CONTENTS OF THE PROPOSAL: NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

I. Descriptive Information

-Name of Institution Proposing the Program: Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC)

-Name of Proposed Program: Digital Marketing

-Degrees/Credentials to Be Awarded: Digital Marketing Certificate

Other Programs Offered in This Field by the Institution: MPCC does not currently offer any marketing programs/certifications.

CIP Code: 52.1404 – Digital Marketing

Administrative Units for the Program: Business, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Proposed Delivery Sites and Types of Delivery:

The proposed courses and program offerings are intended to support in-person, online, and hybrid delivery formats to increase student access across the MPCC service area.

Date Approved by Governing Board: November 18, 2026

Proposed Date of Implementation: Fall 2027

Description, Credit Hours, and Purpose of the Proposed Program

Mid-Plains Community College proposes the development and implementation of a Digital Marketing Certificate to respond to documented workforce demand for skills in digital marketing, social media management, content creation, branding, and marketing analytics. The program provides applied instruction in digital marketing strategy, search engine optimization, social media marketing, content development, and data-informed decision-making.

The certificate consists of 18 credit hours and is designed to be completed in two semesters through online or hybrid delivery formats. Required coursework includes:

- Principles of Marketing
- Search Engine Optimization & Analytics
- Social Media Marketing
- Content Creation & Branding
- Digital Marketing Strategies
- Digital Marketing Capstone

The purpose of the program is to prepare students for entry-level roles in digital marketing and related business fields. Students will develop skills in campaign development, digital content creation, marketing performance analysis, and the use of industry-standard tools and platforms. The program also supports skill development for incumbent workers and provides a foundation for continued study in business, marketing, and related disciplines.

Review Criteria

Centrality to Role and Mission

The proposed Digital Marketing Certificate directly aligns with Mid-Plains Community College's mission of transforming lives through exceptional learning opportunities that support individual student success. The program expands access to career-focused education while addressing workforce needs identified throughout western Nebraska and beyond.

Digital marketing has become an essential function across nearly every industry. Businesses, organizations, and public agencies increasingly rely on digital platforms to communicate with customers, build brand awareness, recruit employees, and drive revenue. Employers are seeking individuals with skills in social media marketing, content creation, search engine optimization, digital advertising, analytics, and data-informed decision making.

The proposed certificate supports MPCC's commitment to workforce development by equipping students with practical, in-demand skills that can be immediately applied in a variety of professional settings. The program is designed to prepare students for entry-level employment while also providing valuable upskilling opportunities for incumbent workers, entrepreneurs, and individuals seeking to expand their expertise in digital marketing.

Curriculum development is informed by regional employer needs and industry best practices to ensure students gain relevant, workforce-aligned competencies. Through ongoing collaboration with employers and regular program evaluation, the certificate will remain responsive to emerging technologies, evolving consumer behavior, and changing workforce demands within the digital marketing field.

Evidence of Need and Demand

National Need

The need for professionals with digital marketing skills continues to grow as organizations increase their reliance on digital communication, online commerce, and data-driven decision making. Marketing has evolved significantly over the past decade, shifting from traditional advertising methods to integrated digital strategies that utilize websites, social media platforms, search engines, email marketing, and analytics tools.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment opportunities in marketing and related fields are expected grow as organizations continue investing in digital outreach and customer engagement strategies. The growth of e-commerce, social media, artificial intelligence, and digital advertising has created increased demand for individuals who can develop and manage digital campaigns while analyzing performance data to improve outcomes.

Employers increasingly seek candidates who possess practical skills in content creation, search engine optimization, marketing analytics, branding, and social media management. These competencies are now essential across a wide range of industries and organizational settings.

The proposed Digital Marketing Certificate prepares students for careers including:

- Digital Marketing Specialist
- Social Media Manager
- SEO Specialist
- Marketing Analytics Specialist
- Content Marketing Coordinator
- Digital Advertising Specialist
- Brand and Marketing Coordinator

Local Need

The need for digital marketing education extends beyond national trends and is increasingly evident throughout western Nebraska. Businesses across the MPCC service area rely on digital tools to connect with customers, market products and services, recruit employees, and remain competitive in an increasingly digital economy.

