

Massachusetts College of Art and Design

RFP 27-01: Web Development & Support Services for MassArt.edu

Addendum #1 – Questions and Answers

Responses in this addendum clarify and supplement the original RFP. Where this addendum provides additional detail regarding scope, qualifications, service expectations, or proposal requirements, respondents should use this information when preparing their proposals.

Q. Who are the members of the core team(s) overseeing the website maintenance and enhancements?

A. Our Marketing and Communications Web Team.

Q. What is the current process for handling maintenance requests?

A. MassArt currently maintains a backlog of maintenance, accessibility, performance, integration, and enhancement requests in Asana. We usually prioritize requests and submit them to our web development vendor via Airtable, along with using Google Workspace messaging for day-to-day communications and email support for urgent requests.

We are flexible regarding the project management workflow for this engagement. Respondents may describe how they would work within MassArt's existing systems or recommend an alternative process for tracking requests, backlog items, priorities, status updates, and completed work.

Q. What 3rd-party integrations are included?

A. Localist, Slate, Mailchimp, and analytics-related tools are the primary integrations currently anticipated for support under this engagement. The website's email subscription form submits to Mailchimp, while certain admissions-related forms and workflows are managed through Slate. (Slate refers to the Admissions CRM, not Slate CMS.) Other forms may submit by email or connect to College-managed systems depending on the business process. Additional technical details will be shared during onboarding as appropriate.

Q. How many people will be administering content?

A. MassArt.edu has a limited number of editors across the College who support updates for specific content areas. We are interested in expanding and improving internal editing

workflows over time, while maintaining appropriate oversight, accessibility standards, brand consistency, and quality control.

Q. Who supports the current site?

- A. The website is supported by an external provider. The College is not identifying the current support provider as part of this solicitation.

Q. What was MassArt's approximate expenditure for website development and support services during the previous 12 months, and approximately how many service hours were utilized per month?

- A. MassArt.edu has previously required approximately 25 hours of support per month with additional contracts for project-based work. We're looking to move to a more holistic model of support.

Q. Does MassArt have an anticipated annual budget range or not-to-exceed amount for this engagement?

- A. The College is not identifying the budget range as part of this solicitation. Respondents should submit a competitive pricing model based on the scope of services, estimated monthly effort ranges, and requirements outlined in the RFP. Vendor proposals should clearly state their preferred pricing structure, hourly rates or blended rate, included services, and billing method.

Q. What prompted MassArt to issue this solicitation? Is the procurement primarily related to routine contract expiration, a need for additional capacity, changing technical requirements, dissatisfaction with existing support, or another factor?

- A. The College is not identifying the current support provider as part of this solicitation. This RFP is intended to establish an ongoing web development and support engagement that meets the College's current and future needs. Any relevant open priorities, documentation, and transition information will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding.

Q. Is MassArt.edu operated as a single WordPress installation, a WordPress Multisite installation, or as part of another shared institutional architecture?

- A. A single WordPress installation

Q. In addition to Pantheon and Git, does MassArt currently use any continuous integration, automated testing, or continuous deployment tools?

- A. Detailed Pantheon environment and deployment information will be provided to the selected vendor during onboarding. The selected vendor will receive appropriate access for their work and direct access to the Pantheon hosting environment for deployment.

Q. What are the five most significant website challenges or priorities that MassArt would like the selected vendor to address during the first contract year?

- A. MassArt's year-one priorities are expected to include a mix of ongoing website maintenance, accessibility remediation and maintenance, performance optimization, analytics/SEO improvements, and strategic enhancements that support recruitment and institutional priorities.

The College maintains an evolving backlog of maintenance, accessibility, performance, and enhancement requests. Typical items include bug fixes, updates to existing components, accessibility remediation, performance and caching improvements, plugin support, content-management enhancements, front-end theme refinements, integration support, and development of new features or functionality. Priorities may evolve over the course of the engagement based on institutional needs, available funding, and the current backlog.

Q. Which third-party platforms, software licenses, monitoring tools, accessibility tools, plugins, and institutional services are currently owned and paid for by MassArt? Which third-party costs, if any, should the contractor include in its proposed pricing?

- A. The College owns and is responsible for paying for hosting services and institutional third-party platforms and licenses. The selected vendor will receive appropriate access to College-owned systems as needed.

Q. Does MassArt permit services to be performed by qualified personnel located outside Massachusetts or outside the United States? If so, are there any restrictions concerning system access, data handling, subcontractors, confidentiality, or security?

