



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTHERN**  
**MISSISSIPPI**®

**Targeted Recruitment Marketing and Communication Plan**

Request for Proposal (RFP) # 22-22

Issued: Friday, December 3, 2021

Proposal Submission Deadline: January 18, 2022



**THIS IS NOT  
AN ORDER**

**REQUEST FOR BIDS/PROPOSALS COVERSHEET**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI**

**Procurement and Contract Services**  
**118 College Drive #5003, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39406-0001**

**Date:** December 3, 2021

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RFP No. 22-22**

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI is considering the purchase of the following item(s). We ask that you submit your bid and retain one copy for your files. Right is reserved to accept or reject any part of your bid. Your quotation will be given consideration if received in Bond Hall, Room 214 on or before:

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

2:00 p.m. CT

**City/State/Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

TERMS - Bidder should state terms of sale. Our terms are 2% ten days, net 45 days.

January 18, 2022

These terms will apply per Mississippi law.

AWARDING CONTRACT - Cash terms will not be used as a basis for awarding contracts; however, the University will accept cash discounts when earned.

**Buyer:** Deidre Edwards

**NOTE:** If you cannot quote on the exact material shown, please indicate any exception giving brand name and complete specifications of any alternate. If additional space is required, use a separate sheet or letter of transmittal.

ITEM	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL NET PRICE
		<p align="center"><b>RFx # 3160004733</b></p> <p align="center"><b>DESCRIPTION</b></p> <p align="center"><b>RFP 22-22 Targeted Recruitment Marketing &amp; Communication Plan</b></p> <p>PROPOSAL MUST BE RETURNED TO THE UNIVERSITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SPECIFICATIONS. RFP NUMBER AND DATE OF BID OPENING MUST BE SHOWN ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE ENVELOPE IF USING THAT METHOD.</p>		

We quote you as above - F.O.B. The University of Southern Mississippi.  
Shipment can be made in \_\_\_\_\_ days from receipt of order. DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Return quotation to Procurement Services at above address.

**Signature Required** \_\_\_\_\_

## Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to solicit information for services to develop a comprehensive marketing plan for academic programs offered by The University of Southern Mississippi's Coastal Operations which will result in increased undergraduate and graduate student enrollment. The marketing plan should include engagement segmentation to drive program awareness and lead generation for prospective students.

This enterprise includes an innovative and integrated strategy for targeted recruitment marketing and communication to prospective students and other pivotal influencers in the process. The plan is expected to create a combined result that delivers a compelling and cohesive set of messages to a wide range of prospective students. The plan will be used by the University's Communications Team to develop web/digital, print, and event display components. Recommendations for developing a digital marketing strategy will be expected to be a significant portion of the proposal with the necessary metrics to measure the short-and-long term success of the marketing plan for diverse program offerings.

## Supporting Information

### Our Vision

The University of Southern Mississippi's Coastal Operations will be a national leader addressing issues relevant to people in coastal and maritime settings.

### Our Foundational Pillars



### Our Core Strategies

- strengthening existing programs that support local, regional, national and international demand, including ocean engineering, logistics, leadership, human capital development, marine science, marine biology, sustainability and hydrography, among others
- developing innovative new academic programs to meet the evolving needs of the coastal maritime sector, including coastal resilience, cybersecurity, policy analysis and an MBA concentration focused on the Blue Economy, among others

- positioning our Gulf Park campus in Long Beach to serve as a hub for academic instruction and research in key fields
- continuing to develop specialized operations that elevate innovation and research across the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast and beyond
- supporting opportunities unique to businesses, industries and government services that benefit from ocean and coastal resources
- addressing needs related to the emerging Blue Tech Economy

#### Sources of Additional Information

1. Main university website: <https://www.usm.edu/>

2. USM Gulf Park Campus (main teaching site for Coastal Operations):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNRX3Nci9Qw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuZ2iVUuwnA>

3. Charting our Coastal Future:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S78lHe4h4PI&list=PLt3r9SxfWJF4MmCOEX2U88uy17MZeeh6s>

