



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**COURSE MATERIALS VENDOR**

Sandburg / 2400 Tom L. Wilson Blvd. / Galesburg, IL 61401  
[sandburg.edu](http://sandburg.edu)

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# I. PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

## A. Sandburg background

Carl Sandburg College is dedicated to serving the educational needs of western and central Illinois. With the fourth largest community college district in square miles, the college has served all or part of a 10-county area for more than 55 years. Students planning to transfer to a four-year university or enter the skilled workforce can select one of more than 40 programs the college offers. The college had more than 1,600 full- or part-time students enrolled for the 2024-2025 academic year. The main campus, located in Galesburg, IL, has an additional location in downtown Galesburg and a branch campus in Carthage, IL.

### Mission

To provide all students with opportunities for success.

### Vision

Where dreams come to life and lives come to change.

## B. Objectives

Sandburg is soliciting proposals from qualified course materials vendors to provide comprehensive textbook and online course material management services for all aspects of course material adoption, purchase and delivery to students for the fall 2026 semester and onward.

### Primary objectives

- Provide affordable, accessible course materials to all students.
- Streamline the course material adoption and ordering process for faculty.
- Integrate seamlessly with existing college systems and technologies.
- Ensure secure transactions and data protection.
- Deliver exceptional customer service to students, faculty and staff.
- Provide flexible purchasing and rental options for students.
- Maximize cost savings and potential revenue/commission for the college.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Sandburg will launch a college-managed spirit shop on campus for Sandburg-branded merchandise, spirit wear and general supplies in fall 2026. The selected course materials vendor will operate remotely and will **not** have a physical presence on campus. All course materials will be delivered directly to students or available for digital access. The vendor is not expected to provide onsite retail services.

## C. Scope of services

### Vendor operating model

Sandburg seeks a remote course materials vendor model with the following characteristics:

- ☐ No physical vendor presence or staffing on campus
- ☐ All transactions processed online through vendor's e-commerce platform
- ☐ Direct-to-student delivery of physical materials
- ☐ Digital materials accessible through vendor's platform or **LMS INTEGRATION**
- ☐ Remote customer service and support
- ☐ Buyback and rental return processes managed through mail/shipping
- ☐ Coordination with college staff conducted virtually
- ☐ Note: the college will operate a separate spirit shop for **SANDBURG-BRANDED MERCHANDISE, APPAREL AND GENERAL SUPPLIES. THE COURSE MATERIALS VENDOR WILL FOCUS EXCLUSIVELY ON TEXTBOOKS, COURSE MATERIALS AND RELATED ACADEMIC RESOURCES.**

### Course material management

The vendor will provide comprehensive services including:

#### **COURSE MATERIAL ADOPTION PROCESS**

- Provide streamlined adoption system for faculty.
- Accommodate late adoptions by faculty.
- Offer adoption deadline reminders and tracking.
- Provide tools for faculty to compare material options and pricing.
- Support multiple format options (print, digital, rental, purchase).

#### **INVENTORY MANAGEMENT**

- Describe inventory management approach for remote operations.
- Note: Sandburg does not currently maintain course materials inventory; vendor will manage all course material fulfillment.

### Student purchasing and delivery

The vendor will describe in detail:

#### **PURCHASE PROCESS**

- How students will access and purchase course materials
- Multiple purchase options (new, used, rental, digital)
- How competitive pricing is ensured
- Price comparison tools available to students

#### **DELIVERY OPTIONS**

- Shipping details and options for direct delivery to students
- Estimated delivery timeframes (standard and expedited)
- Digital delivery for online materials

- Shipping costs and free shipping thresholds
- Process for students to track orders
- Process and timelines for returns (incorrect items, dropped courses)

#### **TRANSACTION PROCESSING**

- Financial aid integration and processing
- Scholarship transaction handling
- Credit card transactions and security measures, including evidence of PCI DSS compliance and SOC 1/2 certification
- Alternative payment options (if available)

#### **RETURNS AND REFUNDS**

- Return policy and procedures
- Refund processing timelines
- Buyback program details
- Rental return procedures
- Process for textbook reimbursement for students receiving tuition refunds

### **Pricing models and financial arrangements**

The vendor will provide comprehensive information on:

#### **PRICING STRUCTURE**

- Detailed explanation of pricing model(s) offered
- How pricing compares to market rates
- Markup percentages on materials
- Discount structures for various material types

#### **INCLUSIVE ACCESS PROGRAMS (IF APPLICABLE)**

- Description of inclusive access model
- How students are charged for inclusive access materials
- Opt-out procedures and timelines
- Cost savings compared to traditional purchasing