- A. Out-of-state vendors with relevant experience may participate. Vendors must be based in the United States. Respondents should identify where services will be performed and how College systems, code, and data would be accessed and protected. Any proposed staffing model, including any specialist subcontractors, will be subject to College review and approval.

Q. Does MassArt anticipate requiring any travel, on-site meetings, or in-person services during onboarding or contract performance? If travel may be required, should associated expenses be incorporated into hourly rates or listed separately as reimbursable costs?

- A. We do not anticipate requiring any on-site meetings or in-person services.

Q. The Events Listing is located at a subdomain: <https://calendar.massart.edu/>. Will it remain there?

- A. Yes.

Q. Are subdomains like <https://calendar.massart.edu/> and <https://maam.massart.edu/> considered to be in scope for the base services? (It's unclear since you state that only massart.edu is in the initial scope, but also that we are to support the Localist API integration)

- A. The ongoing support will primarily cover MassArt.edu, with some hours reserved for accessibility remediation support and consultation on other sites, as needed. References to Drupal and other College-managed platforms are intended to indicate that the selected vendor may occasionally be asked to provide targeted consultation or support, such as accessibility remediation, front-end development, branding alignment, integrations, or issue diagnosis, as part of authorized work. Full ongoing maintenance responsibility for these platforms is not included in the baseline scope and will be managed by internal IT or system owners unless separately scoped and authorized.

Respondents should structure their proposals around MassArt.edu as the primary engagement, while noting any relevant experience or scalable service models that may support related institutional needs.

Q. Admissions application appears to link off to a third-party site. Will this remain as-is? or, what sort of maintenance and troubleshooting has been needed with the admissions integration?

- A. The admissions application process includes third-party systems and multiple user journey steps. The current off-site application process is expected to remain in place unless separately reviewed and authorized. The selected vendor may be asked to support user-experience improvements, tracking, accessibility review, or technical coordination related to admissions pathways as part of authorized work.

Q. What is the approximate size of your backlog (about how many tickets)? About how many would you say are urgent?

A. Our current backlog consists primarily of routine maintenance, component and template fixes, technical troubleshooting, accessibility improvements, analytics support, integrations, and larger planned enhancements. Urgent requests generally involve a website outage, security concern, broken critical functionality, accessibility barrier, or time-sensitive emergency alert banner function issues affecting an important College messaging.

Q. What is the basis for your hours estimates for each segment of work?

- A. The estimates are planning assumptions based on historical support needs, the current backlog of development requests, and institutional priorities during the contract term.

Q. You specified that your business hours are 9-5 Eastern but then also request live support from 8-6 Eastern. Please clarify.

- A. MassArt's standard business hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Routine support is expected to occur during standard business hours and should be addressed within a reasonable timeframe based on priority, complexity, available hours, and clear communication about anticipated next steps and timing.

Q. Will you be able to provide the selected vendor with the original design files (in Figma, for example)?

- A. Yes

Q. Would the College entertain a Bidding Alternate on the five-institution specification, or does the College regard the count of five distinct American institutions as strict?

- A. Our preference is for a vendor with extensive experience working with organizations similar to MassArt.

Q. The RFP requires three United States-based client references. Given the concentration described above, would the College accept references from multiple stakeholders within our American client's organisation individuals separately accountable for different websites and/or permit non-US institutional references to be included as supporting evidence alongside our US reference?

- A. Our preference is for United States based references. They may include individuals responsible for different websites within the same organization.

Q. The anticipated baseline efforts across the four service categories total roughly 38 to 71 hours per month when combined. Should vendors treat that as the expected overall monthly range for the engagement, or are the categories funded and capped independently of one another?

- A. The anticipated monthly effort ranges included in the RFP are planning estimates intended to help respondents understand the expected level and mix of support. They are not guaranteed minimums, independently funded allocations, firm monthly commitments, or fixed monthly caps. Actual utilization may vary based on institutional priorities, project needs, available funding, and the agreed-upon contracting structure.

Respondents should submit a competitive pricing model based on the scope of services, estimated monthly effort ranges, and requirements outlined in the RFP. Vendor proposals should clearly state their preferred pricing structure, hourly rates or blended rate, included services, and billing method.

Q. Is an incumbent vendor currently providing these services, and if so, will there be a defined knowledge-transfer or transition period at the start of the contract?

- A. The College is not identifying the current support provider as part of this solicitation. This RFP is intended to establish an ongoing web development and support engagement that meets the College's current and future needs. Any relevant open priorities, documentation, and transition information will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding.

