

Solicitation Amendment / Modification

1.	Solicitation No.	090225/ET
2.	Solicitation Name	RFP for EducationUSA Website Redesign
3.	Issue Date	September 2, 2025
4.	Closing Date	October 17, 2025
5.	Solicitation Amendment No.	1
6.	Solicitation Amendment Date	October 7, 2025

7. The above numbered solicitation is amended as set forth in Item 9 below.

8. The hour and dates specified for receipt of proposals/quotations: ☐ is not extended; ☒ is extended as described in Item 9 below.

9. Description of Amendment/Modification:

The purpose of this solicitation amendment is to inform prospective offerors/bidders that the above numbered solicitation is hereby amended to:

- RFP Closing Date is October 17, 2025
- Provide responses to questions as follows:

General

Are you open to a hybrid delivery model with a mix of offshore and onshore resources?	IIE has worked with this model with other vendors in the past.
Is this contract intended to be awarded to a single vendor or to multiple vendors?	Single
As the Information Architecture evolves, if new content or content edits are required, will IIE provide staff to create/edit content or does the vendor need to provide these resources?	Site content will be created and approved by IIE.
Beyond educationusa.org , are there other external sites in scope? Is educationusafairs.org in scope?	No, we will be linking out to other websites such as educationusafairs.org

<p>The RFP notes a desired launch by July 27, 2026. Are there additional milestones we should plan for between discovery, design, development, and testing phases?</p>	<p>IIE expects to work with the vendor in creating a project roadmap for website launch.</p>
<p>Could you provide more details on reporting and meeting frequency? What are your team's expectations for reporting and insights from us? Which tools and platforms are you currently using for reporting? Are these tools meeting your needs?</p>	<p>EducationUSA.state.gov site does have some basic engagement tracking. However, IIE does not have further access to or insight into this, which is why we are seeking proposals for greater data/site traffic reporting on our future state EducationUSA.org site.</p>
<p>Other Users - For Officials and Administration, should the overview of the EducationUSA network be a static one-page description with links and statistics, or are you expecting a dynamic dashboard that pulls live data updates over time? Could you clarify the source of the statistics and data for this section (e.g., will IIE provide datasets like Global Guide, Open Doors, etc., or should the vendor connect to external sources)?</p>	<p>IIE is open to vendor vision for making this page deliverable useful and engaging.</p>
<p>Low-Bandwidth / Mobile Access - The RFP says the site must consider students with limited English skills, mobile-first users, and those with expensive or weak internet. Do you expect advanced solutions like multilingual support and lightweight/offline site modes, or is standard responsive design with accessibility best practices enough?</p>	<p>IIE is open to vendor vision for meeting RFP request.</p>
<p>Timeline and Key Milestones: The RFP indicates a target go-live by July 27, 2026 (in time for the EducationUSA DC Forum) and absolutely no later than September 1, 2026. How fixed is the July 27 date – is it tied to a critical event that cannot slip, or is there some flexibility if unforeseen delays occur (with September 1 as a hard stop)? Understanding how firm that date is will help us build appropriate contingency.</p>	<p>IIE would like to launch the website on July 27th as this lines up with the EducationUSA Forum where hundreds of U.S. education institutions will be gathered. This would also line up with the 250th anniversary of the United States. Due to these two events, we would like to adhere to this date.</p>

