STATEMENT OF WORK FOR A MILESTONE, DELIVERABLE OR SERVICE-BASED PROJECT
BETWEEN
Mississippi State University
AND
GUIDESOFT, INC., d/b/a KNOWLEDGE SERVICES
AND
Leading Edges of Mississippi

Authorization for work performed pursuant to this Statement of Work "SOW" is granted under the terms of the Master Consulting Services Agreement between GuideSoft, Inc. d/b/a Knowledge Services and Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services.
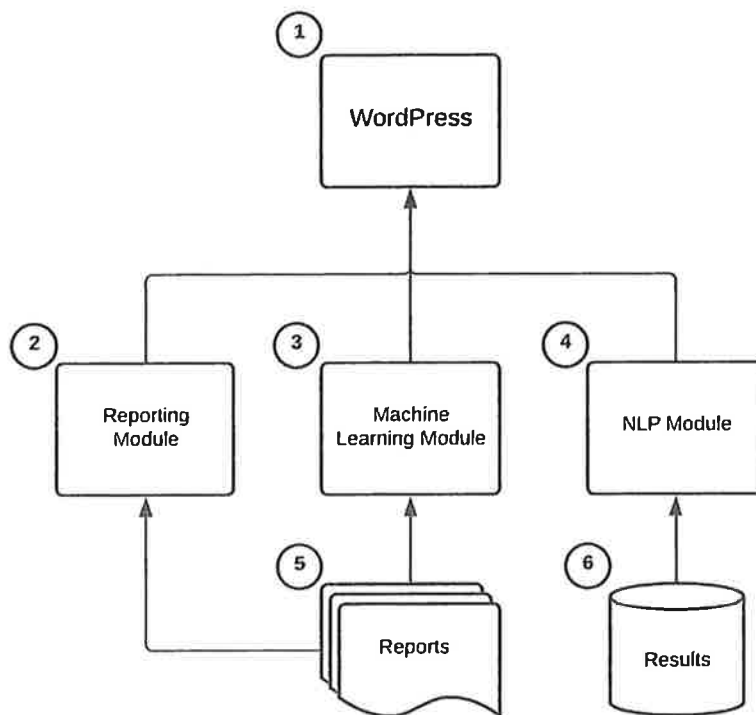
PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Overview
The Mississippi SLDS Website project is dedicated to designing and developing a new, comprehensive, and user-friendly website for the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). This initiative aims to create a centralized platform that enables stakeholders and the public access to information from multiple sources, providing valuable insights.
The primary objectives of this project revolve around four key areas:

- Intuitive Interface: The new SLDS Website will prioritize the creation of a user-friendly interface that enhances ease of navigation and usability.
- Robust Data Visualization: The website will incorporate powerful data visualization capabilities, enabling users to interpret and explore information in a meaningful way.
- Advanced Querying Functionalities: To empower users with enhanced data exploration capabilities, the SLDS Website will include advanced querying functionalities, allowing for flexible and efficient data retrieval.
- Compliance with Standards: Ensuring adherence to relevant standards is a crucial aspect of this project, guaranteeing data security, privacy, and interoperability.

To achieve these objectives, the new SLDS Website will comprise one main component and three secondary modules, collectively working together to provide a comprehensive and integrated user experience. The figure below illustrates the key SLDS Website components.

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WordPress

② Reporting Module ③ Machine Learning Module ④ NLP Module

⑤ Reports ⑥ Results

1. WordPress: Serving as the main component, WordPress will form the foundation of the SLDS Website. It will provide a versatile content management system (CMS) that allows for easy administration, content organization, and customization.
2. Reporting Module: As a secondary module, the reporting module will deliver data to users through a visualization layer that will be embedded within the WordPress framework. This module will enable users to access pre-built reports, generate custom reports, and visualize data in various formats.
3. Machine Learning Module: Another secondary module, the machine learning module will leverage advanced algorithms and techniques to analyze SLDS data and generate insights. This module will facilitate predictive modeling, pattern recognition, and data-driven decision-making.
4. NLP Module: The natural language processing (NLP) module, another secondary component, will improve user interaction with the SLDS Website by enabling query and report access through natural language commands.
5. Reports: The reports will be implemented by NSPARC at a later date and contain the information to be embedded within the Reporting Module and NLP Module
6. Results: The database of results will be implemented by NSPARC at a later date and contain information to link a search query to an actual report.

Please note that secondary modules 2, 3, 4 ,5 and 6 (the Reporting Module, Machine Learning Module, NLP Module, Reports and Results) are listed for informational purposes only and are considered to be beyond the scope of the current project. While these modules hold potential for future development and expansion of the SLDS Website, their implementation and integration are not within the immediate scope of this project.