Q. Will the selected vendor receive access to the current plugin inventory, integration documentation, codebase, and hosting configuration during onboarding, or can any of that be shared with bidders ahead of the proposal to support more accurate scoping?

- A. MassArt.edu is built on WordPress and uses the Gutenberg block editor with a custom theme. Access to the WordPress backend, codebase, plugin inventory, hosting configuration, version information, and other detailed technical environment information will not be provided during the procurement process. The selected vendor will receive available technical documentation, access, and relevant system information during onboarding.

Q. Does the College own the Pantheon hosting account and any associated licenses, including premium or paid plugins? And, if so, will those remain under the College's ownership and billing?

- A. The College owns and is responsible for paying for hosting services and institutional third-party platforms and licenses. The selected vendor will receive appropriate access to College-owned systems as needed.

Q. Does the College maintain an existing prioritized backlog that it can share, even at a summary level, so that vendors can gauge typical request volume and complexity?

- B. The estimates are planning assumptions based on historical support needs, the current backlog of development requests, and institutional priorities during the contract term.

Q. The specifications describe ongoing accessibility work as following the College's completion of a comprehensive audit, remediation roadmap, and priority remediation. What is the current status and expected timing of that foundational work, and who is performing it relative to when this contract would begin?

- A. The College has completed a comprehensive assessment, planning process, and prioritized accessibility remediation of the MassArt.edu codebase. Relevant findings, documentation, reports, and remaining priorities will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding.

Q. Which accessibility monitoring and reporting tools are currently in use, and will the selected vendor be expected to license, configure, or manage those tools as part of the fee?

- A. The College has completed a comprehensive assessment, planning process, and prioritized accessibility remediation of the MassArt.edu codebase. Relevant findings, documentation, reports, and remaining priorities will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding. The College currently uses an automated accessibility monitoring and reporting platform through Accessible Web. MassArt's current conformance standard is WCAG 2.1 AA.

Q. Can the College confirm that WCAG 2.2 AA is the target conformance standard across all in-scope properties, since the specifications reference both that level and, more generally, applicable WCAG standards elsewhere?

- A. MassArt's current conformance standard is WCAG 2.1 AA.

Q. Could the College clarify whether any paid media or advertising spend falls within this engagement, and what that reference is intended to cover?

- A. No paid-media strategy, placement, media buying, or advertising spend is currently anticipated as part of this engagement. However, if support is needed for web-related campaign or institutional priorities, the selected vendor may be asked to assist with campaign tracking implementation, analytics or Google Tag Manager support, conversion measurement, or technical coordination related to paid media efforts. Any such work would be authorized and prioritized as part of the web development and support engagement.

Q. For the additional College-managed platforms named in the specifications, including Drupal, Modern Campus, and Slate, roughly what share of monthly capacity should vendors anticipate dedicating to them, and is any of that work expected at the start of the contract or only as occasional, authorized assignments?

- A. The ongoing support will primarily cover MassArt.edu, with some hours reserved for accessibility remediation support and consultation on other sites, as needed. References to Drupal and other College-managed platforms are intended to indicate that the selected vendor may occasionally be asked to provide targeted consultation or support, such as accessibility remediation, front-end development, branding alignment, integrations, or issue diagnosis, as part of authorized work. Full ongoing maintenance responsibility for these platforms is not included in the baseline scope and will be managed by internal IT or system owners unless separately scoped and authorized.

Q. Does the College have existing response-time expectations or service-level agreements for routine, urgent, and critical requests that vendors should align their proposed policies to?

- A. MassArt's standard business hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Routine support is expected to occur during standard business hours and

should be addressed within a reasonable timeframe based on priority, complexity, available hours, and clear communication about anticipated next steps and timing.

For urgent requests, MassArt expects acknowledgement within approximately one hour during normal business hours, with prompt attention and regular status updates until resolved. Critical issues, including website outages, security incidents, or problems that significantly affect access to the site, should receive immediate escalation and active response through the vendor's proposed emergency support process.

Historically, urgent or critical support requests have been infrequent. Respondents should describe their availability for after-hours or emergency coverage, including response windows, escalation procedures, resolution targets, communication practices, and whether after-hours or emergency support is included in the proposed pricing or billed separately.

Q. Should the Certificate of Non-Collusion, the Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, and any tax-compliance or W-9 documentation be submitted with the proposal, or are those required only from the awarded vendor?