4. USM Research Enterprise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k81Nm6y6G9I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQdBomr-CeY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EczrZE8BhgQ>

## Scope of Work

### Phase I. Technical and Creative Brief

The firm will write and share a technical and creative brief with the core team at USM Coastal Operations to propose a replicable recruitment methodology to serve as a 'playbook' through which academic programs can implement in order to increase student enrollment. The strategy should incorporate sources of market data through which academic programs can connect with in-demand occupation trends and other career aspirations of graduates. The firm should demonstrate prior experience and expertise working with other research universities for developing a targeted recruitment plan, and prior experience working with coastal-oriented universities is considered a plus. Prospective firms should include a well-defined strategy that results in anticipated enrollment growth with actionable steps for targeting new recruits from national perspective. The strategy should align with our existing/planned programs of study as well as provide insights into potential new programs that are aligned with our vision and pillars.

Fundamental questions to be addressed include:

1. Who are our competitors for our academic programs? This will help us understand the types of degrees that our competitors offer in terms of market saturation, degree completions, and growth by program.
2. Who is our target audience for recruitment? This will help us understand what programs/fields students in our region are interested in pursuing at the graduate and undergraduate level. Such data can include but would not be limited to degree program inquiries, search engine data, and website page views.
3. What does the job market forecast look like? This will help us determine which academic programs are leading students to in-demand jobs in our region and elsewhere. Such data can include but would not be limited to employer demand, current job postings, job placement rates, and wages.
3. How to strengthen enrollment? This will help us improve long-term fiscal stability.

#### **Deliverables**

- Minimum of two (2) creative concept approaches, including all three project components, presented on campus to Purchase officials
- Defined methodology for testing creative concepts and any implications testing may have on overall project timeline.

**Estimated timeline:** Months 1 and 2 from kickoff date from the signing of the contract (two months in length)

#### **Phase II: Recruitment Marketing and Communications Plan**

Upon acceptance of creative concept, firm will be required to present detailed plan for review by USM Coastal Operations' Leadership Team.

#### **Deliverables**

- Final Plan, recommended components, projected budget, and schedules for development and completion of each. This includes, but is not limited to, who to target from a national, and to some degree international perspective, what approach/method should be used to communicate, and time of year of when to send targeted messaging.

- Workshop--the firm will conduct at least an interactive workshop with a cross-functional team with multiple university decision-makers to ensure the data-based recommendations align with the strategic vision and pillars.

**Deadline for Completion:** June 30, 2022

## Scoring Criteria

The University will rank the proposing firms and their submittals based on the following criteria (listed in priority order by weighted percentage).

Total Points Available: 100

Line Item Score	Points Available	Criteria
	0 - 30	<p><b>Firm's Expertise and Demonstrated Experience</b></p> <p>The firm articulated that it has the depth and breadth of experience performing similar work with other research universities. Prior experience working with coastal-oriented universities is considered a plus.</p>
	0 - 20	<p><b>Key Staff Experience</b></p> <p>Firm provided experience, length of service and related experience over the last five years of key personnel who will be directly involved in the entire project lifecycle.</p>
	0 - 20	<p><b>Technical Requirement Checklist</b></p> <p>Firm described planning and design of strategic plan based upon an understanding of social and demographic research, direct marketing, and public relations information.</p>
	0 - 10	<p><b>Creative Requirement Experience</b></p> <p>Firm described a complete understanding of creative strategy positioning, creative execution through media channels, and market research that identifies how to maximize opportunities for enrollment growth.</p>
	0 - 20	<p><b>Price</b></p> <p>The low bid will receive 20 points. Each higher bid will receive a percentage of the 20 points on a ratio basis compared to the low bid cost.</p>
	<p><b>= Total Points Awarded</b></p>	

## Point of Contact

For questions please contact: [bids@usm.edu](mailto:bids@usm.edu)

## Submission Instructions to Bidders

One (1) original, two (2) copies, and one (1) electronic version (USB jump drive) of the sealed proposal response, subject to the conditions made a part hereof, will be received by **2:00 PM CDT on Tuesday, January 18, 2021** in the USM Procurement and Contract Services office, as indicated in the General Terms, Conditions, and Instructions to Bidders described herein. It is the responsibility of the respondent to ensure that the proposal package arrives in the Procurement and Contract Services Office.