In addition to the primary objectives of the Mississippi SLDS Website project, NSPARC has outlined secondary objectives that involve the contractor's assistance with project management and requirements gathering for future reports to be accessed through the SLDS Website. NSPARC expects the contractor to actively engage in project management and stakeholder engagement tasks to ensure the overall success of the project. This includes actively involving key stakeholders, eliciting and incorporating their current and future requirements, facilitating effective communication and collaboration, and managing stakeholder expectations.

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Background

The SLDS in Mississippi is used to measure nearly every investment the Mississippi Legislature makes in workforce and economic development. Using longitudinal data to generate information on program outcomes allows for the analysis of trends, patterns, and relationships over time and is a valuable tool for program evaluation and continuous improvement.

Required Experience

To ensure the successful execution of the project, we are seeking a contractor meeting the following experience requirements:

- The contractor must have at least twenty years of experience in website design and implementation. They should have a strong record of creating and implementing websites that are visually appealing, user-friendly, and aligned with industry best practices.
- The contractor must demonstrate extensive experience in marketing and branding campaigns, with a minimum of twenty years of expertise in this field. They should have a proven ability to develop effective strategies that promote brands and products, utilizing both traditional and digital marketing channels.
- The contractor must have demonstrated experience working with higher education and government institutions in Mississippi.
- The contractor must have demonstrated experience with workforce and economic development projects and a comprehensive understanding of workforce trends, talent acquisition strategies, and economic growth initiatives.
- WordPress: The contractor must possess in-depth knowledge and expertise in WordPress, a popular content management system (CMS). They should be well-versed in customizing WordPress websites, managing themes and plugins, and optimizing site performance.
- WP Engine: The contractor must possess experience with WP Engine, a managed hosting platform specifically designed for WordPress. The contractor should have hands-on experience in deploying, managing, and troubleshooting websites on WP Engine. This includes proficiency in utilizing its features, monitoring site performance, and implementing security measures.
- Tableau: Proficiency in embedding reports created with Tableau, a data visualization and business intelligence tool, is essential. The contractor should understand Tableau's embedding capabilities, allowing them to seamlessly integrate Tableau reports into WordPress pages. This includes proficiency in configuring the necessary parameters for data presentation within the WordPress environment.
- PHP: The contractor must possess in-depth knowledge and expertise in PHP, a popular server-side scripting language used for web development. They should be well-versed in PHP programming, including customizing PHP websites, integrating databases, and optimizing code performance.
- MySQL: Proficiency in MySQL, a popular open-source relational database management system, is essential. The contractor should have expertise in designing and implementing MySQL databases, writing efficient SQL queries, and optimizing database performance.

Scope of Work & Deliverables

Project Management and Stakeholder Engagement

1. Project Planning and Management
    1.1. Develop a comprehensive project plan, including timelines, milestones, and deliverables.
    1.2. Coordinate project activities, resources, and budgets to ensure successful project execution.

    1.3. Monitor project progress, identify potential bottlenecks, and take proactive measures to keep the project on track.

    1.4. Provide regular status updates and reports to stakeholders.

2. Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

    2.1. Identify and assess project stakeholders, including internal and external parties.

    2.2. Conduct stakeholder interviews, surveys, or workshops to gather requirements and understand stakeholder expectations.

3. Requirements Gathering for Up to 20 Reports

    3.1. Collaborate with stakeholders to elicit and document project requirements.

    3.2. Conduct workshops or meetings to facilitate discussions and gather additional requirements.

    3.3. Analyze requirements for feasibility, clarity, and alignment with project objectives.

    3.4. Document and validate requirements with stakeholders to ensure accuracy and completeness.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

    4.1. Facilitate effective communication and collaboration between the project team and stakeholders.

    4.2. Organize stakeholder meetings, workshops, or focus groups to gather feedback and address concerns.

    4.3. Seek input from stakeholders on project decisions and share their feedback with the project team.

5. Deliverables

    5.1. Provide comprehensive documentation of stakeholder engagement activities and outcomes.

    5.2. Develop and maintain project plans, including stakeholder management plans and communication plans.

    5.3. Deliver regular reports on stakeholder engagement progress, including summaries of requirements gathered and stakeholder feedback.

    5.4. Assist in the preparation of future project deliverables influenced by stakeholder requirements.

WordPress Website

1. Non-Functional Requirements

    1.1. Create branding assets for the website.

    1.2. Performance: The website should have a maximum response time of 3 seconds for any transaction.

    1.3. Scalability: The website should be able to handle a minimum of 50 concurrent users

    1.4. Security: The website should meet or exceed the standards set by the Mississippi Department of Information Technology (MDITS).