A. The required documents will only need to be completed by the awarded vendor.

Q. Will the finalist interviews during the week of July 27 be conducted in person in Boston or remotely?

A. The finalist interviews will be conducted virtually.

Q. What is the anticipated contract start date following the July 31 award, so vendors can confirm staffing availability and continuity?

A. The College anticipates beginning the engagement as soon as reasonably possible after awarding the contract.

Q. The RFP states that rates are one factor among several in the evaluation. Can MassArt share how pricing is weighted relative to qualifications, experience, and approach?

A. All elements of the Response and Evaluation Criteria will be scored. We cannot share exact weights at this time.

Q. Since we currently do not have access to the backend, could you please provide some additional information to help our team prepare? Specifically, we are looking for a brief rundown of the tech stack used for the custom theme, along with a list of all active plugins. Please include details on any custom plugins and their specific functions.

A. MassArt.edu is built on WordPress and uses the Gutenberg block editor with a custom theme. Access to the WordPress backend, codebase, plugin inventory, hosting configuration, version information, and other detailed technical environment information

will not be provided during the procurement process. The selected vendor will receive available technical documentation, access, and relevant system information during onboarding.

Q. Custom Modules: Could you clarify how the custom modules are built? We are interested to know if you are using ACF or if they are custom-built using React scripts from WordPress.

- A. MassArt.edu is built on WordPress and uses the Gutenberg block editor with a custom theme. Access to the WordPress backend, codebase, plugin inventory, hosting configuration, version information, and other detailed technical environment information will not be provided during the procurement process. The selected vendor will receive available technical documentation, access, and relevant system information during onboarding.

Q. The RFP mentions a requirement for experience with platforms such as Drupal, Modern Campus, and Slate. Could you please clarify which of these platforms are currently in use and what their specific roles are within your ecosystem?

- A. Localist, Slate, Mailchimp, and analytics-related tools are the primary integrations currently anticipated for support under this engagement. The website's email subscription form submits to Mailchimp, while certain admissions-related forms and workflows are managed through Slate. (Slate refers to the Admissions CRM, not Slate CMS.) Other forms may submit by email or connect to College-managed systems depending on the business process. Additional technical details will be shared during onboarding as appropriate.

References to Drupal and other College-managed platforms are intended to indicate that the selected vendor may occasionally be asked to provide targeted consultation or support, such as accessibility remediation, front-end development, branding alignment, integrations, or issue diagnosis, as part of authorized work.

Q. Is there an incumbent vendor currently providing web development, accessibility, or support services? If yes, will transition documentation, knowledge transfer, and access to existing documentation be provided to the selected vendor?

- A. The College is not identifying the current support provider as part of this solicitation. This RFP is intended to establish an ongoing web development and support engagement that meets the College's current and future needs. Any relevant open priorities, documentation, and transition information will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding.

Q. Are project management, meetings, reporting, backlog management, sprint planning, documentation, and quality assurance activities expected to be billable under the Time & Materials engagement, or should they be included within the proposed service capacity?

- A. MassArt does not have a required preference for how these activities are structured, but respondents should clearly explain their proposed approach. Proposals should specify whether these activities are included within the proposed service capacity or billed separately. If they are deducted from available development or support hours, respondents should describe how they will be tracked and reported so the College can understand how contracted time is being used.

Q. Does MassArt have target Service Level Agreements (SLAs) or expected response and resolution times for routine, urgent, and critical support requests that vendors should incorporate into their proposed support model?

- A. MassArt's standard business hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Routine support is expected to occur during standard business hours and should be addressed within a reasonable timeframe based on priority, complexity, available hours, and clear communication about anticipated next steps and timing.

For urgent requests, MassArt expects acknowledgement within approximately one hour during normal business hours, with prompt attention and regular status updates until resolved. Critical issues, including website outages, security incidents, or problems that significantly affect access to the site, should receive immediate escalation and active response through the vendor's proposed emergency support process.

Q. Can MassArt provide examples of the current backlog or the types of enhancement requests anticipated during the first contract year, including any known priority initiatives?

- A. Key Priorities include more proactive site support, with QA and site development for preventing theme, spacing/padding and design regressions that can occur during updates.

Another major focus is improving the applicant experience, including working with Admissions Operations to align branding with the main site and improve user experience with the Slate applicant portal. This would include some front end dev support for email templates, forms, and related communications.

The scope may include some support for campus partner sites, for accessibility and minor front end support.

For larger initiatives, we're looking for more strategic consultation and thought partnership at the onset for brainstorming and recommendations.