Who are the key decision-makers and primary users of the new platform, how will decisions be made, and what governance model (content ownership, approvals, and role split between IIE, sponsors, and external vendors) will be followed after launch?	The IIE team will be the key decision maker. IIE will work with sponsor, REACs and other stakeholders to achieve concurrence on select decisions but IIE will ultimately be the decision maker.
Beyond Higher Education Institutions, international students, and sponsors, are there any secondary audiences we should explicitly consider in the site design?	The website should be designed for our core audience but some secondary audiences to consider are: broader higher education field (high school counselors deans, administrators, etc...), parents, domestic and international government stakeholders
Should page templates, components, and visual designs be created from scratch, or is there interest in reusing/adapting layouts from the current educationusa.state.gov site?	RFP is for an entirely new website. However, IIE will reuse some current EducationUSA.state.gov site text and image content. IIE does not have access to the EducationUSA.state.gov site. EducationUSA has existing brand guidelines, which include color, typeface, logo, and other visual best practices. The new website will build on these rules and complement existing social media and other marketing materials. The new website will incorporate previously created video, audio, photos, and other multimedia assets. IIE is also open to vendor vision for making new website design useful and engaging.
Are there existing project management or collaboration tools (e.g., Jira, MS Teams, SharePoint) that vendors must adopt for deliverables and reporting?	IIE uses both Microsoft and Google Suite programs.
What are the preferred training formats—onsite workshops, remote sessions, or recorded modules?	Planning and execution should occur via regular project calls, but we are open to other possible training formats.
Beyond the mentioned audiences (HEIs, students, officials), what is the long-term strategic vision for the website? Are there future plans to add new functionalities, such as an alumni network or a more robust user community? Understanding the future vision will allow us to propose a	IIE expects an engaging website with dynamic content; lots of analytics; ways to attract/collect U.S. HEI data for enlarged EdUSA global footprint, ...and generally let the entire education world know who we are and want to engage with us.

technology stack that is not only compliant with current requirements but also flexible and scalable for future growth.	
Is there any existing audience/website user research available that might contribute to the success of this project?	IIE is the main POC for selected vendor. IIE already conducted research and will be working closely with the selected vendor based upon our findings.

Tech/Business Systems

Are you open to a hybrid delivery model with a mix of offshore and onshore resources?	IIE has worked with this model with other vendors in the past.
Can IIE provide details on the existing hosting environment, including the platform and provider?	Please refer to RFP. RFP is for an entirely new website. However, vendors may refer to the current EducationUSA.state.gov site to get a sense of our current state and content. IIE does not have access to the EducationUSA.state.gov site.
Hosting Preferences: Does IIE prefer a specific hosting model (e.g., vendor-managed cloud, FedRAMP-certified provider, or hybrid)?	This can be negotiated with selected vendor, but IIE prefers to manage the hosting contract.
Security Certifications: Is it mandatory for vendors to hold ISO 27001 or SOC 2 Type 2 certifications, or will completing the NIST CSF assessment suffice?	Yes. Please see Attachment C of the RFP which is applicable.
Is there a preferred CMS between Drupal and WordPress, or are vendors free to recommend either? Is it a foregone conclusion that the site will be WordPress or Drupal or are you looking for other CMS options or recommendations as part of our response?	Vendors are free to propose the appropriate content management system. However, IIE prefers WordPress or Drupal.
Will the vendor have access to APIs or data feeds for adviser event listings, scholarship	IIE does not anticipate the use of API to transfer data with external system. The only exception

submissions, and HEI data, or is the vendor expected to develop those integrations?	would be the use of OKTA to maintain authentication list.
Please clarify which compliance standards are mandatory versus preferred versus optional (e.g., SOC2, FedRAMP).	FedRAMP preferred but not required. Please see Attachment C of the RFP which is applicable.
Are there additional accessibility standards beyond Section 508/WCAG 2.1 AA that must be followed (e.g., Department of State-specific requirements)?	No.
Is a Content Delivery Network needed	To be determined.
Is a Web Application Firewall (WAF) needed	IIE prefers if this is integrated through the hosting provider
Do you happen to know if you need personalization?	To be determined.
Do you have any prerequisites for data servers to be within a specific geographic area or country?	U.S. company preferred for hosting.
Can you share more details and requirements for the Library Services? What is an example use case?	Open for discussion. Protect data submitted by HEIs.
The RFP references compliance with standards like NIST Cybersecurity Framework, OWASP, and lists various certifications (SOC 1/2/3, FISMA/DIACAP, FedRAMP, PCI, ISO 27001, etc.). Which of these compliance frameworks or certifications are mandatory for the hosting solution and vendor, versus simply preferred or for information? For example, is the system required to operate in a FedRAMP Moderate environment given the federal sponsorship, or is adherence to best practices and possibly providing a SOC 2 report sufficient? For these certifications, is it sufficient if they are held by the hosting infrastructure provider (e.g., cloud service provider), or must the implementing vendor itself also maintain these certifications	Please see Attachment C of the RFP which is applicable.