    1.5. Usability: The system should meet the standards set by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, including support for keyboard navigation and compatibility with assistive technologies.

    1.6. Compatibility: The system should be compatible with modern web browsers, including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Microsoft Edge.

    1.7. Maintainability: The system should be developed using a modular approach that enables easy updates and maintenance.

2. Functional Requirements:

    2.1. Implement WP (WordPress site) on WP Engine

        2.1.1.   Site must employ Google Analytics GA4 or above

        2.1.2.   Site must employ a responsive design that allows for the content to be viewable from mobile devices

    2.2. Must perform the requirements gatherings, design, and implementation of the following WP static pages or their equivalent:

        2.2.1.   Home

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       2.2.2.   About

       2.2.3.   Board

       2.2.4.   Reports

             2.2.4.1.   Pre-K to 12th Grade - Placeholder Page

             2.2.4.2.   Community College - Placeholder Page

             2.2.4.3.   Public University - Placeholder Page

2.3. Must perform the requirements gatherings, design, and implementation of the following WP dynamic pages:

       2.3.1.   Requests – Page will implement a web form.

       2.3.2.   NLP Search – Placeholder Page that will interact with the NLP module

       2.3.3.   ML Reports – Placeholder Page that will interact with the ML Module

Environment / Other Requirements

We are seeking a contractor that strikes the right balance between capacity and attention to detail to ensure the successful execution of our project. The chosen contractor should have a demonstrated track record of successfully delivering projects of similar scope and complexity. While we value the resources and capabilities that come with larger firms, we also wish to avoid the potential for our project to be overshadowed by larger-scale endeavors. Therefore, we encourage proposals from contractors who are suitably sized to dedicate the necessary resources and expertise, ensuring our project receives the attention it deserves. We believe that a contractor with the appropriate capacity, focus, and commitment will be best equipped to meet our objectives within the agreed-upon timelines and budget.

Place of Performance

While there are not any restrictions on the place of performance, it is important to note that the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (MDITS) may have specific requirements in this regard. The contractor should comply with any place of performance guidelines set forth by MDITS. Additionally, NSPARC will require the contractor to participate in in-person meetings held at least monthly at its offices in Starkville, MS or Meridian, MS as designated by NSPARC for each meeting. Contractor's key managers and individuals will be expected to attend these meetings in person. The purpose of these meetings is to foster effective communication, collaboration, and project coordination between NSPARC and the contractor.

Period of Performance

The project's scope of work and deliverables must be completed within the agreed timeline, with a firm deadline set for June 30, 2024. The deliverables tied to the WordPress Website must be completed by December 15, 2023.

Acceptance Criteria

Milestones/Deliverables must be submitted for approval into the VMS dotStaff upon completion. Email, hand delivery, postal service submittals are considered incomplete.

Mississippi State University NSPARC will have 10 Mississippi State University working days to review/validate the deliverable and either notify Vendor of acceptance in writing or provide Vendor a detailed list of deficiencies that must be remedied prior to approval of the deliverable. NSPARC reserves the right to take additional time to review submitted deliverables if it is in the best interest of the department to do so.

In the event NSPARC notifies the Vendor of deficiencies, the Vendor shall make necessary corrections within five working days unless NSPARC consents in writing to a longer period of time. NSPARC has 10 working days to review and accept or reject the corrected deliverable. If NSPARC deems the corrected deliverable(s) as not acceptable NSPARC reserves the right to terminate the SOW contract with selected vendor and payment for the unacceptable deliverable(s) will not be authorized. While this procedure allows a Vendor two opportunities to correct deliverable deficiencies,

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NSPARC, at its sole discretion, may choose to allow the Vendor an additional correction cycle if the deficiencies are not substantial or if it is in NSPARC's best interest to do so.

For the faithful performance of the terms of this Statement of Work, the parties hereto have caused this Statement of Work to be executed by their undersigned authorized representatives.

Project Name: NSPARC SLDS Website	Posting ID#: 121281
State Agency: Mississippi State University	Vendor Name: Leading Edges
Estimated Project Start Date: September 2023	Estimated Project Completion Date: December 2023

Deliverable/Services Description	Cost
Milestone 1: Project Plan Development	$25,000.00
Milestone 2: Non-Functional Requirements & Website Design	$23,000.00
Milestone 3: WordPress Website Development & Deployment	$23,000.00
Milestone 4: Stakeholder Identification & Analysis	$23,000.00
Milestone 5: Requirements Gathering for Up to 20 Reports	$23,000.00
Milestone 6: Stakeholder Engagement & Communication	$23,000.00
Total Project Cost	$140,000.00

A change order will be required for any modifications to the project (Including project scope/project cost). The change order must be created by Knowledge Services, based on the approved change order justification received by VENDOR (approved by AGENCY). The change order must be signed by AGENCY, VENDOR, and Knowledge Services prior to the vendor receiving clearance to move forward with the requested changes.

