



March 13, 2024

**Request for Proposals
Creative, Enrollment, and Retention Services**

RFP Due Date: April 5, 2024

Statement of Purpose:

Eastern Iowa Community Colleges' (EICC) Office of Marketing and Communications is actively seeking experienced creative agencies to strategically partner with us. We need innovative collaborators to enhance our messaging, effectively engage targeted audiences, and boost enrollment, strengthening our reputation as a leading institution of higher education. The selected agency will play an important role in shaping EICC's creative strategy and success in recruitment and retention. Our primary objective is to identify a creative services provider adept at producing high-impact assets, while also overhauling current onboarding and retention processes. This collaboration involves crafting diverse materials, including print collateral, :30 and :15 commercials, digital content, social media assets, promotional materials, and comprehensive communication plans that produce results and ensure a positive and consistent experience for prospective and current students.

About EICC:

At Eastern Iowa Community Colleges (EICC), we know that education changes lives and builds communities. That's why we've focused on delivering high-quality, in-demand academic programs and training opportunities since 1965. The heart of our mission is to educate a skilled workforce, prepare students to successfully transfer to four-year schools, enrich the community through lifelong learning, and be a sound financial steward of public dollars. It's embedded in everything we do at THE Community's College.

EICC includes Clinton, Muscatine and Scott Community Colleges. Stretched along the banks of the Mississippi River, the district covers all of Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine and Scott Counties, as well as parts of Cedar and Louisa Counties. Spanning more than 120 miles from north to south, our campuses boast a dynamic combination of urban and rural landscapes. This creates an incredible diversity of ages, ethnic backgrounds, experiences, and cultures among our students and the communities we serve. In fact, EICC is ranked as one of the most diverse community colleges in the state. We're certainly proud of that, as it enriches our learning environments and the opportunities we offer our students.

EICC is the first choice of area high school graduates, whether pursuing a four-year bachelor's degree or a career education. There's a reason for that - many are already EICC students through our concurrent courses and hands-on Career Academies. We help more than 5,000 high school students get a jump-start on their college education each year.

Our students learn by doing. EICC offers more than 30 Career Technology certificates, diplomas and degrees, allowing students to enter directly into the workforce. With classes taught by industry experts in our state-of-the-art facilities, students can expect to gain the knowledge and skills needed for an in-demand career.

EICC holds formal transfer and joint admissions agreements with many area four-year private college and state universities. By choosing EICC first in a bachelor's degree journey, students receive top-notch faculty instruction, lower tuition rates, smaller class sizes, and in some cases, guaranteed transfer to their preferred institution.

EICC's Office of Continuing Education is committed to helping individuals and local organizations stay competitive in today's rapidly changing business climate. No matter the topic — health and safety, computer technology, leadership, industry trades, etc. — our classes and customized training solutions develop leaders, enhance employee skills, and address industry needs. Our experienced instructors and consultants work in partnership with more than 250 businesses each year to ensure every aspect of the training process is tailored to their exact requirements: from the development of custom curriculum to pre-course logistics and post-course evaluation.

We are looking for a firm that will serve as a true partner and function as an extension of our team. In the last year, we have done a significant amount of work to enhance EICC's brand, including launching an all-new website and developing robust brand guidelines. Our goal is to build upon the work we've done, whether by developing new, or refreshing our existing messaging and assets. To us, success looks like a platform that engages and motivates key target audiences, feels genuine to internal constituents, proudly highlights our competitive advantages, and is flexible enough to apply to a variety of messaging and imaging use cases.

We will expect the selected firm make thoughtful, honest, and respectful recommendations, and one that is open to embracing the ever-changing tools and tech available to marketers. Bring your experience and track record to the table when exploring creative approaches and executions.

Scope of Work:

You'll need to utilize existing and gather new market research from key stakeholders and audiences about their perception of the college so you can identify opportunities to boost enrollment. We'll use what we learn to develop effective creative assets and work with our media placement partner to incorporate them into our multi-channel plan that accurately depicts the EICC brand, strengthens and aligns the brand across the college, and showcases EICC to targeted audiences.

The overarching goal:

- 1) To create a compelling and flexible platform for EICC storytelling that can be shared widely across campus units and stakeholder audiences. The platform must be differentiating, memorable, inspiring, authentic, and resonate with the community.

- 2) Develop a clear onboarding roadmap to boost enrollment.
- 3) Develop a retention communication plan designed to support, encourage, and retain current students.

