

Notice of Intent to Sole Source

Posting Date: July 11, 2024

Francis Marion University seeks to sole source the procurement of a student AI Communication Platform for the University.

Current situation:

The Francis Marion University Admissions Office communication with prospective students is through the individual admissions counselors. The counselors communicate via phone calls, through a texting platform, and by email. Some of the emails are automated through our Customer Resource Management (CRM) system, AdmissionsPro, but these communications are generic and not personalized.

Intent to Sole Source:

FMU Admissions has a need for a student AI Communication Platform that is compliant with the FCC communication rules. The department's goal is to create a communication plan that will ensure prompt and consistent engagement that has concise and digestible directions for both prospective students and current students. The artificial intelligence (AI) platform, from CollegeVine, will be designed to facilitate recruitment efforts by handling large numbers of student leads and inquiries from multiple origin sources. It will operate across a variety of communication channels, including phone, email, SMS text and traditional mail. The platform will give the university an automated mechanism that will assist the Office of Admissions in its recruiting efforts by connecting with prospective students in spaces where they are most comfortable, thereby optimizing engagement and responsiveness. Prospective students will benefit by having more direct access to information that is personalized and geared toward individual needs and interests. Because the AI can communicate in multiple languages, it will benefit several students for whom English may not be their first language; these considerations will contribute to students obtaining the information needed to make informed decisions about their college choice.

Francis Marion University researched several vendors; each vendor was found not to have an AI product that could not only be personalized but build a personalized conversation/interest path for each prospective student. The technology developed by CollegeVine allows the generative and predictive AI to train and deploy an autonomous AI recruiter; the more the AI engages with the student, the more it will adapt its information to the student's particular needs. Additionally, CollegeVine is focused on higher education, specifically, recruiting and helping students find good college matches; the AI platform is geared directly towards the institution's needs.

CollegeVine is the only known entity that provides a personalized AI platform. CollegeVine is a proprietary network product that allows colleges to build connections with prospective students, leverage deep preference, persona, and affinity data based on our own proprietary data model, and engage with students on-platform via livestreams, messages, and other conditional content. Given the proprietary network product, data model, and engagement tools, CollegeVine is the only vendor that provides a complete recruiting ecosystem that includes an AI platform for colleges and prospective students. This platform will provide an effective and efficient way of assisting students in their search for a university that best fits their goals and values. For these reasons, CollegeVine is the sole source for this purchase. The cost for the student AI Communication Platform for the University for two years is \$90,000 (Year 1=\$5,000 and Year 2=\$45,000).

Company Specifics:

CollegeVine

68 Harrison Ave, Suite 605, PMB 94211

Boston MA 02111

Contact Person for this Intent to Sole Source:

Jennifer D Hester, Purchasing Director

Phone: 843 661-1161

Email: jdhester@fmarion.edu

<http://www.fmarion.edu/about/solicitationsawards>

Contact deadline: July 18, 2024 11:59 pm EST

Unless additional pertinent information is forthcoming, Award will be posted at the following physical address and website address on July 22, 2024:

Francis Marion University
Purchasing Office

Stokes Administration Building, Room 102
4822 East Palmetto Street
Florence, SC 29506
www.fmarion.edu/about/solicitationsawards

If you are aggrieved in connection with the solicitation or award of the contract, you may be entitled to protest, but only as provided in Section 11-35-4210. To protest a solicitation, you must submit a protest within fifteen days of the date the applicable solicitation document is issued. To protest an award, you must (i) submit notice of your intent to protest within seven business days of the date the award notice is posted, and (ii) submit your actual protest within fifteen days of the date the award notice is posted. Days are calculated as provided in Section 11-35-310(13). Both protests and notices of intent to protest must be in writing and must be received by the appropriate Chief Procurement Officer within the time provided. See clause entitled "Protest-CPO". The grounds of the protest and the relief requested must be set forth with enough particularity to give notice of the issues to be decided.

PROTEST – CPO ADDRESS – MMO: Any protest must be addressed to the Chief Procurement Officer, Materials Management Office, and submitted in writing

(a) by email to protest-mmo@mmo.sc.gov,

(b) by facsimile at 803-737-0639, or

(c) by post or delivery to:

CHIEF PROCUREMENT OFFICER
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT OFFICE
1201 MAIN STREET, SUITE 600
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29201