

WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Purchasing Department – Room SC 326
RFP # 6878 – Website Search Software
RFP Due Date: 07/16/2026 @ 2p.m. EST

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WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE Request for Proposal #6878

Website Search Software

Submit proposals electronically via email to:

Lydia Scheets

Washtenaw Community College

pur@wccnet.edu

1.0 Proposal Invitation

Washtenaw Community College (“College” and/or “WCC”) seeks proposals from qualified site search providers with experience delivering search solutions for higher education institutions. The primary objective is to implement a robust search platform that enhances content discoverability, addresses user needs, delivers relevant results, and elevates users’ digital experience within the institution’s digital ecosystem. The selected supplier will be able to provide all deliverables outlined in the RFP.

Response to this RFP confirms an understanding that this is *not* a contract or offer of business by the College. This request for proposal in no manner obligates the College to the eventual purchase of any products or services described, implied, or which may be proposed, until confirmed by written agreement, and may be terminated by the College without penalty or obligation at any time prior to the signing of an agreement, contract, or purchase order. In submitting a proposal, Supplier agrees that all materials associated with, attached to, or referenced by the submitted proposal will become the property of the College and may be incorporated into a subsequent contractual agreement between the successful Supplier and the College.

The College is not liable in any manner or to any extent for any cost or expense incurred by the Supplier in the preparation, submission, presentation, or any other action connected with proposing or otherwise responding to this RFP. Such exemption from liability applies whether such costs are incurred directly by the Supplier or indirectly through the Supplier’s agents, employees, assigns, or others, whether related or not to the Supplier.

The College reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and waive any irregularities. Proposals which fail to comply fully with any provisions of this document may be considered invalid and may not receive consideration. The College also reserves the right to negotiate terms and conditions of a contract with the chosen Supplier. The College reserves the right to award a contract based on any combination of the specifications described herein.

The awarded Supplier’s proposal response shall be subject to and governed by the College’s Terms and Conditions for services located at [Terms and Conditions for Services Provided to WCC](#) as a condition of award and are hereby incorporated herein as a substantive part of the solicitation documents. In the event there is any conflict or inconsistency between the Terms & Conditions referenced in the RFP documents and those included in a Supplier’s Proposal response, Supplier’s quote, or listed on the Supplier’s website, the Terms & Conditions of the RFP documents shall govern. Proposal submissions must include all exceptions to the College’s terms and conditions of purchase. A purchase order signed by an authorized agent of the College is required to constitute acceptance of Proposal offer and offer terms and conditions of service. This RFP and any subsequently offered contracts will be governed by the laws of the State of Michigan. Any and all applicable valid executive orders, Federal, State or local laws, ordinances or rules or regulations shall apply to any contract if and when offered and are deemed incorporated herein.

As a public institution, the College is subject to the terms and conditions of the Freedom of Information Act. As required by law, any information submitted in response to this request for proposal could become public information. Suppliers responding to this proposal are cautioned not to include any proprietary

information as part of their proposal unless such proprietary information is carefully identified in writing as such and accepted by the College as proprietary. Any documents submitted may be reviewed and evaluated by any person at the discretion of the College, including non-allied and independent Suppliers retained by the College now or in the future.

Proposals must be comprehensive by including all services and costs necessary to meet the business and technical requirements of the College as outlined in this RFP. In addition, the proposal must specify a detailed approach/methodology, Supplier and College staffing requirements, and any other assumptions to achieve the goal of this RFP.