directly? We want to confirm the minimum-security compliance level expected at go-live.	
What are the expected Service Level Agreements for the site's performance and uptime once live? For instance, is there a target minimum uptime (e.g., 99.9% uptime monthly) and defined response/restoration time for critical outages or incidents? Additionally, are there specific Disaster Recovery requirements such as Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and Recovery Point Objective (RPO) that we should design for? Defining these will help us plan appropriate redundancy, backups, and failover measures.	To be determined.
The RFP specifies Tier III+ facilities with natural disaster protections. Could you confirm if compliance through a leading cloud service provider (which already meets Tier III+/FedRAMP standards) would satisfy this requirement, or if you require vendor-operated physical data center facilities?	Yes, but open for discussion.
The RFP references FedRAMP and OKTA. Does IIE require the entire hosting environment to be FedRAMP certified, or only the identity management component?	FedRAMP certification preferred but not required.
Does IIE require monthly/quarterly security reporting as part of the vendor's support obligations?	Yes, monthly security reporting will be required.
Regarding OKTA FedRAMP integration, will IIE provide the required API documentation and access during the discovery phase, or should vendors propose integration methods?	OKTA FedRAMP not required. IIE will provide the necessary documentation.
For OKTA FedRAMP integration, will IIE provide the necessary API documentation and access during discovery, or is it expected that vendors define and propose the integration approach?	OKTA FedRAMP not required. Selected vendor is tasked with required API for IIE OKTA. IIE will provide the necessary documentation.

Does the hosting solution need to support multi-region failover, or is a single-region failover sufficient?	Depends on what hosting solution vendor provides and can be negotiated with selected vendor. IIE prefers to manage the hosting contract.
Are there specific content governance policies (taxonomy rules, metadata standards, version control) that the vendor should follow?	To be determined since this is a new website. Additional requirements outside the EducationUSA brand guidelines can be discussed with the selected vendor.
Will the new EducationUSA website require an Authority to Operate (ATO)?	The current site does not, so this is open for discussion. There is PII (FN, LN, Email) for HEIs that needs to be protected.
What are IIE's target RTO and RPO thresholds, and incident notification timelines?	To be determined. The new website threshold fits tier 2 Important Business-Critical
What specific federal compliance standards or content guidelines must the new educationusa.org site meet beyond the stated accessibility requirements?	None beyond what has been mentioned.
Are there any restrictions or preferences regarding subcontractors or the geographic location of the development team for this project? For example, does work need to be performed by personnel based in the U.S. (or by U.S. companies) due to the federal funding, or can some development or support be provided from offshore teams as long as security and quality standards are met? Please let us know if there are any compliance or security rules that would impact our staffing approach (such as citizenship requirements or background checks for personnel).	Please see section 3 Qualifications and Capabilities of the RFP which is applicable.
Post-launch, does IIE anticipate a formal "hyper-care" stabilization period beyond the ongoing maintenance contract?	To be determined. It would be good to ensure the new website is stable and functions as expected.
Do you have privacy or data restrictions for using an LLM to train called via an API?	No.

Are there any specific performance or scalability requirements we should design for – for example, expected peak user volumes (concurrent visitors), page load time targets, or the need for a Content Delivery Network to serve a global audience? Understanding any target metrics or usage patterns will help us ensure the solution meets your performance expectations.	The website generally does not have peaks of traffic but is consistent throughout the year.
The RFP mentions a visual workflow engine for content approval with triggers and actions. Could you confirm if a simple role-based approval workflow would meet requirements, or if a full drag-and-drop workflow builder is expected?	This should be a simple role-based approval workflow for the adviser-side updates: adviser > REAC > IIE.
Do you currently use or plan to use a Digital Asset Management (DAM) system that should integrate with the new site?	We currently have access to MediaPort and would like to use it for the website.