#### **EQUITABLE ACCESS PROGRAMS (IF APPLICABLE)**

- Description of equitable access model
- Implementation process and requirements
- Pricing structure for equitable access programs
- Benefits to students and the college

#### **COMMISSION AND REVENUE SHARING**

- Detailed description of any commission structure
- Percentage of revenue returned to the college
- Frequency of commission payments
- Reporting on sales and commission calculations

## **FEES AND COSTS**

- All fees charged directly to the college
- Any student fees beyond material costs
- Setup fees, annual fees or maintenance fees
- Costs for additional services

## **Technology integration and systems**

The vendor must provide detailed information on technology integration capabilities:

### **LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) INTEGRATION**

- Integration capabilities with LMS
- Process for linking course materials to courses in the LMS
- Single sign-on (SSO) capabilities with Microsoft Entra
- Grade passback functionality for digital materials
- API documentation and integration support

### **STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM INTEGRATION**

- Integration capabilities with Ellucian Colleague
- Student enrollment data synchronization
- Course schedule integration
- Financial aid integration
- Data exchange protocols and frequency

### **E-COMMERCE PLATFORM**

- Description of online ordering platform
- Mobile accessibility and responsive design
- User experience and interface
- Shopping cart functionality
- Wishlist and comparison tools

### **REPORTING AND ANALYTICS**

- Available reports for faculty, bookstore staff and administrators
- Real-time data availability
- Custom report creation capabilities
- Adoption rate tracking
- Financial reporting

### **WEBSITE INTEGRATION**

- How vendor website links to Sandburg bookstore website
- Branding and customization options
- Content management capabilities

## Cybersecurity and data protection

The vendor must provide comprehensive information on security measures:

### DATA SECURITY STANDARDS

- Compliance with PCI DSS for payment processing
- FERPA compliance and student data protection
- SOC 2 certification status
- Other relevant security certifications

### SECURITY MEASURES

- Encryption standards for data in transit and at rest
- Multifactor authentication capabilities
- Firewall and intrusion detection systems
- Regular security audits and penetration testing
- Incident response procedures

### DATA PRIVACY

- Data privacy policy
- How student data is used and protected
- Data retention and deletion policies
- Third-party data sharing practices
- GDPR compliance (if applicable)

### BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- Disaster recovery plan
- System backup procedures and frequency
- Redundancy and failover capabilities
- Service level agreements (SLA) for uptime

## Customer service and support

The vendor will describe:

### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Customer service channels (phone, email, chat, in-person) and hours for each
- Average response times
- Multi-lingual support capabilities
- Self-service tools and FAQs

### FACULTY SUPPORT

- Dedicated support for faculty adoption process
- Training and resources for faculty
- Faculty support contact methods and hours

### COLLEGE STAFF SUPPORT

- Dedicated account representative
- Technical support for system integrations

### **REMOTE SUPPORT AND CAMPUS COORDINATION**

- ☐ Virtual support availability during peak periods (start of semester, finals)
- ☐ Process for managing buyback and rental returns without onsite presence
- ☐ Virtual training sessions for staff and faculty
- ☐ Coordination with college staff for any necessary campus-related activities
- ☐ Prepaid shipping labels for returns and buybacks

## **Special populations and programs**

The vendor will describe:

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

- Accessible formats for students with disabilities
- ADA compliance of digital platforms
- Alternative format procurement process
- Note: Vendor must ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504, demonstrated by meeting WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards as defined by the current published version and any future updates.

### **DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS**

- Note: Given the remote vendor model, **all** students (on-campus and online) will use the same ordering and delivery processes. Describe how your platform serves both populations effectively.

## **Implementation and onboarding**

The vendor will provide:

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

- Detailed timeline for implementation
- Key milestones and deliverables
- Resource requirements from the college
- Testing and quality assurance procedures

### **TRAINING PROGRAM**

- Training schedule and format
- Training materials provided
- Ongoing training and professional development
- Training for new staff members

### **TRANSITION SUPPORT**

- Data migration from current system
- Parallel operations period (if needed)
- Communication plan and messaging for students and faculty



## **Additional information**

The vendor will provide:

### **COMPANY INFORMATION**

- Ownership structure and history
- Years in business
- Experience with community colleges
- Number and location of client institutions

### **REFERENCES**

- Minimum of three references from current community college customers with similar requirements
- Contact name, phone and email for each reference
- Description of services provided to each reference

### **FINANCIAL STABILITY**

- Evidence of financial stability (most recent annual report or audited financial statements)
- Certificate of insurance
- Overview of billing and reconciliation process

