Request for Information #25-56793

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Title: ORISE Virtual Community Engagement Platform

Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU), in support of the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) DOE prime contract #DE-SC0014664, plans to purchase a virtual Community Engagement Platform product to aid creating an exclusive community of current and alumni ORISE participants, mentors, and STEM professionals to facilitate and encourage connection, collaboration, mentoring, professional development, and engagement across disciplines and academic levels. This secure platform will foster communication, serve as a valuable informational resource, encourage further education and career advancement in scientific and technical disciplines, and support a highly qualified STEM research workforce pipeline. A more comprehensive overview of the program and objectives is located in Attachment 1 – Statement of Objectives, which includes *mandatory* product requirements.

Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is for ORAU to seek information about capabilities and solutions that currently exist and to be better informed about solutions readily available in the commercial marketplace specifically for a virtual community engagement platform or *similar* product. ORAU/ORISE is interested in commercial providers that are established and have experience in providing the required product (via software tool or solution(s)). This includes experience in working with federal agencies and prime contractors. ORAU/ORISE is seeking a product solution for a five-year period of performance, with complete implementation (*if required*) projected to be completed **no later than October 1, 2025.**

Response

Respondents are invited to provide information on the following:
1. Company Name/Point of Contact
2. Socioeconomic Status and SAM UEID # (if applicable)
3. Identification of any Government-wide acquisition contract(s) (such as GSA, NASA SEWP, ICPT, SCMC, etc.)
4. Capabilities Statement or brief overview of product(s) offered to meet the objectives and requirements identified in Attachment 1, to include:
   a. How your company solution(s)/tool(s) differentiate yourselves from competitors; specifically, if your product(s) also provide capabilities to host virtual events (*reference Feature F – 120 in Attachment 1*)
   b. Integration capabilities
   c. Compliance with (federal) industry standards and regulations (i.e. FEDRamp, NIST, Authority to Operate, ISO 27001 compliance, FIPS Pub 201-2, 508, etc.)
   d. Customization options
   e. Customer Support & Training Services
   f. Experience or past-performance examples working with federal agencies and/or prime contractors as well as providing a product or products that meet the objectives and requirements in Attachment 1

5. Confirmation of ability to meet all "must-have" requirements identified in Attachment 1 *or* any exceptions to these requirements. *Exceptions will be considered and does not eliminate a respondent from receiving any resulting solicitation.*

6. Demonstration of the solution(s) functionalities within 60 days from the issuance of this RFI. *Slots for demo will be requested and agreed after receiving the RFI responses.*

Responses must be submitted electronically to the ORISE Procurement Manager no later than **Tuesday, July 15, 2025.**

Questions

Questions related to this RFI may be submitted electronically to the ORISE Procurement Manager no later than **Tuesday, July 8, 2025.**

This RFI does not constitute a request for quote or proposal and is not to be construed as a commitment by ORAU. ORAU will review all responses received. If ORAU decides to issue a solicitation for commodities or services, ORAU General Terms and Conditions and additional federal acquisition regulations will apply to any resulting award. ORAU will not make an award based on responses to this RFI, and ORAU will not reimburse subcontractors for any costs related to providing the information requested.

Attachment 1- Statement of Objectives

Background

ORAU provides innovative scientific and technical solutions to advance national priorities in science, education, security, and health. Through specialized teams of experts, unique laboratory capabilities, and access to a consortium of more than 100 major Ph.D.-granting institutions, ORAU works with federal, state, local, and commercial customers to advance national priorities and serve the public interest. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and federal contractor, ORAU manages the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Learn more about ORAU at www.orau.org and about ORISE at https://orise.orau.gov.

ORISE, a DOE asset, is dedicated to enabling critical scientific, research, and health initiatives of the department and its laboratory system by providing world-class expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) workforce development, scientific and technical reviews, and evaluation of radiation exposure and environmental contamination. Focusing on the core mission to recruit and prepare the next generation of the nation's scientific workforce for DOE, its national laboratory system, and for non-DOE entities through the Strategic Partnership Projects program, ORISE-managed STEM internship and fellowship training programs are key to enabling America's scientific competitiveness. These partnerships enhance collaboration between DOE mentors and facilities, other federal agencies, the academic community, and industry; strengthen the scientific and technical workforce pipeline; and support the national commitment to research and science education.