Q. Beyond the theme regressions mentioned in the specifications, are there any known technical, security, accessibility, performance, or integration issues that the selected vendor will be expected to address during Year One?

- A. Occasional front-end theme regressions following WordPress core updates: including minor changes to spacing, padding, and component presentation. The selected vendor may be asked to investigate the underlying causes, strengthen update and quality-assurance processes, and implement fixes that help preserve visual consistency across future releases.

Q. Can MassArt share the most recent accessibility audit findings and identify any outstanding WCAG remediation initiatives expected to be included in the scope?

- A. This information can be shared during the interview phase.

Q. Does MassArt have a preference for a dedicated core team throughout the engagement, or is a blended/shared support model acceptable provided staffing continuity is maintained?

- A. While the preference is for a dedicated team, our biggest priority is for continuity throughout the engagement.

Q. Approximately how many after-hours or emergency incidents requiring vendor intervention have occurred during the past 12–24 months?

- A. Emergency incidents have been infrequent – approximately 1-2 events in the past two years.

Q. Will the selected vendor receive administrative access to Pantheon environments, Git repositories, analytics platforms, accessibility tools, and third-party integrations during onboarding?

- A. MassArt.edu is built on WordPress and uses the Gutenberg block editor with a custom theme. Access to the WordPress backend, codebase, plugin inventory, hosting configuration, version information, and other detailed technical environment information will not be provided during the procurement process. The selected vendor will receive available technical documentation, access, and relevant system information during onboarding.

Q. How many WordPress plugins are currently in use, and roughly how many are custom vs. third-party?

- A. MassArt.edu is built on WordPress and uses the Gutenberg block editor with a custom theme. Access to the WordPress backend, codebase, plugin inventory, hosting configuration, version information, and other detailed technical environment information will not be provided during the procurement process. The selected vendor will receive available technical documentation, access, and relevant system information during onboarding.

Q. The monthly effort ranges add up to ~38–71 hrs/month. Is there a target monthly hour cap (or budget) you want us to price against?

- A. The anticipated monthly effort ranges included in the RFP are planning estimates intended to help respondents understand the expected level and mix of support. They are not guaranteed minimums, independently funded allocations, firm monthly commitments, or fixed monthly caps. Actual utilization may vary based on institutional priorities, project needs, available funding, and the agreed-upon contracting structure.

Q. What is the current backlog size, and what has the average monthly request/ticket volume looked like over the past 6–12 months?

- B. This information can be shared during the interview phase.

Q. For the other College-managed platforms (Drupal, Modern Campus, Slate), roughly how many sites could be assigned? Should our proposed rates and roles cover that work, or will it be scoped separately?

- A. The ongoing support will primarily cover MassArt.edu, with some hours reserved for accessibility remediation support and consultation on other sites, as needed. References to Drupal and other College-managed platforms are intended to indicate that the selected vendor may occasionally be asked to provide targeted consultation or support, such as accessibility remediation, front-end development, branding alignment, integrations, or issue diagnosis, as part of authorized work. Full ongoing maintenance responsibility for these platforms is not included in the baseline scope and will be managed by internal IT or system owners unless separately scoped and authorized.

Q. We understand detailed environment information will only be shared post-award. To size the proposal, can you confirm at a high level whether MassArt.edu is a single WordPress installation or a multisite network?

- A. Single Wordpress installation.

Q. Is the custom theme fully bespoke, or is it based on a starter theme or framework (e.g., Sage, Underscores)? Are the reusable content components implemented as native Gutenberg blocks, ACF flexible content, or a page builder?

- A. MassArt.edu is built on WordPress and uses the Gutenberg block editor with a custom theme. Access to the WordPress backend, codebase, plugin inventory, hosting configuration, version information, and other detailed technical environment information will not be provided during the procurement process. The selected vendor will receive available technical documentation, access, and relevant system information during onboarding.

Q. Is the codebase Composer-managed? Is there an existing CI/CD pipeline, and do you use Pantheon Multidev environments for feature branches?

- A. Detailed Pantheon environment and deployment information will be provided to the selected vendor during onboarding. The selected vendor will receive appropriate access for their work and direct access to the Pantheon hosting environment for deployment.

Q. Are there premium/licensed plugins in use (e.g., ACF Pro, Gravity Forms)? Who holds and pays for these licenses, the College or the vendor?

- A. The College owns and is responsible for paying for hosting services and institutional third-party platforms and licenses. The selected vendor will receive appropriate access to College-owned systems as needed.