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In the event of any inconsistencies between this Request for Services Work Order (Exhibit A-1) and the terms of the Master Services Agreement, the following order of precedence shall be:
1. Master Services Agreement; and
2. Request for Project Services Work Order (Exhibit A-1)

Until the contract is approved and fully executed, any actions you take in reliance of contract approval are at your own risk. Therefore, it may be unwise to expend funds or incur expenses in anticipation that contract negotiations will be successful, and a tendered contract will be approved.

All project milestones, deliverables, tasks, or other such project activities shall be entered and approved in the dotStaff VMS by the State. Vendor acknowledges and agrees that Knowledge Services' payment to the Vendor is contingent upon approval by the State and receipt of payment from the State by Knowledge Services. The State is solely responsible for approval and payment of all project activities, and Knowledge Services is not responsible or liable to Vendor for non-approval or non-payment by the State.

Agency Name _Mississippi State University_	Vendor Name
Authorized Signature	_Authorized Signature_
Jennifer Mayfield	Tony Pompelia
Printed Name Interim Deputy Director	_Printed Name_
	annou President
Title	_Title_
9.28.23	9/18/2023
Date	_Date_

Guidesoft Inc., d/b/a Knowledge Services - Legal

Katie Belange
Katie Belange (Sep 18, 2023 16:52 EDT)
Authorized Signature

Katie Belange
Printed Name

General Counsel
Title

Sep 18, 2023
Date

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Evaluation Form for Mississippi SLDS Website Request for Project Services

SCORING CRITERIA	Leading Edges	NextRow
I) Quality of Project Plan - 15 Pts Max		
Comments	The project plan touches on all the required elements from the RFP. The respondent made it clear they knew this was for the development of an SLDS web site and not a university site. The plan also gives insight into the approach the contractor will take to complete the work. In addition, they offered an initial time line.	The project plan touches on all the required elements from the RFP. That said, how well the respondent understands the task is not clear as the many aspects are glossed over--branding being a big one. Also, lots of tools or techniques are listed in the narrative, especially in the table spanning pages 17-19, but there is not information that really conveys how the tools will be implemented to accomplish the specified milestones. This seems like a template that wasn't made specific to our RFP. An example of this is on page 32 where the rresponse references the university and how a blog page will have a window on the site being developed. This has absolutely no bearing on the development of an SLDS web site.
Points	14	6

	Leading Edges	NextRow
II) Quality of Staff - 15 Pts Max		
Comments	Resumes were provided for four staff members. The resumes covered branding and marketing, web development and design, graphic design, art direction, communication, and prject management.	Resumes were only provided for two staff members--a project manager and a web developer. No staff information provided for branding or marketing. They also do not note any workforce or economic development project experience. Finally, no Mississippi-specific details are provided.
Points	14	7

	Leading Edges	NextRow
III) Quality of Experience - 20 Pts Max		
Comments	This company notes 23 years of experience and expressly notes experience in Mississippi and specific experience with workforce and economic development. High-end technical expertise is lacking but team does have a broad composition.	This company notes 12 years (give or take as this number changes throughout the response) of experience with related projects. The RFP calls for at least 20 years of experience. No evidence of working in Mississippi is evident in the response, nor is there evidence of working with state or local government entities.
Points	19	8

	Leading Edges	NextRow
IV) Quality of References - 15 Pts Max		
Comments	Three reference letters that provide information on the services provided by the respondent were included in the package. These references included Mississippi higher education and workforce and economic development. They also made it clear the respondent has experience in branding and re-branding and being customer-focused.	References included a self-reference--the author of the response included himself as a reference. Also, there were no letters from references, just contact information.
Points	15	4

	Leading Edges	NextRow
Total Technical Score:	62.33	25.33

V) Cost - 35 Points Max

	Leading Edges	NextRow
Total Contract Cost	$140,000.00	$144,000.00
Low Bid	$140,000.00	
Points	35.00	34.00

Total Score	
Leading Edges	97.33
NextRow	59.33

Conclusion: The Leading Edges proposal is clearly the stronger proposal. It demonstrated a better understanding of the project and touched on all the required experience. Having a Mississippi-based vendor is ideal for the development of a new web site and reporting system for the Mississippi SLDS.