

*Midwestern Higher Education Compact*

Consulting Services for  
**MHEC's**  
Technological Infrastructure Upgrade

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

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Prepared by the  
Midwestern Higher Education Compact

Announced: October 26, 2011  
Submission Deadline: December 9, 2011



The Midwestern Higher Education Compact is a nonprofit regional organization established by compact statute to assist Midwestern states in advancing higher education through interstate cooperation and resource sharing. Member states are: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

MHEC seeks to fill its interstate mission through programs which:

- enhance productivity through reductions in administrative costs
- encourage student access, completion and affordability
- facilitate public policy analysis and information exchange
- facilitate regional cooperation
- encourage quality education programs and services in higher education
- encourage innovation in the delivery of educational services

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Midwestern Higher Education Compact's  
Consulting Services for MHEC's  
Technological Infrastructure Upgrade

## Introduction

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC-*pronounced meck*) is soliciting proposals from technology consulting vendors to assist with an organization-wide technological infrastructure upgrade in order to better promote organizational value and to streamline mission critical processes. We would like to work with a consultant to design a solution that best fits our organizational needs. This project is only for the design, we expect that at the conclusion an implementation plan will be presented, implementation is not "in scope" for the purpose of this proposal.

### A. The Midwestern Higher Education Compact

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) is an instrumentality of twelve Midwestern states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin). The Compact was established in 1991 through a common statute enacted into law by each of the member states. The purpose of the Compact is to promote higher education through interstate cooperation and resource sharing.

The Compact is governed by a 60 member Commission composed of five delegates from each state who are appointed by their respective Governors, House Speakers and Senate Presidents. The Commission has been conferred very broad authority to enact solutions and enter into agreements on behalf of its member states. Once a state enacts the necessary legislation to become a member of the Compact, all of the public and private non-profit colleges, universities, community colleges and technical colleges in the state are automatically accorded membership as well, and are eligible to participate in the solutions established by the Compact. The Commission receives its primary financial support from member state appropriations, from foundations having special interests in specific solutions, and from administrative service fees.

The primary constituents served by the Midwestern Higher Education Compact are the approximately 1,000 public and private non-profit institutions in the member states whose combined enrollments total over 4 million students.

One of the Compact's top priorities is to establish public-private relationships to improve services to higher education, and reduce administrative costs for both providers and institutions. Over the past 20 years, the Compact has engaged in several highly successful initiatives in cooperation with leading corporations. These relationships have been quite innovative, and have produced financial benefits for all of the involved parties.

B. The MHEC Request for Proposal (RFP)

a. Project Objectives

The objective of the RFP process is to provide interested parties with information to enable them to prepare and submit a proposal which would allow MHEC to fully upgrade its technological infrastructure to better promote organizational value and to streamline mission critical processes.

i. MHEC is seeking consulting for an organization-wide technological infrastructure upgrade, including the following integrated components:

1. CRM database
2. Event management
3. Newsletter functionality
4. Web content management system (including content migration and design work)
5. Data repository with on-demand reporting capabilities
6. Collaborative workspace for MHEC volunteer committees and staff

The following table outlines the various features by the number of individuals creating, editing, or utilizing the system, if applicable.

System/Constituency Group	MHEC Staff (10-15)	MHEC Commissioners (60-80)	MHEC Committees (100-300)	Campus/State Constituents (10,000+)
CRM Database	Create/Edit/End User	None	None	None
Event Management	Create/Edit/End User	End User	End User	End User
Newsletter	Create/Edit/End User	End User	End User	End User
Web CMS	Create/Edit/End User	End User	End User	End User
Data Repository	Create/Edit/End User	End User	End User	End User
Collaborative Workspace	Create/Edit/End User	Edit/End User	Edit/End User	None

ii. That addresses the following business risks, in order of importance:

1. Process improvement/efficiency
2. Increasing organizational awareness
3. Promoting organizational value
4. Business continuity

b. Projected Timeline

The objectives listed in section “i” are listed in order of importance. We envision items 1-4 to be “phase 1” of the project, as these are technologies that we currently have that are in need of upgrade. It is expected that “phase 1” take at least three months but no more than nine. Items 5-6, or “phase 2” are systems we currently do not have in place but require. “Phase 2” may take upwards of 18 months and can start before “phase 1” ends.

c. Current Technologies

Our website is currently uses a platform called PVA Site Manager (Pine Valley Associates <http://www.pineval.com/>) with backend SQL server that synchs with FileMaker Pro. The webserver is hosted offsite. The staff is looking to move to more user-friendly and supported platform. Data is saved on a file server shared by staff, which resides in our office. We currently do not use any type of CRM.

d. Current Computing Environment

We currently are all using PCs that are managed by SlashBlue, our outsourced IT manager.

e. Future Computing Environment

If we need to upgrade or replace our current computing environment in order to fully implement this upgrade, we are willing to consider additional hardware and software purchases. We would like to know the minimum hardware, software, and networking requirements needed to implement any proposed solution.

f. Additional Questions

- i. What is the likely timeline and budget for a project of this scope?
- ii. What is the company’s plan for dealing with overages?
- iii. What is the project management process like?
- iv. Describe the discovery process.