Q. Beyond the noted front-end theme regressions following WordPress core updates, are there other known areas of technical debt, deprecated or outdated plugins, or past security incidents the incoming vendor should factor into onboarding?

- A. This can be discussed in the interview process.

Q. Who approves and executes production deployments, the vendor or the MassArt Web Team? Is there a defined release and approval process?

- A. Detailed Pantheon environment and deployment information will be provided to the selected vendor during onboarding. The selected vendor will receive appropriate access for their work and direct access to the Pantheon hosting environment for deployment.

Q. Is MassArt.edu currently supported by an incumbent vendor? If so, will they assist with handover, and is existing technical documentation (architecture, deployment, integrations) available? Is the incumbent expected to bid on this RFP?

- A. The College is not identifying the current support provider as part of this solicitation. This RFP is intended to establish an ongoing web development and support engagement that meets the College's current and future needs. Any relevant open priorities, documentation, and transition information will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding.

Q. What is prompting this procurement? Is it the natural expiration of an existing contract, a desired change in service model or vendor, or a shift from internal support to an external partner?

- A. This procurement is prompted by our need to meet internal bidding requirements and desire to explore the market.

Q. Which Pantheon plan/tier is MassArt.edu on, and does the College hold the hosting contract directly? Is the vendor expected to advise on or manage Pantheon platform configuration (Redis, CDN, Autopilot)?

- A. Detailed Pantheon environment and deployment information will be provided to the selected vendor during onboarding. The selected vendor will receive appropriate access for their work and direct access to the Pantheon hosting environment for deployment.

Q. Which automated accessibility monitoring tool is in use (e.g., Siteimprove, Pope Tech), and will the vendor be given access under the College's license?

- A. The College has completed a comprehensive assessment, planning process, and prioritized accessibility remediation of the MassArt.edu codebase. Relevant findings, documentation, reports, and remaining priorities will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding. The College currently uses an automated accessibility monitoring and reporting platform through Accessible Web. MassArt's current conformance standard is WCAG 2.1 AA.

Q. For the Localist, Slate, and Mailchimp integrations, is API documentation available, and are these custom-built or off-the-shelf connectors?

- A. Localist, Slate, Mailchimp, and analytics-related tools are the primary integrations currently anticipated for support under this engagement. The website's email subscription form submits to Mailchimp, while certain admissions-related forms and workflows are managed through Slate. (Slate refers to the Admissions CRM, not Slate CMS.) Other forms may submit by email or connect to College-managed systems depending on the business process. Additional technical details will be shared during onboarding as appropriate.

Q. The RFP asks vendors to provide their standard service-level policies. Beyond those, does MassArt have minimum required response/resolution targets, business-hours expectations, or after-hours/weekend coverage requirements for critical issues?

- A. MassArt's standard business hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Routine support is expected to occur during standard business hours and should be addressed within a reasonable timeframe based on priority, complexity, available hours, and clear communication about anticipated next steps and timing.

For urgent requests, MassArt expects acknowledgement within approximately one hour during normal business hours, with prompt attention and regular status updates until resolved. Critical issues, including website outages, security incidents, or problems that significantly affect access to the site, should receive immediate escalation and active response through the vendor's proposed emergency support process.

Historically, urgent or critical support requests have been infrequent. Respondents should describe their availability for after-hours or emergency coverage, including

response windows, escalation procedures, resolution targets, communication practices, and whether after-hours or emergency support is included in the proposed pricing or billed separately.

Q. The RFP notes MassArt uses Asana, Airtable, and Google Workspace for web project coordination. Will the vendor work within these systems, and which is the system of record for the backlog?

A. MassArt currently uses TeamDynamix, Asana, and Airtable.

Q. Pricing is time-and-materials with no volume guarantee. For the optional 2 extension years, should we hold Year 1 rates or may we propose annual rate escalation?

A. Any changes to rate or terms shall be mutually agreed upon at the time of extension.

Q. The timeline lists finalist interviews during the week of July 27 and the anticipated award the week of August 3, while the interviews are listed before the award. Can you confirm the interview week is still accurate given the current schedule?

A. Our team plans to move quickly to review proposals and schedule interviews. It is the goal to schedule interviews during the week of July 27th.

Q. The RFP references a minimum of four years of relevant experience. May this requirement be satisfied through the combined professional experience of the proposed project team and key personnel, or is it evaluated solely based on the vendor organization's operating history?

A. While it is our desire to work with a well established firm, this requirement may be satisfied by the extensive experience of key personnel.

Q. For the representative experience and client reference requirements, may vendors include projects and client engagements completed by members of the proposed project team in previous professional roles, provided they will perform the work under this contract?