More specifically, ORISE Research Participation Programs (RPP) provide opportunities for college and graduate school students, recent postgraduates (master, bachelor, and associate degree recipients), and faculty members to participate in and learn from a STEM research or technical program, project, or activity at DOE, its national laboratories, and other partnering federal agencies.

Purpose

The ORISE RPP is responsible for assisting DOE in developing and maintaining a robust supply of highly qualified, diverse, interested, engaged, and eligible candidates for the STEM research workforce pipeline by connecting them to learning-based internship and fellowship opportunities across the nation at the lowest cost possible. To support this requirement, ORISE requires a **virtual community engagement platform** to aid RPP in locating, attracting, and informing this diverse pool of qualified candidates.

A purposeful virtual engagement platform will enhance the value of the ORISE experience and foster a robust alumni network by connecting current participants with each other, with former participants as resources and mentors, and with ORISE staff and Federal Agency mentors for ongoing, meaningful interactions and opportunities for community collaboration, professional networking and mentoring.

Networking and building connections with other scientists are imperative to progressing the ORISE mission in developing collaborative efforts that enhance STEM research and workforce. Given the high volume of ORISE participants, mentors and alumni, providing a tool that allows virtual communication and access to STEM resources, is a key component to support the ORISE RPP mission to the fullest.

Required Capabilities

A comprehensive list of all minimum (MUST HAVE) software requirements are listed herein.

For purposes of proposal and pricing considerations, the software product must be able to accommodate up to **10,000 members.**

Attachment 1- Statement of Objectives

Standard Software

For information purposes, the standard software systems currently in use at ORAU/ORISE include Microsoft Windows 11 Enterprise, Microsoft 365 Apps, Microsoft Outlook/Exchange Server, Microsoft Teams, and Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS). Web browsers include Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, and Firefox.

Privacy Notice

The software provider is hereby expressly forbidden to sell or provide personal information (names, email addresses, phone numbers, etc.) of ORAU/ORISE employees, sponsors, and event attendees to any third-party vendors, advertisers, direct mail companies, email list services, etc.

Software Requirements
Virtual Community Engagement Product

Item No.	Requirement/ Feature Description	Must Have	Nice to Have
Part I. Transition and/or Implmentation Requirements *Ability to transfer following items from existing platform (if new vendor):*			
1	User registration and profile data (Including data from unapproved/incomplete registrants)	X	
2	Registration questions and processes	X	
3	Created graphics	X	
4	Website/Landing page -digital front door/ information and video	X	
5	Existing text articles	X	
6	Resource libraries – if internal to platform	X	
7	Career job feeds	X	
8	Group information & membership	X	
9	Ability to transfer current users and stand-up site by October 1, 2025	X	
Part II. Branding and Customization			
10	Utilize existing ORISE URL – www.oriseconnections.org (owned by ORISE)	X	
11	Maintain ORISE Branding (color, pictures, logos, wording, etc.) throughout site	X	
12	Customization of internal wording/text to coincide with ORISE restrictions (employment, alumni, etc.)	X	
13	Ability to spotlight users or features on landing page or internally controlled by admin.		X
Part III. Sitewide Requirements			
14	ORISE Connections site will include and/or link to: ORISE Code of Conduct, ORISE Privacy/Security Notice/Policy, Terms and Conditions, Frequently Asked Questions, About ORISE in multiple locations to include landing page and easy access internally.	X	
15	Maintain ORISE Branding constantly throughout site.	X	
16	Ability to report inappropriate messaging and send alert to ORISE or block at user level	X	
17	Ability to opt in or out of all communications and controlled by user along with user-controlled privacy settings.	X	
18	User and/or admin How-To Guide, Job Aids for end-users and ORISE Staff, and Videos	X	
19	Ability for the majority of site updates to be made by ORISE Admin	X	

