



UNIVERSITY *of*  
MONTEVALLO

# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

## **Website Design & Development**

### **For Information, Contact:**

**Steven Boydston**  
**Director of Contracts, Purchasing, Legal Affairs & Risk Management**  
**University of Montevallo**  
[sboydstu@montevallo.edu](mailto:sboydstu@montevallo.edu)

**Please submit proposals via US Mail, UPS, or FedEx to:**

**University of Montevallo**  
**Attn: Station 6001**  
**Montevallo, AL 35115**

## **Project Background**

The University of Montevallo's institutional website, [www.montevallo.edu](http://www.montevallo.edu), is a vital component for the university's recruitment and enrollment efforts and serves as the most effective tool to elevate the university's brand perception, reputation, and communication strategies. The University of Montevallo website had more than 400,000 visitors during the most recent calendar year. For many, the website is the first engagement and interaction with the university.

The University of Montevallo is seeking a formal estimate for the re-design, development, and deployment of the montevallo.edu website on our WordPress CMS platform. We seek a strategic partner with a creative and technical team that will quickly gain a comprehensive understanding of our brand, values, culture, and strategic directions.

This project will deliver a new and future-focused digital strategy and web presence that elevates the university and reflects the best practices in design, content strategy, user experience, usability, accessibility, and technical implementation.

The University of Montevallo is looking for an experienced agency who has demonstrated experience with managing complex website projects and expertise with best practices for higher education websites.

## **Project Goals and Objectives**

The University of Montevallo website is a key element in the university's marketing and communications and admissions efforts and is an important vehicle for delivering information to external and internal audiences and key stakeholders. It is a vital recruitment, fundraising, and storytelling platform for the university.

The University of Montevallo is looking to partner with an agency with significant digital capabilities to create a streamlined, customized, and optimized digital experience for current and prospective students, current and prospective students' families, current and prospective employees, alumni, donors, and our local community.

Our partner agency will assist in surveying our audience stakeholders to strategically assess the needs of each and create a plan using feedback generated during the survey process. The agency will also incorporate search engine optimization (SEO) best practices to increase both the quality and the quantity of the website traffic, as well as exposure to our brand through non-paid (organic) search engine results.

All project requirements and specifications support the project's following objectives.

- Content is dynamic, not static.
- Seamless integration of video and image galleries.
- Institutional colors and branding concepts emphasized in the design.
- Fully accessible and in compliance with WCAG 2.1 & WCAG 2.0 Level A & Level AA, Section 504 and Section 508 standards.
- The University of Montevallo's brand strengths, qualities, and values are highlighted throughout.
- Targets prospective undergraduate and graduate students and their families, while respecting the needs of all secondary audiences, and effectively markets both undergraduate and graduate programs and services.
- Incorporates information architecture that organizes content in an efficient and logical manner for primary target audiences, while preserving deeper content structures to meet secondary audience needs.
- Incorporates SEO best practices to improve ranking in search engine results.
- Modular, flexible visual design that is fully optimized across desktop, laptop, tablet, and mobile devices.
- Robust, yet flexible enough to continue to grow and evolve with our web presence and our strategic long-term digital evolution.

Following implementation of our project requirements and specifications, our desired outcome is to accomplish the following objectives:

- Increase conversion rates for online applications and inquiries, increase engagement, decrease bounce rates, and improve our search rankings.
- Increase participation rates and fundraising totals for Advancement and Alumni campaigns.

## **About University of Montevallo**

Established in 1896, the overriding mission of the University of Montevallo, unique in higher education in Alabama, is to provide to students from throughout the state an affordable, geographically accessible, "small college" public higher educational experience of high quality, with a strong emphasis on undergraduate liberal studies and with professional programs supported by a broad base of arts and sciences, designed for their intellectual and personal growth in the pursuit of meaningful employment and responsible, informed citizenship.

To enhance student success within a vibrant campus community, the University of Montevallo provides a premier educational experience characterized by distinguished degree programs, personalized instruction delivered by highly qualified faculty and affordable tuition. Enriched by an array of opportunities, the UM experience prepares students to enter graduate or

professional school or to begin their careers with an understanding of how to succeed in a constantly changing and complex world.

## **Our Current Website**

The University of Montevallo's current public facing website is the culmination of merging two separate institutional websites that existed prior to our most recent redesign in 2016. The website is often the first experience with the university for many prospective students and families and is a vital component of the University of Montevallo's lead generation and communications strategies. We have more than 1,800 webpages on the website with more than 400,000 visitors during the most recent calendar year. Our web ecosystem is comprised of approximately 75 content managers, trained and supported to maintain individual webpages, spread across the university.

