

Purpose

The Alabama Department of Commerce “Department” solicits proposals from qualified professional firms (“Firm” or “Responder”) interested in developing the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (“ACCET”), which was established by _____.

The Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is issued in accordance with the requirements of Section 41-16-72(4), Code of Alabama (1975). This RFP is not an offer to contract subcontractors. The Department seeks the submission of proposals from qualified, professional firms that may form the basis for negotiation of an agreement to develop the ACCET.

1. Minimum Qualifications

In order for an RFP to be considered, the Responder must include documented proof that the following minimum qualifications are met. In addition, the Responder has a continuing obligation to disclose information throughout the RFP process should any qualifications or situations change that might render the Responder an unqualified candidate.

1. If selected, the Responder will comply with all state regulations to conduct business in the State of Alabama and will register with the Secretary of State, if applicable.
2. The Responder and its personnel have all authorizations, permits, licenses, and certifications as may be required under federal, state, or local law to perform the services specified in this RFP at the time it submits a response to this RFP.
3. The Firm represented by the Responder has been in operation for at least five (5) years.
4. The Firm responsible for providing the services described in this RFP has at least two (2) years of experience working in website/portal development.
5. The Firm has knowledge about the operations of Alabama’s public workforce system and an understanding of the AlabamaWorks! brand.
6. The Firm has a knowledge and understanding of Governor Kay Ivey’s workforce development strategic plan, including the Success Plus postsecondary educational attainment goal.
7. The Firm is committed to complying with established timelines for this project and working closely and cooperatively with Department points of contact to facilitate the implementation of any enhancements or modifications required by the project.
8. The Firm has a company policy and practice of equal employment opportunities and non-discrimination based on age, sex, race, creed, or gender.
9. If applicable, the Firm will maintain sufficient procedures and capabilities to ensure the timely and accurate backup and full recovery for all servers and other data storage systems that may be needed for the project.
10. If selected, the Firm will carry errors and omissions insurance or a comparable instrument to cover the Firm’s negligent acts or omissions.
11. If selected, the Firm will be in compliance with Section 9(b) of Alabama Act No. 2011-535, *The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act*.

12. If selected, the Firm must be able to start and complete the project within nine (9) months.
13. If selected, the Firm must be able to provide one local point of contact (within the State of Alabama) as well as a local project team (central to Montgomery).

2. Scope of Services

The Firm will work with designated Department representatives to develop and create the Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (“ACCET”). The contract term may not exceed two (2) years. The project will include the following:

- The Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET) will consist of a web-based dashboard, accessible at no cost to the general public, developed by synthesizing data from the Alabama State ATLAS on Career Pathways.
- The Governor’s Office of Education and Workforce Transformation Division of Education and Workforce Statistics, with the advice and consent of the P-20W Council will develop, maintain, and manage the ACCET.
- The ACCET shall do all of the following:
 - Allow the user to compare all education and workforce training programs offered by the state of Alabama, including postsecondary education and training programs, programs offered through the public workforce system as listed on each of the seven workforce region’s eligible training provider list, and employment opportunities offered by public and private employers;
 - Guide students through a digitally-delivered exploration and survey all 79 pathways within the 16 CTE industry clusters, an interest and career profile, and a graduation plan;
 - Allow users to compare the following data points when comparing education and training programs:
 - Annual and total cost of attendance;
 - Expected length of time to complete a program;
 - Graduation or completion rate;
 - Percentage of graduates or completers who are employed six (6) months, one (1) year, five (5) years, and ten (10) years after graduation or completion;
 - Median salary after five (5) and ten (10) years after graduation or completion;
 - Whether the program participants are eligible for federal financial aid under Title V of the Higher Education Act and other state and federal laws;
 - Allow employers to post current employment opportunities to be accessed by the public;
 - Allow users to access applications for public and private institutions of higher education;
 - Allow users to access the eligible training provider list in each local workforce development region;

- Allow users to explore all 16 career and technical education clusters and 79 career pathways and to determine which occupations in each pathway are in-demand, high-wage, and fast growing by region;
- Allow members of the public to complete an interest and aptitude profile that will identify in-demand career pathways aligned to the interests and aptitude of the user;
- Allow employers to auto-populate a list of the individuals who possess the credentials and competencies best suited for each job posting, which will reduce hiring costs and will incent employers to add credentials to job descriptions;
- Allow users to create a career pathway plan that will identify sequences of stackable credentials, work-based learning opportunities, and secondary, postsecondary, adult basic education programs needed to attain progress through a competency-based career pathway.
- Allow Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators to map career pathways that will lead to graduation with industry-recognized credentials, postsecondary credit, and work-based learning experience.
- Include a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion and college application tool.
- Allow users to create a verified, digital resume to display industry-recognized credentials and progress against established competency models. Credential information displayed through the ACCET will signal to employers that a worker or student possess the requisite skills for either an entry-level job or progressive wage increases as a result of mastering the next competency within a stackable sequence.
- Serve as an integrated case management system for core agencies and partners to the Alabama 2020 WIOA plan that will include routing questions, a WIOA data hub, individual services routing assessments, an app for accessing services, and a common needs assessment.
- Beginning no later than 1 July 2020, state agencies appointed to deliver Employment, career, and training services under the Wagner-Peyser Act and Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and adult, youth, and dislocated worker programs under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will utilize the ACCET to enroll individuals in programs funded through Title I and Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- All appropriate privacy and data-sharing guidelines are incorporated into the development of the ACCET. The ACCET must be operational by July 1, 2020.