Finance

What was the annual spend for the previous year on this Project?	This is a new project.
Budget Guidance: Is there an estimated budget range or ceiling for the entire project, including hosting and maintenance?	RFP requires vendors to submit a detailed budget grid based upon expected project deliverables. Vendors should use their best judgement to determine a realistic budget range for the project.
Should cost proposals cover the full 4-year period or only initial development plus one year of O&M with renewals?	The proposal should be for the delivery of the new website as outlined in the RFP by July 27, 2026. Proposals can include both cost proposals.
Should monthly maintenance be priced as a fixed fee or hourly rate with caps?	Vendor can provide pricing for both, if possible.
You have listed "Potential AI enhancements" in your project scope, is it your preference that we include these in the budget as development	IIE would like AI to be instrumental to the website.

items or are you looking for the site to be built with planning for them in mind only?	
Contract Terms and Compliance: Will the contract resulting from this RFP be based on IIE's standard contractor agreement terms (and if so, are these terms available for review in advance or included in an attachment)? Since this project is funded by a U.S. government sponsor, are there any additional federal contract provisions or flow-down clauses that we should anticipate (for example, adherence to specific USG regulations, reporting requirements, or data ownership clauses)? Understanding any special contractual conditions or required compliance (beyond what's stated in the RFP and the General Terms for Subcontractors) will help us ensure full compliance in our proposal and project execution.	The contract will be in IIE's standard template. IIE's T&Cs and applicable Uniform Guidance and State Department flowdowns are published in this link https://www.iie.org/get-involved/procurement-subaward-and-consultant-opportunities/solicitations-for-goods-and-services/
Can the IIE confirm if the cost proposal is to be included in the same document as the technical proposal or is a separate submission required?	Cost proposal can be included.
Does IIE anticipate this contract being firm fixed or time and materials? Or a hybrid?	The anticipated contract will be Fixed Price.

AI

Should the AI features (greeter, search assistant, prompts) be part of the initial launch, or are they considered a later enhancement?	Desired for full launch by July 27, 2026. Will be internally tested prior to the launch date.
Do you have real-life examples of AI integrations you like or aspire to include on the new IIE website?	Please refer to use cases generally outlined in the RFP. We are open to Vendor recommendations.
Should we assume relatively low usage of the AI Chatbot and Search AI features at first, or do you expect a high volume of queries and usage?	This is entirely new for EducationUSA and we hope that the tools will be highly used/valued by all who visit our pages.

<p>Ai Capabilities Toggle: What are the expectations for the Ai-driven features that “can be toggled on/off” by administrators (the greeter/chatbot, intelligent search suggestions, etc.)? Should these Ai enhancements be included as part of the initial launch, or are they considered exploratory/optional features that could be added later? If they are in scope now, is there a preferred approach or technology (e.g., using a specific Ai platform or existing chatbot service) that we should align with, or should the vendor propose an Ai solution that meets the described needs?</p>	<p>Please refer to use cases generally outlined in the RFP. For example, when we say “can be toggled on/off” for the pop-up website greeter, we mean that, if EducationUSA needs to suppress the feature/prevent it from popping up for any reason in the future, IIE administrators are able to do that on the backend without contacting the Vendor. We would also like the website visitors to be able to 'dismiss'/minimize such pop-ups if they need to during a page visit. The AI-driven features are desired for full launch by July 27, 2026, and should be internally tested prior to that date. We are open to Vendor recommendations.</p>
<p>For the AI assistant, should we scope for a simple search/chatbot trained on site content, or a more advanced conversational tool with multilingual support?</p>	<p>We are open to Vendor recommendations based upon the use cases generally outlined in the RFP and Vendor's subject matter expertise/experience.</p>