Assets and Deliverables:

The outline below lists our current expectations for each phase as well as a breakdown of annual assets and deliverables. Once awarded, modifications may be made with mutual agreement between EICC and our new partner.

Phase 1 - Research & Discovery

- Creative audit
 - Inventory and analysis of creative assets
 - Review of analytics & performance of assets with available data
 - Perceptions of EICC
 - peers and influencers
 - prospective students (high school, working adult)
 - donors, alumni, community
- Based on the audit, provide:
 - Recommendations for key compelling positioning statements optimized for audiences and platforms
 - Design recommendations optimized for audiences and platforms
 - Finalized messaging platform: compelling positioning statement, creative expression, supporting message pillars, brand personality/attributes, and visual identity
- Audit of onboarding and retention communication and processes
 - Analysis of prospective student journey and audit of communication materials
 - Analysis and audit of current student communications
 - Recommendations for onboarding communication arc and retention messaging arc

Phase 2 - Rollout messaging and asset development timeline to support EICC marketing plan

- Imagery and messaging resources and guidelines
- Asset development optimized for identified channels and placements
- Training and support on use of assets and templates, and use cases
- A complete plan for intake messaging, from admissions to the first day of classes.
- A complete plan for retention messaging, starting from day one to graduation.

Phase 3 - Implement creative kickoff and rollout strategy

- Implement new creative Summer and/or Fall 2024
- Implement onboarding and retention communication plans August 2024

Annual marketing plans vary slightly from year to year, but typically include the following deliverables (currently, all print and social media content is created in-house. We work with a vendor on the video editing, but write our scripts and have provided b-roll):

- Programmatic Banner Ads

- 300x250
- 728x90
- 300x600
- 320x50
- Facebook/Instagram Ads
 - 1080x1080 banner
- Video
 - :15 and/or :30 spots
- Radio/Streaming
 - :30 spot
- Billboards
 - Digital and Poster (Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine, and Scott Counties)
- Direct Mail
 - Postcards
 - Brochures
- Newspaper Advertisements
 - QC Times (College Guide, Leading in Business)
 - North Scott Press
 - Maquoketa Sentinel Press
 - DeWitt Observer
- View Book & Recruitment Suite Handouts
- Email Marketing Templates
 - Current Students
 - Inquiries/Applied not Enrolled
 - Concurrent

Year One Deliverables

A new creative concept, usage guide and asset library:

To contain a mix of existing college branding elements and newly-developed or refreshed assets

- Primary and secondary messaging including headlines, key phrases, and body copy samples
- Visual assets such as colors, typefaces, along with primary and secondary design elements
- Library of recent, current, and new assets for simpler sharing and reference
- Mockup or template files of key creative including:
 - Storyboard, scripts and graphics for :30, :15, and :07 spots
 - Social media (prevailing formats and sizes)
 - Outdoor
 - Standard collateral (flyer, postcard, booklet, email)

Onboarding Communications Audit

- Review and realign the colleges' intake processes and communications from applications to the first day of classes

Retention Communications Recommendation

- Create a retention communications plan that will support, inspire and encourage students to finish their goals

Notes and Considerations:

1. Traditional media buying and placement strategy services are managed by a separate agency and are out of scope. However, we welcome new digital advertising placement insights and strategies.
2. Visual assets are historically gathered from onsite visits every one to two years, depending on budget and timing. Stock footage is used very sparingly. We maintain a photo and video library, but anticipate all new photography/videography will be needed to execute a new creative strategy. This should be included in the final cost proposal, in addition to what the cost will be if we work with our freelance photographer and videographer to capture needed content.
3. EICC is under no obligation to purchase additional services from the selected vendor, and any services rendered outside of the above scope will require a separate, signed agreement prior to said services commencing. Vendor must provide EICC a copy of their W9 & Certificate of Insurance before any services begin.
4. All content produced must align with standard accessibility requirements, including but not limited to closed captions and alt text.
5. Partner must allow a process to work with established, preferred or third-party vendors.
6. Some projects may be funded by Federal, State, or Local monies or grants. Such funds may impose additional funding, reporting, or billing requirements. Awarded bidder must be eligible to receive Federal funds and maintain an active registration on the System for Award Management (SAM) website and comply with all respective Federal requirements.
7. EICC will retain rights to creative assets; and raw assets needed for one-off or quick-turn projects shall be provided on request.
8. All awards will be based upon the availability of funds.
9. The College reserves the right to reject any bid proposal that is not in full compliance with the specifications; reject any or all bids wholly or in part; to waive technicalities or minor deviations; to make awards in a manner deemed in the best interest of the College; and to correct any award or specification erroneously made as a result of a clerical error on the part of the College.
10. Payment will be made by EICC upon completion of the project(s).