20	Easy and quick process for changes that must be made by vendor – no additional cost	X	
Part IV. Landing Page			
21	Maintain similar style and look of existing landing page at ORISEConnections.org	X	
22	Add new users spotlights or rotating spotlights/pics on Landing/Home pages		X
Part V. Home Page/Main Portal Functionality			
23	User friendly interface with ability to access various features/areas of the site	X	
24	Admin can control and create links visible to users	X	
25	Admin control of graphic usage and changes	X	
26	Customizable and personalized by user to show highlights/features/posts of interest without having to go to other pages – personalized experience that shows them what they want to see first		X
27	Ability to integrate X feeds, Instagram, news feeds		X
Part VI. Integration/Interface with ORISE System *Product must be able to integrate with ZINTELLECT - CUSTOM WEB APPLICATION) to build active users*			
28	All users have accounts on Zintellect.com and will enter the new platform via Zintellect using Single Sign On (SAML) with Zintellect as Identity Provider	X	
29	Send profile data to new platform to create user accounts via API	X	
30	Pull profile data from new platform via API (data sent by Zintellect and entered by user in platform)	X	
31	Pull event data, user badges, notifications, etc into Zintellect via API	X	
32	Need ability to test API integration and changes without impacting production environment Platform must be 508 Compliant System must be able to accommodate growth in Zintellect (SSO provider) and adapt to changing needs over time, which may include volume increase as membership grows, new data fields, transfer of data and changing technological processes	X	
33	For ORISE GO (native mobile Zintellect client) - User needs to navigate from ORISE GO to new platform without additional login (works with current platform using in-app browser)		X
34	Mobile app (ORISE GO) can pull profile info, badge, event, message info from platform via API		X
Part VII. User Enrollment/Registration *Product must provide ORISE staff the ability to create and manage user information with robust tools for:*			
35	Unlimited users and complimentary ORISE admins	X	
36	Customizable Registration process that fits to existing platform.	X	

37	Creation of ORISE Administrative profiles for ORISE staff that allow customization of various levels of access to user data/ messaging/ etc. – i.e. may have need for drafts to be approved by super admin before release	X	
38	ORISE Administrative profiles should not be included in the count of activated users	X	
39	Auto set the type of user (alumni/mentor/participant/etc.) when enrolled	X	
40	Auto-enroll feature for categories of user to internal properties of platform (groups)	X	
41	Ability to deactivate users that are not utilizing the platform or if required per policy if needed	X	
42	Give end users the ability to customize profile settings and notifications, and have nulti status roles (being both mentor and participant)	X	
43	Notify/send feedback to ORISE of problems, bugs, and technical/interface issues		X
44	Connect to Zintellect to update user status based on participant status in Zintellect (i.e. start as current participant and via interface with Zintellect, user notified and moved to alumni status after term program)		X
Part VIII. Data Requirements			
45	All data belongs to ORAU/ORISE – key criteria that it is protected and does not belong to software company	X	
46	Downloadable data that can be utilized by various software applications (i.e. Microsoft Excel, etc.)	X	
47	ORISE Administrative Staff ability to customize data collection	X	
48	Customizable and detailed data reporting options based on registration, user activity, internal usage, as well as possible access to more powerful data tools (i.e.. PowerBi)	X	
Part IX. Communication Tools to Users by ORISE			
49	Effective admin communication channels including features for email campaigns, newsletters, events, and personalized communications	X	
50	Integrations with social media platforms	X	
51	Notifications, Badges, and/or Alerts: Automated notifications for new content uploads, updates, and comments in system.	X	
52	Ability for admin to post articles, content, events, messages, etc. to individuals, selected groups, or to mass community	X	
53	Ability for auto generated email messages such as birthday, anniversary of joining, reminders to complete enrollment	X	
54	Send mass push messages based on filterable categories of users	X	
55	Bulk and segmented texting option (if selected)		X
56	Send admin immediate notifications from platform of reported violations of code – way to report in system		X
57	Content preview – ability for admin to see and/or approve post before approving for release		X

