

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII NOTICE OF EXEMPTION CHAPTER 103D, HRS

The President, University of Hawaii, is in the process of reviewing the request from
Office of Admissions, University of Hawaii at Hilo (Department/Campus)

for exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, for the following goods and services:

The University of Hawaii at Hilo is seeking to build a digital marketing campaign to build awareness and increase enrollment by promoting the benefits of attending UH Hilo to prospective students. This campaign will have push and pull components (i.e. Google and Meta) and be collaborative in nature, including custom audience and segment definitions, competitor identification, and content.

Vendor: Advance 360 Education
(If known)

Address:

1 World Trade Center
New York, NY 10007

Term of Contract:
(If known)

From:

To:

Cost:

120,000.00

Direct any inquiries to:

Department: University of Hawaii at Hilo Office of Admissions

Contact Name/Title: Annie Nakatsu, Fiscal Specialist

Address: 200 W. Kawili Street
Hilo, Hawaii 76720

Phone Number:
808-932-7336

Fax Number:
808-932-7797

Date Posted: April 30, 2024

Submit written objections to this notice to issue an exemption from Chapter 103D, HRS, within seven (7) calendar days from the date posted to:

Office of Procurement Management
1400 Lower Campus Road, Room 15
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96822
email: OPM@hawaii.edu

REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION FROM CHAPTER 103D, HRS

TO: OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT

FROM: UH HILO ADMISSIONS

(Department/Program)

Pursuant to APM Section A8.220, the Department requests a procurement exemption to purchase the following:

Description of goods, services, or construction:

The University of Hawaii at Hilo is seeking to build a digital marketing campaign to build awareness and increase enrollment by promoting the benefits of attending UH Hilo to prospective students. This campaign will have push and pull components (i.e. Google and Meta) and be collaborative in nature, including custom audience and segment definitions, competitor identification, and content. Strategic adjustments will be necessary to meet performance targets. The vendor is expected to advertise for a one-year period targeting individuals ages 18-24 year old, parents and guardians, and non-traditional students between the ages 35-64 that are Hawaii residents, mainland residents, and international prospective students interested in pursuing undergraduate degrees and certificates offered at UH Hilo.

Estimated Cost: \$ 120,000

(1) Explanation describing how procurement by standard competitive means is either not practicable or not advantageous to the University;

SEE ATTACHED

(2) Details of the process or procedures to be followed in selecting the vendor to ensure as fair and open competition as practicable;

SEE ATTACHED

(3) A description of the Department's internal controls and approval requirements for the exempted procurement; and

The vendor will provide access to a reporting dashboard and/or analytical reports and UH Hilo Admissions meet with the vendor on a monthly basis to discuss progress. This allows key personnel to monitor, manage, and oversee all aspects of the digital media campaign and ensure University goals are met with the most effective digital marketing. UH Hilo will also have the opportunity to continually optimize the strategy based upon vendor performance.

(4) A list of Department personnel, by position title, who will be involved in the approval process and administration of the contract:

Katherine McGinnis, Director of Admissions
Sherrie Padilla, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Enrollment Services Manager/Director of Financial Aid.
Chris Holland, Interim Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs
Annie Nakatsu, Fiscal Specialist

Direct questions to: Annie Nakatsu Phone: 808-932-7336

I CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, TRUE AND CORRECT.

Sherrie Padilla
Full Name of Principal Investigator, Department Head, or Administrator

Sherrie K Padilla Digitally signed by Sherrie K Padilla
Date: 2024.03.25 16:26:15 -10'00'
Signature Date

Chelsey Grant
Full Name of Fiscal Administrator

Chelsey Grant Digitally signed by Chelsey Grant
DN: cn=Chelsey Grant, o=UH Hilo, ou=VCSA Office,
email=cnshok@hawaii.edu, c=US
Date: 2024.04.23 13:47:07 -10'00'
Signature Date

APPROVED:

Bonnie Irwin
Full Name of Vice President or Chancellor

Bonnie D Irwin Digitally signed by Bonnie D Irwin
Date: 2024.03.27 17:08:09 -10'00'
Signature Date

FOR OPM USE ONLY

OPM COMMENTS:

APPROVED DENIED

David Lassner Digitally signed by David Lassner
Date: 2024.05.23 12:51:17 -10'00'

5/23/24

1. Explanation describing how procurement by standard competitive means is either not practicable or not advantageous to the University:

We are seeking a vendor who can provide UH Hilo a comprehensive digital marketing plan. The COVID-19 pandemic created a change where social media platforms and website search engines experienced an increase in traffic because people turned to virtual options to research and connect with higher education institutions. This holds true today. With the loss of UH Hilo's EAB contract in July 2023, we have not had any type of digital marketing service that helps to drive enrollment growth, enhance institutional effectiveness, and ultimately fulfill the university's mission to deliver quality education to students. We need a comprehensive digital marketing campaign to help us increase UH Hilo enrollment by 1) building upon a previous digital campaign with EAB, 2) improving UH Hilo's website search engine optimization (SEO), 3) promoting UH Hilo brand awareness, and 4) increasing student applications from target markets, resulting in higher enrollments. We have identified several potential digital platforms that have the most effective means for reaching our target audience and their influences, those are: PaidSearch, MetaSocial (Facebook and Instagram), LayeredDisplay, and YouTube TrueView.