The web team is comprised of an assistant director in University Marketing & Communications and a web applications administrator in Information Services & Technology.

## **Our Audiences**

We have identified five core audiences for whom the website is specifically geared to address. The new website should provide unique customer journeys for these audiences:

- current and prospective students
- current and prospective students' families
- current and prospective employees
- alumni
- donors
- local community

## **Project Deliverables**

The primary objectives and goals of the website redesign are listed below. The University of Montevallo is open to all recommendations for innovative design techniques and modern technologies that will provide a best-in-class digital experience.

- Discovery, strategy, user experience, and information architecture processes
- Audience profiles and planned conversion paths
- Flexible, responsive, accessible, and optimized design
- Lead generation and communication strategy integration
- Search engine optimization
- Site search strategy

- Redirect strategy
- Content models
- Wireframes
- Front-end development
- Academic program menu module
- QA testing
- Other recommended and future-focused integration features

## Functional Content Features

The University of Montevallo is seeking a partner agency to create a holistic theme and consistent messaging across the website, including the home page, headings on main section pages, features and Call to Action (CTA) prompts throughout the website. We are seeking a partner agency that can utilize this strategy to develop the functional content features below.

- Editable navigation and sub-navigation
- Flexible page design templates
- Content tags and website search
- Interactive and dynamic elements
- Photo galleries, lightboxes or slideshows, video and audio integration
- CTAs, promos and buttons utilizing university colors and branding
- Events calendar: Recommendations on third-party event calendar
- Academic program browser
- On-page emergency alerts
- News/blogs/articles
- Social sharing
- Dynamic content – entered once, displayed many times (event > news > social)
- Dynamic key word searches
- Structured snippets and schema markup
- A-Z and employee directories
- Interactive campus map

## Source Files

All files used to create webpages, templates, images, or other elements associated with this project shall be delivered, and all copyrights transferred to the University of Montevallo prior to project completion. This includes, but is not limited to the following types of files: HTML, PHP, JavaScript, CSS, Microsoft Word, PDF, Photoshop, TIFF, JPG, and Flash. Additionally, the University of Montevallo may make subsequent changes to the website at its discretion. All rights of ownership will reside with the University.

## **Integrations**

The University of Montevallo is seeking a partner agency that can integrate the existing systems below in the design of our institutional website:

- Customer relationship management system (CRM)
- Enterprise resource planning (ERP)
- Advancement/Giving portal
- Academic catalog
- Virtual campus visit website
- Google tag manager/Google Analytics
- Single sign on (SSO) portal
- Degree Audit & Planning software
- Scholarship Management software
- Registrar bulletin integration with website search capacity
- Chatbot
- Etc.

## **Existing Technology**

The University of Montevallo website will be deployed through the WordPress content management system. The development partner will be responsible for building functional webpage strategy within the parameters of the WordPress CMS.

## **Instructions to Vendors**

The University of Montevallo is seeking a detailed website proposal, budget and timeline that accounts for all work in accordance with the project objectives. Please include:

- General description of the firm, including number of years in business and overall experience in interactive web design and development, particularly in higher education working on projects similar in scope.
- Detail the firm's experience with project discovery and research, persona development, digital strategy, user experience, information architecture, mobile and responsive web design, usability testing, website accessibility (WCAG 2.1 and WCAG 2.0 Level A & AA compliance), SEO, content strategy, and digital marketing.
- A list of web content management systems the firm has direct experience implementing and providing ongoing maintenance, support, and development.

- A list of all individuals and roles who will be assigned to work directly on the project along with their bios.
- Case studies with URLs linking to examples of relevant work that is similar in scope to the University of Montevallo's project.
- A project plan that describes the agency's approach, methodology, and includes timelines.
- A minimum of three references that the University of Montevallo can contact about the firm's work that is similar in scope to this project.
- Pricing for the project including a breakdown by major elements or milestones (e.g., project management, discovery, strategy, UE, IA, design, build, content migration support, QA, usability testing and post deployment); a total project cost, any incidental expenses that would be charged to the University of Montevallo, and an applicable hourly rate for additional time and materials work that may result from a scope expansion or other unanticipated work.
- The University of Montevallo is interested in potential vendor support services post deployment. Vendor should include recommendations and a menu of options and pricing for ongoing website support, maintenance and development options or packages, e.g., bulk purchase of hours (pre-paid), pay-as-you-go or per-hour pricing (time and materials). The university is interested in vendor recommendations for how much budget we should allocate toward ongoing maintenance and support for a website similar in size or scope.
- Vendor should detail any warranty of code or bug fixes that are identified post-launch.