Proposals received in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP) will be evaluated using numerically weighted totals in accordance with the criteria and process described herein. At its sole discretion, the College may require supplementary presentations and/or interviews from select vendors; criteria may include but is not limited to:

- Accordance with the specifications contained herein
- Quality and clarity of responses
- Methodology/Approach to meet the objectives of this RFP
- Scope of services/project capabilities
- Experience, references, & portfolio samples
- Organizational Project Team and Qualifications
- Relevant and Comparable Experience
- Collaboration & working relationship
- Understanding of the College's Needs and Environment
- Vendor's image, reputation, and professionalism
- Functionality, user experience (look, feel, etc.), and configurability of products, platforms, and software
- Product performance
- Compatibility & Portability of software
- Samples (if required)
- Price Proposal

The College intends to award a contract to the vendor whose proposal is determined to represent the best overall value to the College, taking into consideration both qualitative and cost-related factors. Award of a contract will be based on the highest-rated proposal, contingent on a determination of price reasonableness at the sole discretion of the College. The College may enter negotiations with the highest-ranked vendor to finalize contract terms and pricing. The College reserves the right not to select the highest-scoring vendor if pricing is deemed excessive, unbalanced, or outside of market expectations. If negotiations are unsuccessful, the College may choose to enter negotiations with the next highest-ranked vendor. The award of this RFP will follow the term of final contract with the selected vendor and may be renewed at the College's discretion.

2.0 Planned RFP Schedule

RFP issued – 07/02/2026

Deadline to submit questions – 07/09/2026 by 2:00 p.m. EST Questions shall be addressed to Lydia Scheets, Purchasing Agent, at pur@wccnet.edu

College response to questions – 07/10/2026 by 2:00 p.m. EST posted on the WCC Purchasing website <https://www.wccnet.edu/about/purchasing/bids-rfp.php>

RFP due date – 07/16/2026 at 2 p.m. EST

3.0 Submission Directions

Submit 1 PDF of vendor proposal with Signature Page and Attachment A – Minimum Security Standards form to: PUR@wccnet.edu Attn: Lydia Scheets – Purchasing Agent; RFP #6878

Submit **one (1)** electronic proposal, including the required Signature Page in PDF format. Faxed and mailed replies are not acceptable and will be rejected. Supplier assumes all responsibility for delivery to the location given above on or before the due date and time.

4.0 Project Objectives & Goals

The primary objective is to improve the user site search experience of the College's website for all site visitors and identify a site search solution that the College's internal team, in partnership with external vendors and support, can implement on a new Drupal build as part of an institutional web refresh project.

The College expects the site search tool to be scalable for subdomains, indexing the academic catalog website, and the main wccnet.edu site; the tool must be adaptable to the latest technologies in site search functionality.

The plan will support the following broad goals:

- Improve web content discoverability across WCC's website and subdomains.
- Use intelligent technologies (may include AI, vector or semantic search, natural language processing, or machine learning) that are scalable to anticipate and adapt to evolving user needs and future platform integrations.
- Develop an ecosystem that can unite content across academic catalogs, news and marketing pages to create a unified user search experience.
- Deliver an interface that is fully accessible by WCAG standards and is customizable for branding.
- Deliver an intelligent, robust search platform that enhances and expands user access to services and resources via fast and relevant search results.
- Provide a solution that is intuitive and requires little to no manual overhead and engineering.

5.0 Project Requirements

1. **Approach to Technical Architecture, Search Capabilities and AI Functionality** – Describe the architecture and capabilities of your search platform, including keyword, semantic, vector, hybrid, natural language processing, machine learning, generative AI, and/or other intelligent search technologies utilized by your solution. Explain how search relevance is determined and how the platform supports natural language queries and evolving user needs.

Describe your platform's ability to integrate with Drupal and other content sources, including websites, subdomains, academic catalogs, PDFs, documents, and future systems. Include details regarding indexing methods, indexing frequency, APIs, extensibility, and implementation requirements.

Describe the administrative tools available to College staff for managing and optimizing search results, including relevance tuning, synonym management, promoted results, search rules, content boosting, and reporting capabilities.

If AI technologies are utilized, describe how customer content and data are used, retained, protected, and governed, including whether customer content is used to train public or shared AI models.

2. **Security, Privacy and Compliance** - Describe your organization's information security program and provide details regarding relevant certifications, audits, and compliance frameworks, including SOC 2 Type II, ISO certifications, or comparable third-party assessments, if applicable.