Each bid **must** be submitted in a sealed envelope bearing on the outside the name “RFP # 22-22 Targeted Recruitment Marketing and Communication Plan,” the name of the Vendor, and the opening date specified on the coversheet.

The proposal should be addressed as follows:

USPS Mail:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Attn: Deidre Edwards, Buyer  
118 College Drive, Box 5003  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406  
RFP # 22-22

For FedEx, UPS, or other express couriers:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Attn: Deidre Edwards, Buyer  
2609 W. 4th Street  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
RFP # 22-22

Hand-carried responses should be brought to:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Attn: Deidre Edwards, Buyer  
214 Bond Hall  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406  
RFP # 22-22



As an alternative to traditional sealed proposals in envelopes, the University of Southern Mississippi is capable of receiving electronic bid responses. While this option is available, it is not required and we ask that all potential respondents keep in mind that with any electronic system there could be delays or glitches with the submission process; therefore the University *highly encourages traditional sealed responses* which are either mailed or submitted in person. Additionally, the University will not be responsible for issues with attempted submissions of bids using the electronic method.

Should a vendor choose to submit their response electronically, please follow the instructions below using the following website: [https://www.ms.gov/dfa/contract\\_bid\\_search/Home/Sell](https://www.ms.gov/dfa/contract_bid_search/Home/Sell).

On this site you will find helpful links to procurement opportunities, as well as a link to supplier registration. If not already registered in this system, potential bidders will first need to click on 'Supplier Registration' and follow the steps outlined (a one-time process). Once registered, suppliers can return to the original website and click on 'Procurement Opportunities' where they can either search by keyword for the bid they desire to respond to or leave the search box blank and click 'Search' for a listing of all current bids and proposals for the various State of Mississippi offices.

**Please note that emailed bids will not be accepted.**

Any bid may be withdrawn prior to scheduled time for the opening of bids or authorized postponement thereof. Any bid received after the time and date specified will not be considered.

The University of Southern Mississippi reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and to waive any formalities.

Vendors are responsible for examining all specifications, terms, conditions, and instructions of this request. Failure to do so will be at Vendor's risk.

In order to ensure all interested bidders receive any addenda that may be issued, proposers must email their intent to propose using the Intent to Bid link on the USM Bid Calendar under RFP 22-22 prior to the deadline to submit:

<https://www.usm.edu/procurement-contract-services/current-bids-and-sole-source-notice.php>

## RFP #22-22 Timeline

The following dates are for planning purposes only unless otherwise stated in this RFP. Progress towards their completion is at the sole discretion of the University.

RFP Posted

December 3, 2021

Prospective Respondents Written Inquiries Deadline	December 17, 2021
Responses to Inquiries Deadline (Estimated)	December 22, 2021
Proposal Submission Deadline – 2:00 p.m. CDT	January 18, 2022
Deadline for Project Completion	June 30, 2022

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI  
PROCUREMENT SERVICES  
118 COLLEGE DRIVE #5003  
HATTIESBURG, MS 39406-0001**

**GENERAL TERMS, CONDITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIDS/PROPOSALS**

- 1.) Failure to examine any drawings, specifications, and instructions will be at bidder' s risk.
- 2.) Samples of items when called for must be furnished free of expense and if not destroyed in testing, will, upon request, be returned at the bidder' s expense. Request for the return of samples must be made within ten (10) days following opening bids. Each individual sample must be labeled with bidder' s name and manufacturer' s brand name and number.
- 3.) Bids must be signed and sealed with bidder' s name and address on the outside of the envelope, and the time and date of the bid opening and the bid file number shown in the lower-left corner of the packages; envelopes, express mailing labels, boxes, etc.
- 4.) In order for your bid to be considered, it must be received and time stamped in our office by 2:00 P.M. of the bid opening date. It is the responsibility of the vendor to ensure their bid is received within the appointed time. If your bid package is not received in Bond Hall, Room 214, by 2:00 P.M. of the bid opening date, it will not be considered.