User Accounts

<p>Content Creators / Editors - The RFP notes a goal that content creators/editors should not have direct logins, but advisers, REACs, and sponsors are expected to upload and manage content. Could you clarify if these users will actually have individual logins, or if their inputs should instead be handled through external forms with admin approval?</p>	<p>There have been issues with having back-end accounts on the current website. For this reason, IIE would like to avoid having website specific user accounts. IIE would like for Adviser and REAC website content (center address, business hours, etc...) to be updated using an integration method using OKTA. As advisers and REACs already have IIE OKTA logins, they can be verified users and can update the website through this verification. Thus, it is our hope accounts are not needed for advisers or REACs. Accounts are only needed as a fallback option if integration does not work properly. We also expect HEIs to not have accounts as well. We want them to be able to submit their info and updates (school information, scholarships, etc...) through a form that is directly embedded on the website. We can then manually approve the information to update</p>
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	the website. We would need to consider PII. We prefer not to store PII but would still need some PII to help verify HEI updates. We would like vendors to propose solutions for the user accounts challenge.
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Website Testing

The RFP asks the agency to contribute to planning for user testing and focus groups during the Website Design phase. Would it be acceptable to use an agency's own user testing process to iterate upon and refine designs in addition to or as a replacement for this, or is such research limited to Education USA's internal testing process only? Should vendors include user testing/focus groups in the budget, or will IIE manage that directly?	EducationUSA has a vast network of stakeholders. We want to leverage this network to help with testing pre-launch. Specifically, we would like to ensure that we get the perspective of HEIs and advisers. IIE expects to partner with the selected vendor to establish a testing phase for the website. This could include user-testing, surveys, focus groups, panels, etc...
Does IIE expect vendors to conduct user research or usability testing with students, advisers, or HEIs during design, or will stakeholder engagement be handled internally?	IIE has conducted research from all major stakeholder perspectives (except student) that included panels, surveys, questionnaires, etc... IIE would like to partner with vendor to conduct website testing with stakeholders.

Website Design

Student Guidance Filters - For student guidance content (5 Steps to U.S. Study, visa, financial aid, etc.), should the filters (undergraduate, graduate, community college, trade school) be done through simple tagging and navigation, or do you expect separate content pathways for each type?	IIE is open to the vendor's vision for making the user's journey on the "5 Steps to U.S. Study" useful and engaging, whether through tagging, separate content, or another solution.
Multi-Audience User Experience How do you envision helping first-time visitors quickly identify whether they're students, HEI representatives, or network users without overwhelming navigation?	Please refer to RFP. It will be a combination of site design/delivery and possible AI solution. IIE is open to vendor vision for making this new website useful and engaging.

Emergency Communications How important is real-time crisis communication capability for urgent updates across your global network?	Refer to RFP regarding 24x7 x 365 days a year <u>technical</u> support preferably by telephone, email, chat or finally trackable ticketing to IIE staff.
What social media integrations are in scope for July or post July 2026?	Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Proposals may consider other popular social media platforms that could be integrated after site rollout.
Beyond current site content, are there new multimedia assets (video, audio, interactive tools, stories) that you plan to provide, or should we anticipate developing some of these with you?	The new website will incorporate previously created video, audio, photos, and other multimedia assets.
Are there existing brand guidelines that must be strictly followed, or is there flexibility for visual refresh?	EducationUSA has existing brand guidelines, which include color, typeface, logo, and other visual best practices. The new website will build on these rules and complement existing social media and other marketing materials.
Regarding the interactive maps for both world and U.S.: Is the expectation to build custom interactive maps on the website with clickable regions showing data or to embed existing maps? Could you please provide examples of your expectation for the maps?	Vendor proposals should contain feasible ideas for the development, design, and maintenance of a map that meets the specifications listed in the RFP. This may include clickable regions with data and other multimedia assets.