FEATURE A: PROFILES/DIRECTORY			
58	Defined required and optional fields by ORISE to create profile	X	
59	Profile set up at registration and ability to update at any time	X	
60	Set up a robust ability for users to use a Searchable Directory based on registration data provided by users to discover others of common interests, expertise, locations, and other criteria and easily message to connect and begin networking	X	
61	Show search in list and/or map feature	X	
62	User message capabilities within profile – send in-platform chat message with notification or email	X	
63	Ability to "save/favorite" suggested matches	X	
64	Set up a calendar of availability with the option to make viewable by other users (for meeting setup)		X
65	Template messages to use for networking in-platform		X
66	Upload/import a resume to auto-populate user profile		X
67	Auto-suggestions for connections and communities to sign up for within Community if user has opted in		X
68	Feature Connect or Follow buttons in profile if user agrees		X
FEATURE B: COMMUNITY/AFFINITY GROUPS WITH DISCUSSION FORUMS AND NOTIFICATIONS			
69	Robust ability for users to search for and join specific communities/groups – no limit to number of groups allowed for set up	X	
70	Groups can be either public or private, for private ORISE enrolls user	X	
71	Ability to save/favorite communities	X	
72	ORISE Administrative Staff ability to setup to allow auto-join – approval not required	X	
73	Can also create private communities/groups that require approval	X	
74	Ability to give permissions to community users, volunteer leaders, or other admin to control community/group	X	
75	Discussion Feeds – Self-policing within posts; not dependent on ORISE	X	
76	Ability to send private messages to specific reps within platform by attendees, other booth reps, or ORISE Admins	X	
77	Community Users can join and communicate via messaging board to other users within a specific community, must be user driven, and admin can create messaging for all communities.	X	
78	Ability to push notifications to email/phone number.		X
79	Message board capability or similar group chat function		X

80	Ability to send videos or do video meetings within platform		X
81	System auto suggest matches to join based on Profile as well as self-identification		X
82	User ability to schedule and plan events within their community		X
83	User ability to set preference for communication modes (messaging/video/email/etc.)		X
FEATURE C: MENTORING PLATFORM - TEXT, AUDIO, AND VIDEO OPTIONS			
84	Ability for users to identify and connect with mentors/mentees of interest in platform	X	
85	Personalized suggested recommendations for networking or groups or other areas in system auto provided by system or search based on user information/AI		X
86	1:1 messaging capabilities for all statuses with suggested and customizable email templates		X
87	Types of Messaging capabilities - Direct messaging within the software		X
88	Types of Messaging capabilities - Ability to request and set up meetings		X
89	Types of Messaging capabilities - Pre-arranged "chat" capability		X
90	Types of Messaging capabilities - Video conferencing capabilities (1:1 and with multiple users)		X
91	Types of Messaging capabilities - Dynamic feedback – check text, spelling, suggestions when messaging		X
92	Types of Messaging capabilities - Flash – roulette style, quick matching by user or by admin, peer to peer or structured based on interests or AI suggestions		X
93	Admin AI – guided conversations, in platform preps, notes, goals and tasks, real time ratings		X
94	Ability to flag as "need a mentor" or "willing to be a mentor" and have mentors search for mentees and mentees search for mentors plus use for auto matching/suggestions		X
95	Badges/notifications showing messages from other users with reminders to answer/follow up		X
96	Inbox room – group discussions options for mentors with multiple mentees		X
FEATURE D: JOB BOARD/CAREER PAGE			
98	Job Postings by/restricted to ORISE Administrative Staff or ORISE-designated users, with ORISE approval routing	X	
99	Process for manual postings or requests from users for postings	X	
100	Ability to pull in RSS, JSON, or other auto feeds from varied sources (ie. USAJobs)	X	
101	ORISE admin ability to manage and update content	X	