Describe your data privacy practices, including data ownership, retention, residency, backup, recovery, and deletion procedures. Clearly identify how College data is protected and any third-party services utilized in delivering the solution.

Describe how the solution supports accessibility requirements, including compliance with WCAG standards and other applicable accessibility guidelines.

3. **Analytics and Reporting** - Describe the analytics and reporting capabilities included with the platform. Include information regarding search trends, user behavior insights, failed searches, zero-result searches, content performance, reporting dashboards, export capabilities, and any tools available to support ongoing optimization of the user search experience.

4. **Implementation and Support** - Describe your implementation methodology, anticipated project timeline, staffing requirements, and the level of effort expected from College personnel. Include information regarding onboarding, training, documentation, and knowledge transfer.

Describe your ongoing support model, including support hours, service level commitments, escalation procedures, customer success resources, and product roadmap considerations relevant to higher education institutions.

6.0 Pricing

- Provide list pricing with an explanation of the cost for the services included in this RFP; if tiered pricing is proposed, clearly indicate what tier meets the requirements of this RFP.
- Pricing must clearly indicate what is included and anything that is excluded or that will drive incremental costs. Washtenaw Community College holds a tax-exempt status and shall not be charged any Federal or State taxes where allowed. Tax-exempt documentation shall be presented when required

7.0 RFP Requirements

- A. Supplier must return completed **Attachment A – Minimum Security Standards** form with proposal.
- B. The supplier must warrant its products and services to meet the requirements and objectives of this RFP.
- C. **Proof of Insurance** - A copy shall be provided to the College upon request. No changes are permitted in the insurance coverage unless agreed to in writing by the College. Insurance shall be maintained for the following coverage in the amounts stated below:
 1. Commercial general liability insurance, including contractual products and completed operations insurance (\$1 million per occurrence/\$2 million annual aggregate)
 2. Professional Liability/Errors and Omissions Insurance (\$1 million per occurrence/\$2 million annual)
 3. Worker's Compensation at statutory limits in accordance with the appropriate State of jurisdiction including Employer's liability (with minimum \$500,000)
 4. Automobile liability for owned, non-owned and hired vehicles minimum limit (\$1 million each accident)
 5. \$1,000,000 Cyber Security Insurance for loss to the College due to data security and privacy breach, including costs of investigating a potential or actual breach of confidential or private information
 6. Supplier agrees to have Washtenaw Community College added as additional insured
- D. **Supplier Company Information**
 1. **Background** – Brief history and background of your company.
 2. **Project Experience** – List comparable projects including portfolio samples, indicating who from the team was involved with each project, their role and qualifications. Indicate experience with educational institutions and other projects that may be similar in nature.
 3. **References** – Include at least three to five references for similar projects; specifically, those provided to other community colleges, colleges, or other educational facilities. List the reference's company name, contact name, title, address, email address, project description and date.

SIGNATURE PAGE

This page must be signed and submitted with the proposal.

By virtue of submittal of a proposal, supplier acknowledges:

- That all the requirements of this RFP have been read and understood.
- Supplier is presently not debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, nor voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency.
- Any responses, materials, correspondence, or documents provided to WCC are subject to the State of Michigan Freedom of Information Act and may be released to third parties in compliance with the Act.
- By signing below the supplier warrants that the information submitted is complete and factual and that the individual signing below has authority to enter into this on behalf of the supplier.
- Unless agreed to in writing by WCC and the supplier, in the event there is any conflict between the Terms & Conditions referenced in this RFP and those included or referenced in any response to this RFP, the Terms & Conditions referenced herein shall prevail.
- Proposal and pricing shall remain valid for ninety (90) days.

Printed Name

Title

Company Name

Signature

Address

Email

City, State, Zip

Phone

By signing above, supplier agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, local and College laws, rules and regulations in providing goods and services under this agreement.