A Superquote and IFB is not practical and advantageous to our needs because we are asking the experts in this field to help us develop a comprehensive digital marketing strategy to meet the defined audience demographics: prospective students, students who have inquired, and students who have applied to UH Hilo, ages 18-24 years old and 35-64 years old, to move them through the funnel. The vendor will need to perform the following three duties which work hand in hand in the strategy - build the creative that resonates with the audience considering the platform, deploy the creative so as to maximize marketing reach, and then adjust the creative and/or deployment in order to meet agreed upon targets.

Since we are not experts in this field, getting the right mix of these three duties right to meet the agreed upon targets is extremely difficult. Splitting these duties across vendors is very complex and will result in missed opportunities for UH Hilo. We want a vendor who will help us develop a smart, effective, and efficient marketing campaign strategy, perform the three duties noted above, analyze the results, and then meet with us monthly to discuss what works best for UH Hilo. With that being said, the ideal vendor will meet the following criteria:

1. A vendor that has affiliations with various media outlets and information websites to push UH Hilo content directly, through display/video, social, search engine marketing, and organic search engine optimization.

2. A vendor that focuses on education vs. an education company that dabbles in digital marketing or a company that does specialize in the education industry.
3. A vendor that stays on top of a rapidly growing, fast paced digital marketing industry to provide its clients additional insights and new techniques.
4. A vendor that has access to and uses first party data from various content publishers, plus cookies from the world's largest data providers (for example, Google and Facebook) to optimize results and target prospective students who recently visited a competitor website.
5. A vendor that is able to create video ads that can be pushed to targeted students via mobile, desktop, and tablets, with the results being tracked with Google Analytics, established KPIs and goal conversions, Google Tag Manager, pixels, call tracking, UTM codes, and tags.
6. A vendor that can set up ad campaigns on Google and Bing, using data algorithms to analyze trends and optimize the approach, delivering quality prospective students to a custom landing page (conversion) or directly to UH Hilo's application.

2. Details of the process or procedures to be followed in selecting the vendor to ensure fair and open competition as practicable:

Research was conducted to determine the best-fit digital marketing agency that has the unique set of capabilities and resources to ensure the University effectively and efficiently achieves enrollment objectives, while experiencing a positive return on investment (ROI).

In today's digital age, the University faces intense competition for student enrollment. Understanding the target audience—the prospective students—is paramount. Advance Local, Advance 360 Education's parent company, includes a portfolio of 12 world class digital online news and information publications reaching 45 million people directly every month. By harnessing the proprietary data that comes with this massive U.S. reach, respected third-party data providers and Advance 360 Education's technology platforms, this agency can delve deep into demographics, behaviors, and preferences of potential students. This allows for the creation of highly targeted and personalized marketing campaigns that resonate with our intended audience. University of Hawai'i at Hilo is expected to better allocate resources and efforts toward the segments most likely to yield enrollment, thereby maximizing ROI.

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo must harness the power of data to achieve impactful results. Access to and expertise in leveraging unique data sets for digital campaign targeting will allow for navigating a privacy-complaint evolution in the digital marketing landscape while maximizing our investment.

In addition to unique data sets, approach to data insights, and market intelligence, Advance 360 Education offers deep experience and a comprehensive set of marketing services desired by the University, which also include:

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

The agency's branding experience, including their market intelligence approach, will empower UH Hilo to make data-informed marketing decisions. We expect our institution's brand will be elevated through a compelling narrative and enhanced brand visibility, standing out in a crowded marketplace.

MARKETING STRATEGY AND PLANNING

We will collaborate with seasoned, certified digital strategists developing customized marketing plans, incorporating comprehensive research, competitor analysis, and audience segmentation for maximum impact and ROI.

DIGITAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT

With expertise in all digital channels, Advance 360 Education's data-informed, multi-channel digital marketing solutions are designed to stimulate engagement, delivering efficient and tangible results in today's digital-centric higher education landscape.

Advance 360 Education holds the principles of transparency and trust which is necessary when navigating the complexities of the higher education landscape. Advance 360 Education can leverage proprietary data, technology, and a unique approach to establish data-informed marketing and leverage a comprehensive set of marketing services. Based upon review by the UH Hilo Admissions Director, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Manager, and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs have determined that Advance 360 Education would best be able to provide the unique services required, making Advance 360 Education our vendor selection.