If you are delivering your bid, you need to hand carry the bid package to:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Procurement Dept. (Bid)  
Bond Hall, Room 214  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

If you are mailing your bid package via U.S. Postal Service, mail to:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Procurement Dept. (Bid)  
118 College Drive #5003  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

If you are express mailing your bid package via Federal Express or UPS, or any other delivery service which requires the use of a physical address, deliver to:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Procurement Dept. (Bid)  
2609 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

- 5.) Bids or proposals shall not be modified, corrected, altered, or amended after the specified closing time and the opening of such bids, unless otherwise noted in the request for bids or proposals.
- 6.) The University of Southern Mississippi reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any informality in bids, and unless otherwise specified by the bidders, to accept any items on the bid. If the bidder fails to state the time within which bids must be accepted, it is understood and agreed that The University of Southern Mississippi shall have 60 days to accept. The University of Southern Mississippi reserves the right to make an award to this bid on an all or none basis, or on a line by line basis, whichever serves the best interest of The University of Southern Mississippi.
- 7.) Contracts and purchases will be made or entered into with the lowest, responsible bidder meeting specifications.
- 8.) A written purchase order or contract award mailed or otherwise furnished to the successful bidder within the time of acceptance specified in the Invitation for Bid results in a binding contract without further action by either party. The contract shall not be assignable by the vendor in whole or in part without the written consent of The University of Southern Mississippi.
- 9.) Bid files may be examined during normal working hours by bid participants. Non-participants will be prohibited from obtaining any information relative to the bid until the official award has been made.
- 10.) If purchase orders or contracts are canceled because of the awarded vendor's failure to perform or request for price increase, that vendor shall be removed from our bidders' list for a period of 24 months.
- 11.) No addendum will be issued within a period of two (2) working days prior to the time and date set for the bid opening. Should it become necessary to issue an addendum within the two-day period prior to the bid opening, the bid date will be reset giving bidders ample time to answer the addendum.
- 12.) Alternate bids, unless specifically requested or allowed, will not be considered.
- 13.) Bid openings will be conducted open to the public. However, they will serve only to open the bids. No discussion will be entered into with any vendor as to the quality or provisions of the specifications, and no award will be made either stated or implied at the bid opening. After the close of the bid opening meeting, the bids will be considered to be in the evaluation process and will not be available for review by bidders. Proposal openings are not required to be open to the public; however, the resulting award is open for public inspection.
- 14.) Prices quoted shall be firm for the term of the contract or for the stated time of

acceptance.

- 15.) The bidder understands that The University of Southern Mississippi is an equal opportunity employer and, therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical handicap, disability, or any other such discrimination; and the bidder, by signing this bid, agrees during the term of agreement that the bidder will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of products or services.
- 16.) Bidders must upon request of The University of Southern Mississippi furnish satisfactory evidence of their ability to furnish products or services in accordance with the terms and conditions of these specifications. The University of Southern Mississippi reserves the right to make the final determination as to the bidder's ability.
- 17.) Questions or problems arising from bid procedures should be directed to the Buyer listed on the solicitation at:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
118 College Drive #5003  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
Phone: (601) 266-4131