The University of Montevallo anticipates retaining a single vendor to perform the entirety of the scope of work. However, we reserve the right to make multiple awards, e.g., selecting one firm for project discovery, strategy, user experience and information architecture and a second for design/build or to make no award.

## Special Conditions

### Completion of Proposal

The proposal must be complete in all aspects. Completion of the project is defined as when the vendor delivers all items, and the website is launched. The proposal may be rejected if it is found to contain conditional or incomplete language or contain any alterations of form. The proposal may be rejected if any defect or irregularity is shown to have materially changed the quote price.

### Signature of Proposal

The proposal shall be signed by a duly authorized representative of the supplier. A Proposal submitted unsigned or signed by agents not authorized will be considered incomplete and **WILL BE REJECTED**.

## **Confidentiality**

Any specifications, drawings, sketches, data, or documentation, or other technical or business information furnished or disclosed to the supplier hereunder shall be deemed the property of the University of Montevallo and, when in tangible form, shall be returned to the University of Montevallo if requested. Unless such information was previously known to the supplier free of any obligation to keep it confidential as evidenced by supplier records or has been or is subsequently made public by University of Montevallo or a third party, it shall be held in confidence by the supplier and shall be used solely for the purposes hereunder.

## **Communication**

All communication, including bid clarification questions, should be sent to Steven Boydstun, Director of Contracts, Purchasing, Legal Affairs & Risk Management, at [sboydstu@montevallo.edu](mailto:sboydstu@montevallo.edu), and copy Kira Thomas, Director of University Marketing & Communications, at [kthomas18@montevallo.edu](mailto:kthomas18@montevallo.edu), and Joe Walsh, Chief Information Officer, at [walshj@montevallo.edu](mailto:walshj@montevallo.edu). Failure to comply with these instructions could result in disqualification in this RFP.

## **Modification and Supplements**

Modifications and/or supplements to this RFP issued by the University of Montevallo will be in writing and will become part of the RFP documents.

## **Disposition of Proposals**

All material submitted as part of a proposal or in response to this RFP will become property of the University of Montevallo and may be returned only at the option of the University of Montevallo and at the expense of the supplier. All confidential information that is identified as such should be on a document labeled Confidential. The University of Montevallo will, with all reasonableness of care, protect said information. In any case, one copy shall be retained by the University of Montevallo for official files.

## **Non-Committal Estimates**

All estimates as to quantity of service to be purchased are non-committal to the University of Montevallo. Estimated annual usages shown in the RFP are only estimates and in no way represent a commitment by the University of Montevallo to purchase such quantities. These quantities may change from time to time during the life of any resultant agreement and are for planning purposes only.

## **Right to Negotiate**



The University of Montevallo reserves the right to negotiate and hold discussions with suppliers as necessary to protect its own best interest. However, the University of Montevallo may award a contract based on the initial offer without discussion of such. Accordingly, supplier should offer the most favorable terms from a price and service standpoint in their proposal.

### **Not an Offer to Contract**

This RFP is not an offer to contract, nor does it commit the University of Montevallo to award a contract. The University of Montevallo reserves the right to make one award, multiple awards, or no award under this RFP. Additionally, the University of Montevallo may cancel this RFP at any time, if so, doing is in the best interest of the University of Montevallo.

### **Supplier Pre-Screening Information**

Supplier is requested to provide completed W-9 document (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>) for the University of Montevallo to verify company tax status.

### **Connection with University of Montevallo Employees**

Supplier, by submission of their proposal in response to this solicitation, represents that any employees, consultants, or other persons associated with the University of Montevallo, who have been or are associated with the supplier, have not participated in the preparation of the proposal. In addition, those such persons have not conveyed to the supplier any information pertaining to this RFP and will not participate in any of the work hereunder, except with the specific written approval of the University of Montevallo.

### **University of Montevallo Equal Opportunity Statement**

In accordance with University policy 01:100, the University of Montevallo is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic information, disability, or disabled veteran/Vietnam era veteran status in the University's educational programs; admissions policies; faculty, staff, and student employment policies; financial aid; or other school-administered programs and services. The University of Montevallo prohibits any form of harassment related to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status of and by faculty, staff, and students.