102	Career Support – Uses AI to provide personalized (but automated) career support, career pathing, career resources, enhanced networking, suggested "matches" for career guidance, and other tailored resources and events such as professional development articles and presentations, modules, salary and career trend information		X
103	One section with feeds and resources/articles together		X
104	Resume/Cover Letter/LinkedIn Builder, Analysis, and/or Templates/Examples		X
105	Mock Interview Feedback		X
106	Integration with Job Boards to auto feature feeds – i.e. Indeed/Handshake		X
107	Gamification to encourage completion		X
108	Still allow ORISE to add exclusive content		X
FEATURE E: RESOURCE LIBRARY			
109	Feature that allows for the storage and sharing of exclusive content and resources to community	X	
110	Ability for ORISE Admin to set up access that segments viewable content and resources via user status or group membership	X	
111	ORISE admin ability to easily create, manage, share and store content/post and provide resources and articles within system – open to Word, PDFs, websites, videos, Excel, PowerPoint Presentations, etc.		X
112	Online learning management system (LMS) or access to library of resources		X
113	ORISE dashboard and full data analytics and reporting on course content, management, certifications, and tracking of completions		X
114	Career Resource modules		X
115	Structured and customizable modules		X
FEATURE F: EVENT MANAGEMENT			
116	Calendar of Events - ORISE added events/Approved information	X	
117	Creation and Management of Virtual and In-Person Events including webinars, networking or info sessions, etc. – tools for and access within system	X	
118	Automated Feed from ORISE GO Mobile App or ORISE website		X
119	User ability to request the addition of events, with ORISE approval routing for ORISE-specified approvers		X
120	Ability to hold event within the system, and would include registration, scheduling, reminders and tracking		X
ADDITIONAL FEATURES (G): MUST HAVE			

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121	Real-time Admin Dashboard for reporting exportable data, summary of emails requiring response, and approval requests	X	
122	User and visitor data – Requests for profile approval – by date, lifetime, segmented	X	
123	New and Returning visitors data	X	
124	Average time for visits, average actions per, Most used/visited communities, features, pages, posts, trend analysis	X	
125	Locations/Map & Dates/Times	X	
126	Bounce & Conversion Rates	X	
127	Event data	X	
128	Status, Employer, Location, Academic Levels, etc. – other data from profile	X	
ADDITIONAL FEATURES (H): NICE TO HAVE			
129	Additional features developed by vendor and/or identified in strategy meetings with ORISE designed for best-in-class, industry leader objectives and as determined possible by vendor		X
130	Marketplace/Discounts/Perks		X
131	Chatbots		X
132	Gamification with missions, badges, and rewards - custom or set automatically		X
133	Badging		X
134	Polls/surveys		X
135	Q&A sessions		X
136	Contests		X
137	Backgrounds for video meetings or event attendees if within platform		X
138	Multi-segmentation options		X
139	Messaging/Chat data		X
140	Trends/Insights – comparisons to last month, last year or to market; insights for actionable items		X
141	FAQ with alert for ask ORISE		X
142	Alert/Notifications for questions or alerts on self-policing		X
143	Alert/Notification to receive and answer User Feedback		X

	Part X. Maintenance and Support		
144	24/7/365 Support for end-users on platform/technical issues (without ORISE involvement	**X**	
145	24-hour response time for Technical issues initiated by ORISE staff	**X**	
146	Updates to platform to maintain compliance with requirements	**X**	
147	Consistent communications regarding maintenance, updates before scheduled processes	**X**	
148	Staging area for updates or new versions to test before release	**X**	
	Part XI. Administrative, Development, Marketing and Training Support		
149	Unlimited ORISE admin and user access roles set up	**X**	
150	Initial and ongoing training for ORISE admins	**X**	
151	Marketing and product support/how to for ORISE admin – dedicated vendor product manager/POC with regular meetings during implementation and launch	**X**	
152	Community/listserv and/or meetings of platform users to share admin resources with other platform users	**X**	

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