A. Yes

Q. Is a vendor currently providing the services described in this RFP? If so, will the awarded vendor receive a transition or handoff period, and is there existing documentation of open work or backlog items that would transfer?

A. The College is not identifying the current support provider as part of this solicitation. This RFP is intended to establish an ongoing web development and support engagement that meets the College's current and future needs. Any relevant open priorities, documentation, and transition information will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding.

Q. Should the effort required for the awarded vendor's initial onboarding — review of the codebase, architecture, documentation, and accessibility findings — be absorbed within proposed baseline monthly hours, or may respondents propose it as a separately priced onboarding phase?

A. Bidders may propose separate one-time onboarding expenses if required.

Q. Redesign horizon. Recognizing that redesigns and rebuilds are outside baseline scope, does the College anticipate a redesign or major visual refresh of MassArt.edu within the potential three-year contract period (initial term plus extensions)?

A. This engagement does not include a full website redesign, platform migration, or full website rebuild as part of the baseline scope. The selected vendor is expected to support and maintain the existing custom WordPress theme and MassArt.edu environment.

Q. Could you confirm whether MassArt currently has a vendor or an internal team providing the services described in this RFP, and, if so, whether a transition or knowledge transfer period is planned?

A. The College is not identifying the current support provider as part of this solicitation. This RFP is intended to establish an ongoing web development and support engagement that meets the College's current and future needs. Any relevant open priorities, documentation, and transition information will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding.

Q. Do you have a target start date for services following the anticipated bid award, the week of August 3, 2026?

A. The College anticipates beginning the engagement as soon as reasonably possible after awarding the contract.

Q. The Scope of Work includes estimated monthly effort ranges for maintenance, accessibility, consultation, and strategic enhancements. Should vendors assume these ranges represent an anticipated total monthly level of effort, or are they intended solely as planning estimates that may fluctuate significantly based on institutional priorities?

A. The anticipated monthly effort ranges included in the RFP are planning estimates intended to help respondents understand the expected level and mix of support. They are not guaranteed minimums, independently funded allocations, firm monthly commitments, or fixed monthly caps. Actual utilization may vary based on institutional priorities, project needs, available funding, and the agreed-upon contracting structure.

Q. The RFP notes that support may extend to other College-managed websites and platforms, including Drupal, Modern Campus, and Slate. Can MassArt provide additional context regarding the anticipated scope or frequency of work outside of MassArt.edu?

- A. The ongoing support will primarily cover MassArt.edu, with some hours reserved for accessibility remediation support and consultation on other sites, as needed. References to Drupal and other College-managed platforms are intended to indicate that the selected vendor may occasionally be asked to provide targeted consultation or support, such as accessibility remediation, front-end development, branding alignment, integrations, or issue diagnosis, as part of authorized work. Full ongoing maintenance responsibility for these platforms is not included in the baseline scope and will be managed by internal IT or system owners unless separately scoped and authorized.

Q. The RFP requests vendors to describe their service-level policies. Does MassArt have target response or resolution expectations for routine, urgent, and critical requests that vendors should plan to support?

- A. MassArt's standard business hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Routine support is expected to occur during standard business hours and should be addressed within a reasonable timeframe based on priority, complexity, available hours, and clear communication about anticipated next steps and timing.

For urgent requests, MassArt expects acknowledgement within approximately one hour during normal business hours, with prompt attention and regular status updates until resolved. Critical issues, including website outages, security incidents, or problems that significantly affect access to the site, should receive immediate escalation and active response through the vendor's proposed emergency support process.

Q. Can MassArt confirm whether the stated core business hours apply specifically to technical support and issue response, or to all services provided under this engagement?

- A. The vendor should be available for all services under this contract during MassArt's core business hours.

Q. The Scope of Work references "alignment with evolving SEO practices for AI-powered search and discovery." Could MassArt clarify its expectations in this area? For example, is the College primarily seeking technical SEO improvements, structured data enhancements, AI search optimization, content discoverability recommendations, or broader strategies related to generative AI visibility?

- A. The reference is intended to indicate that the selected vendor should provide proactive guidance and subject-matter expertise on evolving SEO practices, search visibility, structured content, metadata, technical SEO, accessibility, performance, and other practices that support discoverability across traditional search engines and emerging AI-powered search experiences.

If a vendor believes an AI-powered search tool, third-party search platform, or related enhancement would benefit MassArt.edu, they may recommend it as a separately

evaluated option. Any such recommendation should be clearly scoped, priced, and distinguished from the baseline web development and support services.