- v. How many drafts, feedbacks, and redesigns are included in the budget?
- vi. What is your preferred communication style?

g. Coordination with Existing Vendor Relationships

It is expected the prospective vendor will be willing and able to work with MHEC’s current vendors to transition MHEC to new technologies. It is our expectation that these vendors will bill MHEC directly for their assistance on this project but prior approval must be gained through MHEC. Any costs billed by these vendors are not considered part of the budget for this response. These vendors include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- i. SlashBlue – internal network IT manager
- ii. Tela – website hosting
- iii. Pine Valley Associates – content management system
- iv. Settanni & Company – IT consultants

C. Schedule of events

The following schedule lists meetings and deadlines related to this Request for Proposal (RFP). Deadline dates are as indicated unless otherwise changed by the MHEC. In the event that the MHEC finds it necessary to change any of the dates or activities listed in this calendar, it will do so by issuing an amendment to the RFP to prospective vendors.

Event	Target Completion Date
Advertisements of RFP	October 26, 2011
Effective issue date of RFP	October 26, 2011
Final Questions Due	November 7, 2011
Answers to Questions Send to Intended Respondents	November 18, 2011
Deadline for Submission of RFP	December 9, 2011
Identification and Notification of Finalists	December 14, 2011
Interviews with Finalists	December 19, 2011
Selection of Vendor	December 22, 2011
Contract Award and Assignment	TBD
Effective Date of Contract	TBD

D. Selection Process

The selection process will be guided by an evaluation of the range and quality of consulting services offered, and the cost of those services in the context of what represents the best interests of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact and its staff.

The evaluation of responses will be performed by MHEC. Its findings and recommendations will be submitted to the MHEC President for approval.

#### E. Instructions to Respondents

##### a. Request for Proposal (RFP) Document

Respondents are expected to examine the complete RFP document. The failure to do so is at the respondent's risk. It is the respondent's responsibility to ask questions, request clarifications, or otherwise advise MHEC if any language, specification or requirement of the RFP appears to be ambiguous, contradictory, and/or arbitrary, or appears to inadvertently restrict or limit the requirements stated in the RFP to a single source.

All questions with regard to the submission of proposals should be made in writing and directed to Jennifer Dahlquist, Assistant Vice President for Cost Savings and Chief Financial Officer, at [jenniferd@mhec.org](mailto:jenniferd@mhec.org). Only information supplied by MHEC in writing through Jennifer Dahlquist or this RFP or amended RFP should be used as a basis for the preparation of vendor responses.

In addition to addressing the project objectives outlined above, all proposals must address the information requested in the sections that follow.

##### b. Project Plan

Please provide a detailed project management plan proposal. In this proposal, estimate MHEC staff human resource requirements and expectations.

##### c. References

Provide at least three references for similar type projects. Please include any higher education and/or non-profit client references.

##### d. Staffing Plan and Resumes

Provide information on account executive(s) and support staff that you propose to assign to service this account. Attach detailed resumes of the account executive(s) and any backup staff you plan to use in servicing our account.

- i. Name
- ii. Title

- iii. Number of years in this capacity
- iv. Educational background
- v. General professional experience
- vi. Professional experience in servicing higher education and/or non-profit organizations
- vii. If applicable, describe the nature and level of staff resources and service capabilities readily available to you through your parent organization.

#### F. Pricing

The Compact requires a budget/cost proposal that is sufficient to carry out the vendor's proposal. The pricing proposal should be in a document separate from the proposal response.

#### G. Conflict of Interest

By submitting a proposal, the vendor certifies that no relationship exists between the vendor and the Midwestern Higher Education Compact that interferes with fair competition or is a conflict of interest, and no relationship exists between the vendor and other persons or firms that constitute a conflict of interest that is adverse to the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

#### H. Organization and Format

One response in electronic format (the electronic copy files are limited to the following document formats: MS Word, MS Excel, or PDF) should be emailed to the address in section I prior to the deadline. Pricing must be presented in a document separate from the RFP response document.

#### I. Contacting MHEC

For further information about the Midwestern Higher Education Compact and its programs and services you are referred to the Compact web site at: <http://www.mhec.org>. For further information contact:

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