Scope of Services

1. The scope of services will include all creative services, from beginning to end, including assisting with current campaigns and establishing new campaigns. This includes defining and expanding the vision, strategy and intended outcomes, collaborative messaging and design development, storyboard conceptions and development, optimizing assets for marketing platforms and executions, the approval process, and post-campaign analysis.
2. This may include all full-service related areas, including, for example, creative digital and print materials, social media, mass mailings, digital photography, videography, assistance with public information or public service announcements, special events—and all other

related activities, events, programs or efforts by the college which can be identified for use in potential marketing and advertising campaigns.

3. Advertising and marketing services must be based on research, key audiences, and identification of target markets in EICC's service areas.
4. EICC's Marketing team meets regularly via Zoom with our (1) creative development and (2) media buying partner account managers to intake projects, set timelines, schedule and run campaigns, review campaign performance, and conduct annual planning. Participation by video conference is acceptable.

Proposal Timeline and Process

The timeline for the RFP is as follows:

- March 13, 2024: Distribute RFP
- April 5, 2024: Response deadline
- April 15 - 19 , 2024: Finalist presentations
- April 29, 2024: Firm selected and contracting process begins
- June 1, 2024: Contract start date

Proposal Submission and Scoring:

To be included in proposal:

1. Experience of key stakeholders who will work on projects and manage our account.
2. Case studies with 2 – 4 sample campaigns of work that evidence the firm's expertise and innovation across relevant media and platforms. Include basic parameters and goals of each project along with campaign creative analytics (at least one to two community college case studies preferred).
3. Three references from clients with similar deliverables or project scopes (at least one higher ed required, community college highly preferred).
4. Project deliverables and pricing package.

Submitted proposals will be scored using the criteria below:

1. Responsiveness to RFP items: pass/fail
2. Cost & deliverables proposal
3. Quality of work
4. Relevant experience
5. Optimization value-add (expertise in research, messaging, leveraging platform functionality and emerging tech)
6. Fit

While a key consideration, EICC reserves the right to reject one or all bids, at its discretion.

Submission details:

Submissions must be received by EICC by 5 p.m. Friday, April 5, 2024. Incomplete submissions will be rejected.

Submit questions regarding RFP, to Johnna Kerres, Associate Director for Marketing & Communications, 101 W. Third St., Davenport, IA 52801; jkerres@edu; 563-336-3464. DO NOT EMAIL PROPOSALS. ALL PROPOSALS MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA MAIL TO THE ADDRESS LISTED UNDER RFP CONDITIONS/SUBMISSION GUIDELINES.

Finalist Presentation:

Finalists will be invited to make a presentation to the selection team the week of April 15, 2024. This can be done in person or via videoconference.

Selection:

The winner will be contacted by April 29, 2024 with a contract term start date of June 1.

RFP Conditions/Submission Guidelines:

- Vendors are responsible for all costs associated with the preparation and delivery of their proposals.
- Vendors are responsible for all costs associated with presentations/meetings during the decision-making process.
- Proposals must be completed according to the instructions provided in this section and throughout this document. Incomplete proposals will be disqualified. During onsite demonstrations, if selected, vendors should be prepared to demonstrate any of the cited functionality upon request.
- Vendors should provide their standard terms and conditions, software maintenance agreements, and related contractual documents related to this proposal where indicated.
- Submit proposals, with pricing in a separate sealed envelope to: Eastern Iowa Community Colleges, Attention: Janet Foutch, Purchasing Specialist, 101 W. Third St., Davenport, IA 52801.
- EICC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.

It is the policy of Eastern Iowa Community College District not to discriminate in its programs, activities, or employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, religion, and actual or potential family, parental or marital status, as required by the Iowa Code §§216.6 and 216.9, Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d and 2000e), the Equal Pay Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 206, et seq.), Title IX (Educational Amendments, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688), Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.).

If you have questions or complaints related to compliance with this policy, please contact EICC's Equal Employment Opportunity Officer/Equity Coordinator, Eastern Iowa Community College District, 101 West Third Street, Davenport, Iowa 52801, 563-336-5222, equity@eicc.edu or the Director of the Office for Civil Rights U.S. Department of Education, John C. Kluczynski Federal Building, 230 S. Dearborn Street, 37th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604-7204, Telephone: (312) 730-1560 Facsimile: (312) 730- 1576, TDD (800) 877-8339 Email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.