- 18.) All items must equal or exceed the specifications listed. The absence of detail specifications or the omission of detail description shall be recognized as meaning that only the best commercial practices are to prevail and that only first quality materials and workmanship are to be used.
- 19.) It is the intent of the specifications to obtain a product that will adequately meet the needs of the user while promoting the greatest extent of competition that is practicable. It is the responsibility of the prospective bidder to review the entire Invitation to Bid packet and to notify The University of Southern Mississippi if the Specifications, Instructions, General, or Special Conditions are formulated in a manner which would unnecessarily restrict competition.
- 20.) It shall be incumbent upon the bidders to understand the specifications. Any requests for clarifications shall be in writing and shall be submitted to our Procurement Services office at least five (5) days prior to the time and date set for the bid opening, unless otherwise noted in the bid or proposal specifications.
- 21.) The minimum specifications are used to set a standard and in no case are used with the intention to discriminate against any manufacturer. Bidders should note the name and the manufacturer and model number of the product they propose to furnish and submit descriptive literature.
- 22.) Trade names, brand names, and/or manufacturer's information used in these

specifications are for the purpose of establishing quality, unless otherwise noted. Bids on products of other qualified manufacturers are acceptable, provided they are demonstrated as equal to those specified in construction, design and suitability. Each bidder shall submit with his bid a complete brochure with pictures on each item and shall point out specifically any deviations from the specified items. Failure to do so may disqualify any bid. Please bid as specified or an approved equal.

- 23.) A copy of the manufacturer's standard guarantee/warranty shall accompany and become a part of this bid.
- 24.) There are no federal or state laws that prohibit bidders from submitting a bid lower than a price or bid given to the U.S. Government. Bidders may bid lower than U.S. Government contract price without any liability as The University of Southern Mississippi is exempt from the provisions of the Robinson-Patman Act and other related laws. In addition, the U.S. Government has no provisions in any of its purchasing arrangements with bidders whereby a lower price to The University of Southern Mississippi must automatically be given to the U.S. Government.
- 25.) All invoices, unless noted otherwise, are to be billed to:

The University of Southern Mississippi  
Accounts Payable  
118 College Drive #5104  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
- 26.) All equipment bid shall be of current production and of the latest design and construction.
- 27.) Where all, or part(s), of the bid is requested on a unit price basis, both the unit prices and the extension of the unit prices constitute a basis of determining the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. In cases of error in the extension of price, the unit price will govern.
- 28.) All bidders/respondents are on notice that USM is a public agency of the State of Mississippi and is subject to the Mississippi Public Records Act, Miss. Code Ann. § 25-6-1, *et seq.* If a public records request is made for any information provided to the USM pursuant to this solicitation, USM shall promptly notify the Disclosing Party of such request. The Disclosing Party shall promptly institute appropriate legal proceedings to protect its information. No party to this agreement shall be liable to the other party for disclosures of information required by court order or required by law. For clarity, documents are not considered public record unless and until an award is made from such solicitation.
- 29.) Should the University of Southern Mississippi close due to inclement weather conditions, or any other unforeseen events on the bid opening date, sealed bids will open the following business day at the same time and location.

- 30.) As an alternative to traditional sealed bids in envelopes, the University of Southern Mississippi is capable of receiving electronic bid responses. While this option is available, it is not required and we ask that all potential respondents keep in mind that with any electronic system there could be delays or glitches with the submission process; therefore the University highly encourages traditional sealed bids which are either mailed or submitted in person. Should a vendor choose to submit their response electronically, please follow the instructions below using the following website: [https://www.ms.gov/dfa/contract\\_bid\\_search/Home/Sell](https://www.ms.gov/dfa/contract_bid_search/Home/Sell). On this site you will find helpful links to procurement opportunities, as well as a link to supplier registration. If not already registered in this system, potential bidders will first need to click on ‘Supplier Registration’ and follow the steps outlined (a one-time process). Once registered, they can return to the original website and click on ‘Procurement Opportunities’ where they can either search by keyword for the bid they desire to respond to or leave the search box blank and click ‘Search’ for a listing of all current bids and proposals for the various State of Mississippi offices.

With regard to construction bids, there is one additional step required during the bid submission process. Along with the bid response and other attachments, contractors will also need to attach their Certificate of Responsibility (COR), or a statement that the bid enclosed does not exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$ 50,000.00). If their COR or such statement is not attached, the bid will be invalid and not considered.

**AA/EOE/ADA**