Many communities served by MPCC are supported by small businesses that operate with limited staffing and resources. Employees are often expected to manage multiple responsibilities, including marketing and communication efforts and employers frequently seek individuals who possess practical digital marketing skills that can be immediately applied in the workplace.

Across communities such as North Platte, McCook, Ogallala, Imperial, Broken Bow, and Valentine, businesses utilize websites, social media platforms, online advertising, customer reviews, and search engine visibility to reach consumers. These tools have become essential to business success regardless of industry sector.

The demand for digital marketing knowledge extends beyond traditional marketing agencies. Healthcare providers, educational institutions, agricultural businesses, financial organizations, tourism operations, retail establishments, and nonprofit organizations all rely on digital communication strategies to engage customers and stakeholders.

This need is particularly important in rural communities where businesses often serve broad geographic regions and depend on digital platforms to expand their reach. Consumer purchasing behavior continues to be influenced by online searches, reviews, websites, and social media engagement, creating an ongoing need for employees who understand how to effectively utilize these tools.

Demand for the Program

Demand for digital marketing education continues to increase as organizations expand their digital presence and adopt technology-driven marketing strategies. Employers consistently report

a need for individuals who possess both creative and analytical skills related to digital communication and customer engagement.

Nebraska workforce projections indicate continued opportunities in occupations related to marketing, communications, public relations, and business development. As digital platforms become increasingly integrated into daily business operations, employers are seeking candidates with experience in social media management, content development, search engine optimization, and marketing analytics.

Demand is particularly evident in rural communities where access to specialized digital marketing education remains limited. Students often must leave the region or enroll in fully online programs offered outside Nebraska to obtain this type of training. The proposed certificate expands local access to workforce-focused education while addressing a growing skills gap identified by employers.

The program also supports entrepreneurship and small business development. Many individuals interested in launching or growing businesses recognize the importance of digital marketing but lack formal training in the strategies and tools necessary for success. This certificate provides an opportunity to develop those skills through a structured and applied curriculum.

Anticipated Enrollment and Cost of Program

Enrollment projections for the Digital Marketing Certificate are based on area interest in business, communications, entrepreneurship, and technology-related career pathways. Initial enrollment is expected to range from 10 to 15 students annually, with growth anticipated as awareness of the program increases throughout the MPCC service area.

Multiple recruitment pathways support anticipated enrollment, including traditional students, dual credit students, incumbent workers, business owners, and individuals seeking career advancement or retraining opportunities. The online and hybrid delivery model further expands access by reducing barriers related to travel, scheduling, and geographic location.

Interest in digital marketing continues to grow as students recognize the versatility of these skills across industries. The certificate provides an attractive option for individuals seeking a short-term credential that leads directly to employment opportunities while also supporting continued academic progression.

Program costs are expected to remain affordable due to the use of existing instructional infrastructure and technology resources. Primary expenditures will include curriculum development, digital marketing software, instructional tools, faculty training, and ongoing program maintenance.

Adequacy of Resources

Mid-Plains Community College maintains a comprehensive equipment plan to ensure instructional programs have the resources necessary to meet workforce expectations and support student success. The proposed Digital Marketing Certificate can be implemented using existing institutional infrastructure while strategically investing in specialized software, curriculum development, and instructional resources that align with industry standards.

The program may also align with allowable uses of federal and state career and technical education funding, including Perkins V resources that support instructional technology, curriculum development, program enhancement, and workforce preparation activities. These funding opportunities will help ensure that students have access to current industry tools and learning experiences.

Faculty and Staff Resources

The proposed Digital Marketing Certificate has been designed to utilize existing institutional expertise while providing flexibility as enrollment grows.