It is the University's intent to take affirmative action to ensure equal opportunity in employment, and to avoid unlawful discrimination in employment within the University. The University will take affirmative action to recruit, employ, and to advance in employment minorities, women, and disabled veterans/Vietnam era veterans. Reasonable accommodations will be made for qualified disabled veterans and persons with disabilities. The University and individuals or agencies signing contracts with the University agree not to discriminate against

any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic information disability, or veteran status and agree to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants and employees are treated without regard to their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status. This policy covers the following: Recruitment and recruitment advertising; employment, promotion, demotion, or transfer; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; training; and all other terms and conditions of employment. The University and individuals and agencies with whom it contracts will adhere to the letter and spirit of all relevant laws and governmental regulations. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for coordination of all activities to ensure equal opportunity/affirmative action in all University programs and activities and for monitoring their effectiveness.

## **Appendix: Key Message Framework**

### **Mission**

Our mission is to produce graduates who use effective communication, critical thinking, and leadership skills to become well-rounded contributors to the global business landscape. We accomplish this mission by creating a tailored, hands-on education, combining theory and experiential learning with collaborative interdisciplinary teaching informed by the production of impactful scholarship.

### **MESSAGE FOUNDATION**

**University of Montevallo's brand essence: You Belong at Montevallo**

#### **Brand positioning**

A University of Montevallo education prepares you to think for yourself and communicate effectively in a way no other experience can. It delivers the skills needed to enter a rapidly-changing workforce and creates the capacity for lifelong learning. It develops the critical thinking skills necessary to make an impact in today's world.

Montevallo is the best environment to study with its small class sizes, engaging student activities, and abundant opportunities for real-world experience. Our alums are chairing boards, leading companies and teaching and serving communities because of the Montevallo experience. At Montevallo, students don't just find a place to fit in, they find a family where they belong.

#### **Additional messaging**

Founded in 1896, the University of Montevallo is nestled in the heart of Alabama, approximately 35 miles south of Birmingham.

Designed by the architects behind New York's Central Park and the grounds surrounding North Carolina's Biltmore House, the UM campus serves as a picturesque backdrop to match the University's world-class educational offerings. White columns, expansive lawns, brick walkways and stately oaks are just part of the campus' beauty that has earned widespread acclaim. Southern Living magazine even named UM among the "South's Most Beautiful Colleges" in 2020.

As the only public liberal arts university in Alabama, the University of Montevallo has the charm of a private school experience while providing the value of a state-supported institution. As a small school, UM is committed to creating big opportunities for students. Montevallo's list of national accolades grows each year. U.S. News & World Report has ranked UM as one of the top Public Regional Universities for the past 14 years, as well as a Best Value School and one of the most innovative schools in the nation, and the institution has been named a College of Distinction for 11 consecutive years.

UM doesn't merely inspire – the institution's devoted faculty teach students how to harness inspiration, become versatile and give back. Through its accreditations, scholarships and faculty resources, UM has cultivated a reputation for producing bright minds. Montevallo offers academic programs in four colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Human Development and Fine Arts. Students choose from more than 30 degree programs and more than 70 majors and concentrations. They participate in an educational environment boasting an average class size of 13 and have unprecedented opportunities for conducting undergraduate research under full-time faculty mentors.

UM fields 22 NCAA Division II athletic teams competing in the Gulf South Conference, giving student-athletes ample opportunity to don the purple and gold.

Unique to Montevallo is its homecoming tradition, College Night, known as the oldest tradition of its kind in the nation. Montevallo students from across all disciplines have come together for a spirited competition like no other for now more than 100 years. College Night was selected as a "Local Legacy" for the Library of Congress's bicentennial celebration in 2000.

**I. Company & Signatory Page**

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours of operation:  
Weekdays: \_\_\_\_\_  
Weekend: \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of Firm: Corporation: \_\_\_ Proprietorship: \_\_\_ Partnership: \_\_\_ Joint Venture: \_\_\_  
Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_  
Business License Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of years in business under firm name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Full names of firm's owners (> 10% ownership), officers and managing employees:

Has the firm changed its name within the past 3 years?

YES NO

If yes, provide former name(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

Have there been any recent (within the last three years) changes in control/ownership of the firm?

YES NO

If yes, explain.

Have officers or principals of the firm ever had their business license suspended or revoked for any reason?

YES NO

If yes, please explain.

Vendor Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