Q. Are you able to share MassArt's brand guidelines with us?

- A. MassArt will provide the selected vendor with relevant brand guidelines, design assets, and available design-system or component documentation needed to support assigned front-end development work.

Q. The RFP requires live support from 8am to 6pm EST. We are based in Los Angeles. Does Pacific Time coverage satisfy this requirement, or is EST coverage strictly required?

- A. EST availability from 9am to 5pm is required.

Q. Key personnel on this engagement include specialist contractors. Are resumes required for contractors, or would a brief bio describing relevant experience and qualifications be acceptable?

- A. A brief bio would be acceptable for any non-employee specialist contracts.

Q. Who will be the main point of contact for this project?

- A. Our Marketing and Communications Web Team.

Q. Can freelance vendors apply for this project?

- A. Yes

Q. Are there any staff members who will need access to post content to the website?

- A. MassArt.edu has a limited number of editors across the College who support updates for specific content areas. We are interested in expanding and improving internal editing workflows over time, while maintaining appropriate oversight, accessibility standards, brand consistency, and quality control.

Q. Can we ask more questions at a later time?

- A. No. The deadline to submit written questions related to this RFP was July 15th.

Q. Beyond the front-end theme regression issues identified in the RFP, are there additional known technical debt areas that should be considered when sizing the engagement?

- A. No

Q. Please provide an overview of all integrations supporting MassArt.edu (including Localist, Slate, Mailchimp, and others), covering ownership, implementation approach (custom or standard APIs/plugins), synchronization frequency, operational challenges, API limitations, and known support complexities.

- A. Localist, Slate, Mailchimp, and analytics-related tools are the primary integrations currently anticipated for support under this engagement. The website's email subscription form submits to Mailchimp, while certain admissions-related forms and workflows are managed through Slate. (Slate refers to the Admissions CRM, not Slate CMS.) Other forms may submit by email or connect to College-managed systems depending on the business process. Additional technical details will be shared during onboarding as appropriate.

Q. What technical documentation will be made available during onboarding, and how current and complete is the documentation for architecture, integrations, deployment processes, and support procedures?

- A. The selected vendor will receive available technical documentation, access, and relevant system information during onboarding.

Q. Are there any ongoing modernization initiatives, platform upgrades, or digital transformation projects planned during the contract period?

- A. This engagement does not include a full website redesign, platform migration, or full website rebuild as part of the baseline scope. The selected vendor is expected to support and maintain the existing custom WordPress theme and MassArt.edu environment.

Q. The RFP references AI-powered search and discovery. Could you share MassArt's broader digital strategy around AI adoption and any expectations for the vendor to recommend or implement AI-enabled capabilities?

- A. The reference is intended to indicate that the selected vendor should provide proactive guidance and subject-matter expertise on evolving SEO practices, search visibility, structured content, metadata, technical SEO, accessibility, performance, and other practices that support discoverability across traditional search engines and emerging AI-powered search experiences.

If a vendor believes an AI-powered search tool, third-party search platform, or related enhancement would benefit MassArt.edu, they may recommend it as a separately evaluated option. Any such recommendation should be clearly scoped, priced, and distinguished from the baseline web development and support services.

Q. Who are the primary stakeholders and decision-makers?

- A. Primary stakeholders include our Marketing and Communications Web Team and the Technology Department.

Q. What challenges have you faced with WordPress core updates or Pantheon deployments?

- A. Occasional front-end theme regressions following WordPress core updates: including minor changes to spacing, padding, and component presentation. The selected vendor may be asked to investigate the underlying causes, strengthen update and quality-assurance processes, and implement fixes that help preserve visual consistency across future releases.

Q. Is there an incumbent vendor currently supporting MassArt.edu, and if so, what factors are driving the rebid?

- A. The College is not identifying the current support provider as part of this solicitation. This RFP is intended to establish an ongoing web development and support engagement that meets the College's current and future needs. Any relevant open priorities, documentation, and transition information will be shared with the selected vendor during onboarding.

Q. Beyond the known theme regression issues described in the RFP, what are the most significant technical, accessibility, performance, security, or operational challenges currently affecting MassArt.edu, and what business impact do they have?

- A. Occasional front-end theme regressions following WordPress core updates: including minor changes to spacing, padding, and component presentation. The selected vendor may be asked to investigate the underlying causes, strengthen update and quality-assurance processes, and implement fixes that help preserve visual consistency across future releases.