Initial curriculum development will require subject matter experts and course developers with experience in marketing, communications, business, and digital technologies. Two to four faculty members may participate in course design and development.

Instruction will initially be delivered through a combination of adjunct faculty and existing instructional resources. This model provides flexibility during program implementation while allowing MPCC to evaluate enrollment trends and workforce demand.

This phased approach minimizes risk while ensuring students receive high-quality instruction aligned with industry expectations. The model also allows MPCC to respond quickly to changing workforce needs and emerging trends within the digital marketing field.

Physical Facilities

No significant facility modifications are required to implement the Digital Marketing Certificate.

The program will utilize existing classroom space, computer resources, instructional technology, and online learning infrastructure currently available throughout the college. Online and hybrid delivery options further reduce facility demands while increasing access for students across MPCC's service area.

Instructional Equipment and Information Resources

The Digital Marketing Certificate will use existing technology resources while incorporating industry-relevant software and digital tools that support student learning.

Instructional resources include:

- Computers and instructional technology
- Virtual learning environments
- Learning management system access
- Internet and network infrastructure
- Digital marketing and analytics platforms
- Industry-standard software applications
- Content creation and design tools

Resources can be updated efficiently to ensure students continue learning with tools that reflect current workplace practices. The college library, online databases, and digital learning resources will provide additional support for research, professional development, and student success throughout the program.

Budget Projections

Initial expenses will primarily include curriculum development, course design, faculty training, and software licensing. Current estimates project approximately $21,000 in one-time development costs associated with creating the certificate pathway.

Annual instructional delivery costs are estimated at approximately $24,000 per cohort. These estimates are based on projected instructional expenses and may vary depending on enrollment, course scheduling, and delivery methods.

Projected annual revenue exceeds estimated instructional costs under anticipated enrollment scenarios. Based on an estimated cohort of 12 students, the program is expected to generate approximately $31,104 in annual tuition revenue.

Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

The proposed Digital Marketing Certificate has been developed following a review of existing marketing and digital marketing offerings throughout Nebraska.

While several institutions offer marketing-related degrees, few provide short-term, workforce-focused digital marketing certificates designed specifically to serve rural populations and place-bound students. Existing programs are frequently embedded within broader business degrees or located in urban areas outside the MPCC service region. Some focus primarily on transfer education, while others emphasize workforce training or industry-specific certifications.

Nebraska community colleges currently offering digital marketing or related programming include:

- Northeast Community College
- Western Nebraska Community College
- Central Community College
- Metropolitan Community College

Nebraska four-year institutions offering marketing-related degrees include:

- University of Nebraska–All campuses
- Nebraska Wesleyan University
- Wayne State College
- Bellevue University

The proposed MPCC certificate does not duplicate these offerings. Instead, it addresses a gap in accessible, applied digital marketing education available to students residing in western Nebraska.

The program is intentionally designed to meet the needs of rural communities, working adults, high school students seeking career exploration opportunities, entrepreneurs, and individuals pursuing workforce advancement. Flexible online and hybrid delivery options further distinguish the program by increasing accessibility across MPCC's extensive service area.

The certificate also complements rather than competes with existing programs by emphasizing practical skill development, workforce readiness, stackable credentials, and immediate application in professional settings.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

The proposed Digital Marketing Certificate supports statewide priorities related to workforce development, educational access, student success, and employer responsiveness by preparing students for careers that contribute to economic development across Nebraska.

The program advances statewide priorities by:

- Expanding access to workforce-focused education
- Supporting high-demand business and technology-related occupations
- Increasing educational opportunities for rural and place-bound students
- Strengthening partnerships with employers and industry stakeholders
- Supporting stackable credential pathways and lifelong learning
- Utilizing flexible delivery methods that increase student access
- Responding to emerging workforce needs through industry-relevant curriculum

The certificate aligns with MPCC's role as a regional workforce leader while contributing to broader statewide efforts to strengthen Nebraska's talent pipeline. By providing accessible, affordable, and workforce-driven education, the program supports both student success and regional economic vitality.