

## **GEM Navigation Bot – Vendor Q&A Response**

**(Prepared 9-15-2025)**

**Note:** Some of the technical questions raised fall outside the current scope of GEM Central’s expertise. While we have answered questions to the best of our ability, additional technical details will be addressed collaboratively with the selected vendor during the post-selection discovery and design process. Vendors should use their best professional judgment to provide pricing based on the information provided and identify any major contingencies in their proposal.

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### **1. Content sources & cadence**

**Question:** What initial source materials/FAQs will DRP/GEM provide at kickoff, in what format, and how often should we plan scheduled content reviews/refreshes after launch?

**Answer:**

Initial materials include GEM pillar documents, GEM Outreach Playbook, and other curated assets such as events, links, and descriptions related to workforce, supplier diversity, startups, industrial sites, and testing facilities. These will be provided primarily in PDF, Word, and web link format.

We anticipate a monthly content review cycle post-launch, with ad hoc updates as needed.

**Impacts Pricing?** Likely yes – vendors should price based on expected content onboarding and refresh schedule.

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### **2. Answering model**

**Question:** Should answers be curated only or hybrid (FAQ mapping + AI-generated)? If hybrid, how should we resolve conflicts between curated and AI answers?

**Answer:**

We are open to a hybrid model with curated responses prioritized where available. AI-generated responses may be used to fill gaps or expand on content. Where both exist, curated responses should take precedence. The final model will be shaped collaboratively during discovery.

**Impacts Pricing?** Yes – vendors should indicate their preferred approach and associated costs.

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### 3. FAQ mapping details

**Question:** Which priority FAQs must be pinned at launch, and what is the approval/change process for updating those mappings over time?

**Answer:**

We will identify 10–15 priority questions in the initial content development phase. The approval/change process will involve review by GEM Central, with updates likely managed quarterly.

**Impacts Pricing?** No – discovery will determine specific questions.

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### 4. Learning & evolution

**Question:** How would you like the “bot improvement” plan structured (e.g., periodic reviews, retraining triggers, change logs) and who approves updates?

**Answer:**

Vendors should propose a structure that includes quarterly review, retraining triggers based on question volume or failure rates, and change logs. GEM Central will approve updates.

**Impacts Pricing?** Yes – vendors should price based on proposed improvement model.

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### 5. Website integration

**Question:** In the managed, non-headless WordPress environment, do you prefer a native plugin or external hosting with an embed? Any constraints from the GEM web management team we should plan around?

**Answer:**

We prefer **external hosting with an embed** for ease of maintenance. Solutions must be compatible with a managed WordPress environment. Vendors **must not require Node/npm-based packages** for embedding. Final approval will be provided by DRP’s web management team.

**Impacts Pricing?** Yes – vendors should confirm technical compatibility and hosting preferences.

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### 6. Launch UX style

**Question:** Should the bot be user-initiated (icon/button) or proactive (auto-greeting) on key pages?

**Answer:**

We prefer **user-initiated** interaction for launch, with the option to test proactive auto-greeting on selected pages in the future.

**Impacts Pricing?** No – standard toggle feature assumed.

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## 7. Geographic tailoring

**Question:** Should the bot rely on user input (e.g., prompt/selector) or apply regional filters internally for Southeast Michigan–specific responses?

**Answer:**

User prompt/selector is preferred to confirm location-based intent. Vendors may propose a flexible model that allows for regional tailoring over time.

**Impacts Pricing?** Minor – should be noted in design approach.

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## 8. Optional identifiers

**Question:** Should the bot collect voluntary user identifiers (name, email, organization)? If yes, at what point in the flow and for what follow-up use?

**Answer:**

We are open to collecting optional identifiers at a natural point in the flow (e.g., after a helpful answer is given). Use cases include follow-up, support, or newsletter sign-ups. However, vendors must have a clear data privacy strategy and articulate how they comply with applicable laws, including GDPR if the bot may receive traffic from EU-based users. Please include recommendations or safeguards related to user consent and international data compliance.

**Impacts Pricing?** Yes – vendors should note implementation and compliance approach.

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## 9. Analytics scope

**Question:** Which metrics do you want prioritized at launch (e.g., topic taxonomy, user segment, keywords, top questions, referrals to GEM resources/events)? Should user type be self-identified or inferred?

**Answer:**

Prioritized metrics include:

- Top questions asked
  - Referral links clicked
  - Drop-off points
  - Resource categories
  - Gaps in content
- User type can be self-identified via prompts (e.g., jobseeker, business, nonprofit).
- Impacts Pricing?** Yes – vendors should price analytics configuration accordingly.
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## 10. Dashboard form & exports

**Question:** Would you prefer a custom web-based dashboard, Google Analytics 4 (GA4), or integration with existing DRP tools?

**Answer:**

A simple, web-based dashboard with export capability is preferred. Integration with GA4 using custom events and parameters is welcome, and vendors should indicate the scope and intensity of their GA4 integration capabilities. We are also open to integration with existing DRP tools if technically feasible.

**Impacts Pricing?** Yes – dashboard type and analytics depth should be priced accordingly.

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## 11. Data retention

**Question:** How long should conversation logs and collected identifiers be retained?

**Answer:**

We prefer **90-day retention** of anonymized logs for analysis unless longer retention is required for debugging or improvement.

**Impacts Pricing?** No – but vendors must follow privacy standards.

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## 12. Access & roles

**Question:** Who needs dashboard access, and should roles be tiered?

**Answer:**

GEM Central staff (2–3 people) will need access. Read-only and admin/export roles are preferred. Additionally, DRP's website vendor (Inno) should have at least read-only access

for technical monitoring and troubleshooting, if needed.

**Impacts Pricing?** No – standard role configuration assumed.

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### 13. Staffing & training

**Question:** Post-launch, which DRP/GEM roles will manage content, and what training is needed?

**Answer:**

One GEM Central lead will oversee content. Vendors should include **basic training and documentation** to ensure sustainability (e.g., content edits, question mapping).

**Impacts Pricing?** Yes – training/documentation should be scoped.

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### 14. Timeline confirmations

**Question:** Are there any key events or blackout dates across prototype, testing, and launch?

**Answer:**

The project is expected to launch within 4 months of contracting. Major holidays (Thanksgiving, December holidays) may affect internal availability.

**Impacts Pricing?** No – but consider standard 4-month timeline.

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### 15. Accessibility expectations

**Question:** Are there specific accessibility standards required for chatbot experience?

**Answer:**

The chatbot must adhere to **WCAG 2.1 AA** standards to ensure accessibility for all users.

**Impacts Pricing?** Yes – accessibility should be built into design.