Migration

Current Site Platform and Access: What is the current platform/CMS used for the existing EducationUSA website at educationusa.state.gov? Will the project involve a content migration from that site to the new one, and if so, can IIE provide any direct exports of content (such as a database dump, XML export, or CSV of content), or will the migration need to be done manually due to limited back-end access? The RFP notes we may not have full access to the current site's back-end, so we want to understand how we can retrieve all the	RFP is for an entirely new website. However, vendors may refer to the current EducationUSA.state.gov site to get a sense of the current website's state and content. IIE does not have access to the EducationUSA.state.gov site. We are looking at a mix of manually importing content and creating brand new content for the new website.
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existing content (pages, documents, media, etc.) for reuse on the new site.	
What content would be programmatically migrated vs manually authored because the content itself is being repositioned or rethought? For example, advising centers and scholarships might be programmatically migrated, while the evergreen content may need to be rethought for a more engaging experience.	IIE more than likely will not have access to the back end of the current website. For website content, this might be moved manually or new content created. Most content that is on the current website will be retained but IIE is in the process of doing an inventory of current content.
Should the new site integrate directly with the current State Department database of advising centers, or will this be managed separately?	The new website needs to display information that is on the current website such as: current events, advising center information, and scholarships. Since it is more than likely we will not have access to the backend of the current website, IIE will work with our network to gather the most up-to-date information. We can also manually move over information from the previous website.

Integration

Global Content Management With 430+ centers contributing content globally, what's your preferred approach for content approval workflows and center integration?	IIE would like a centralized, easy-to-use dashboard for content approval from selected users. Vendors are welcome to propose a solution that limits approval processing while still maintaining content quality.
Third-Party Integration: Are there specific third-party systems (besides MailChimp and OKTA) that the new site must integrate with?	IIE looks to incorporate third-party systems into its new website. The website will integrate social media, digital marketing, and other components of EducationUSA's online footprint. Examples of third-party integration may include: data analytics plug-ins, social media account feeds, digital marketing platforms, or content management systems. IIE expects the website to allow for current and future third-party plugins according to future business needs.

For Mailchimp and other email marketing integrations, should vendors assume existing connectors will be reused, or is a custom integration expected?	Currently we do not have access to existing connectors. We do have backend access to Mailchimp.
To what extent should integrations (e.g., adviser forms, CRM, email tools) be automated vs. manually managed by IIE staff?	IIE expects that integration should be as automated as possible, taking approvals and other possible issues into account.

Translation

Language Support for Non-English Users: The RFP mentions including translation services for non-native English speakers as part of accessibility. Is the expectation that the site will be fully multilingual (with content available in other languages such as Spanish, French, etc.), or is this more about providing tools like a Google Translate widget or ensuring the site is translatable and written in plain language? If multilingual content is required, which languages are a priority and will translations be supplied by IIE/EducationUSA? Understanding this will help us plan the CMS structure and any integration needed for translation or localization.	IIE expects student facing pages (5 steps, U.S. info, events, scholarships) to be translated. IIE currently has an internal translating program that we would like to integrate.
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Proposal

Evaluation Presentations: Will shortlisted vendors be required to present live demos or prototypes during the October 27–31 presentation window?	Yes, we may request that.
Can IIE extend to us the option of providing references for similar experiences from last five years instead of three.	No.

Proposal Attachments: Can CVs and references be submitted as separate attachments outside the 30-page limit?	Yes, as indicated in RFP.
The RFP specifies using the table listed in Section 3 for Past Performance & Experience. This will be very hard to format and stay within the page length outlined in the evaluation criteria. Can a different format be used or extra material be placed in an Appendix?	Yes
If bidders propose alternative ideas or exceptions (as noted in Section 3), is there a preferred place in the proposal to present them?	No. There is no placement requirement as long as the 30-page maximum is met.
May offerors reformat the table for improved readability or to better align with their proposal layout—provided all requested information is included?	Yes
Will the selected vendor have any responsibility for maintaining the existing .gov website before the rebuilt website is launched?	No. Aside from ensuring redirect and other possible migration, selected vendor will not help maintain the previous website.
Section 3 mentions “Basic Information, one page,” while Section 5 allocates two pages for Company Information. Could you confirm whether one or two pages are acceptable for Company Information?	Two pages
Can attachments (letters of recommendation, certificates, etc.) use their original formatting and fonts, or must they conform to the proposal’s formatting style?	Yes, they can use original formatting.

END OF AMENDMENT