### **CONTRACT AND BILLING**

- Sample contract
- Sample billing statement
- Payment terms and schedules

### **OTHER SERVICES**

- Other academic-related products and services offered
- Technology products that support student learning (if applicable)
- Additional discount programs for students
- General merchandise offerings
- Additional discount programs

## II. RFP SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The following schedule outlines key dates and deadlines for this RFP process:

**Issue request for proposal (RFP)**

Nov. 21, 2025

**Proposal submittals due**

Dec. 12, 2025 @ 3 p.m. CT

**Proposal evaluation period**

Dec. 15-19, 2025

**Finalist presentations**

Jan. 12-14, 2026

**Board of Trustees meeting for approval**

Jan. 22, 2026

**Award RFP to selected vendor**

Jan. 23, 2026

**Contract negotiations**

Jan. 26-Feb. 20, 2026

**Implementation period**

Feb. 23-Mar. 23, 2026

**SCHEDULE NOTES**

*The above dates are subject to change at the discretion of Sandburg. Respondents selected for final evaluation will be required to present their proposals and demonstrate components of their program to Sandburg personnel via webinar or in-person presentation.*

## III. SELECTION CRITERIA

Sandburg is seeking to partner with a vendor who meets the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience providing course materials management to community colleges and/or universities
- Strong technology integration capabilities with Ellucian Colleague and Moodle
- Comprehensive cybersecurity measures and data protection policies
- Competitive pricing models and favorable commission structure
- Excellent customer service track record
- Financial stability and business continuity planning
- Ability to support inclusive access and equitable access programs
- Strong references from similar institutions

### Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following weighted criteria:

1. Qualifications and experience of the vendor (20%)
2. Technology integration capabilities (20%)
3. Cybersecurity and data protection measures (15%)

4. Pricing model and financial arrangements (15%)
5. Customer service model and support capabilities (15%)
6. Implementation plan and timeline (10%)
7. References and past performance (5%)

Proposals will be evaluated to select the vendor whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the college, taking into consideration all evaluation criteria. This RFP identifies the minimum requirements of the project. Prospective vendors are encouraged to submit proposals that both leverage the vendor's successful prior experiences with similar projects at other community colleges and align with the strategic priorities of Sandburg.

## IV. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals will be received by Sandburg for the course materials vendor project, pursuant to specifications.

### A. Receipt of proposals

Vendors will submit proposals for the course materials vendor project before 3 p.m. CT, Dec. 12, 2025, one of the following ways:

#### Email (Preferred)

Send PDF of proposal to [RFP@sandburg.edu](mailto:RFP@sandburg.edu), cc'ing [anscott@sandburg.edu](mailto:anscott@sandburg.edu)

#### Mail

Carl Sandburg College  
Attention: Leslie Anderson, CFO  
2400 Tom L. Wilson Blvd.  
Galesburg, IL 61401

Proposals will be held good and not withdrawn for 90 calendar days from the due date.

#### Direct all correspondence and questions to:

Autumn Scott ([anscott@sandburg.edu](mailto:anscott@sandburg.edu) / 309.341.5422)  
Vice President of Student Development  
Carl Sandburg College  
2400 Tom L. Wilson Blvd.  
Galesburg, IL 61401

Proposals are held good and not withdrawn for 90 calendar days from the due date. Sandburg reserves the right to waive any irregularities and to accept any or reject all proposals when, in the opinion of Sandburg, such action will serve the college's best interest.

### B. Additional requirements

#### Tax exemption

The college is exempt from paying Illinois Use Tax, Illinois Retailers Occupation Tax, Federal Excise Tax and Municipal Retailer's Occupation Tax (Tax Exemption ID # E9995-5253-06).

**BUSINESS ENTERPRISE FOR MINORITIES, FEMALES AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The college recognizes the importance of increasing the participation of businesses owned by minorities, females and persons with disabilities in public contracts. It's the policy of the college to promote the economic development of disadvantaged business enterprises by setting aspirational goals to award contracts to businesses owned by minorities, females and persons with disabilities.

**CERTIFICATION FORM**

Vendors must sign a certification form certifying that they've not been barred from bidding as a result of a conviction for bid-rigging or bid-rotating under the Criminal Code of 1961, and that they have a written sexual harassment policy in place in full compliance with Section 2-105 of the Illinois Human Rights Act. The signed certification must be submitted with the proposal.

**INCURRED COSTS**

Sandburg will not be liable in any way for any costs incurred by respondents in replying to this RFP.

**LAW GOVERNING**

Any contract resulting from this RFP will be governed by and construed according to the laws of the state of Illinois, without regard to conflict of law principles.