3. Information Required for Proposal

Proposals should be as thorough and detailed as possible so that the Responder's capabilities to provide the required services can be properly evaluated.

To be considered, proposal responses to the RFP must include:

1. Brief transmittal letter
2. Exhibit A: Proposal
3. Exhibit B: Minimum Qualifications
4. Exhibit C: Cost Proposal Based on Scope of Services
5. Exhibit D: Vendor Disclosure Statement
6. Exhibit E: Beason-Hammon Affidavit (must be submitted prior to award of contract)
7. Other required documentation, as requested by Department during the course of the solicitation process.

4. Submission of Proposals

Issuing Office:

The Alabama Department of Commerce
401 Adams Ave # 600, Montgomery, AL 36104

Submission of Proposals: Format and layout should follow closely to the proposal format as listed on Page 17 of this document.

Submission Deadline: It is the responsibility of the Responder to ensure that one printed copy of its proposal is delivered to and received by the Department at the above address in a sealed envelope on or before 4:00 p.m. (Central Standard Time) on Friday, December 13, 2019.

Responders should additionally provide two (2) electronic versions of their written responses on a Jump or Flash drive. The electronic data must be an exact duplicate of the written version. AIDT will not consider proposals received after the date and time specified herein. AIDT assumes no responsibility for late delivery by the U.S. Mail, the State's Central Mail Facility, a commercial courier service, or any other method of delivery selected by the Responder. RFP's will be publicly opened beginning at 4:01 p.m. CST and prepared for distribution to the review committee; however, no opinions, decisions, or judgements will be rendered at that time regarding response content. Other than questions and answers (see next item), vendors should not contact the AIDT Purchasing Agent for updates on the review process.

Questions and Inquiries: The sole point of contact or purposes of the RFP is Ed Castile, Deputy Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce. **Any questions or inquiries should be in writing and emailed to ecastile@aidt.edu.** All written questions and inquiries will be posted on the Department's website. Any oral communications will be considered unofficial and nonbinding.

Rejection of All Proposals

The Department reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and/or to solicit additional proposals if that is determined to be fiscally advantageous to the Department or is otherwise determined to be in the best interests of the Department.

5. Evaluation and Selection

The Department will post the RFP on the Alabama Department of Finance Comptroller's website at: . Interested parties may monitor the progress and status of this RFP process on such database.

All proposals timely received will be reviewed and evaluated by the Department's review committee. After the review and evaluation of the proposals, the Department may conduct interviews if it is determined that they are necessary. If interviews are conducted, they will be scheduled in Montgomery, Alabama, and the interviewees will be notified. the Department reserves the right to request a best and final offer for fees from finalists.

Qualifications to be considered for evaluation include the overall abilities, capabilities, and the experience of the Firm and its staff to develop the web-based ACCET tool. the Department will select the Firm it determines, in its sole discretion to be fully qualified and best-suited among those submitting proposals to best meet the needs specified in the RFP.

Upon identification of the selected Firm, if any, the Department may initiate negotiations for contract terms and conditions.

8. Efforts to Influence Selection Process Prohibited

The integrity of the RFP process is of primary importance and will not be compromised. Any written or oral communications beyond this RFP response made by Responders, or others on their behalf, whether paid or unpaid, to influence the selection process, from the time the RFP is issued through its conclusion, made directly or indirectly to Department staff (other than the designated contract), will be grounds for immediate elimination from the selection process.

9. Agreement

All duties of the Firm will be set forth in an Agreement to be entered into between the selected Responder and AIDT and its partners. The Agreement will be for a period not to exceed two (2) years. The Agreement will incorporate the requirements of the RFP and the proposal as negotiated.

State law prohibits the Department from agreeing to (1) indemnify the Responder, (2) waive the right for jury trial, (3) grant a security interest, or (4) agree to binding arbitration. Additionally, it is mandatory that Alabama laws apply to the performance of the contract and that jurisdiction and venue be in Montgomery, Alabama.

10. Public Information

All proposals received and subsequent communications, contracts, reports, and other records developed during the course of **the relationship**, except as may specifically be exempted, will be subject to the Alabama Open Records Act, Section 36-12-40, Code of Alabama (1975), and may be subject to public disclosure upon request. The Open Records Act is remedial and should be liberally construed in favor of the public. The Alabama Trade Secrets Act is codified in Sections 8-27-1 through 8-27-6, Code of Alabama (1975). Responders are cautioned to be familiar with these statutes. The burden is on the one asserting the trade secret to show that the information sought to be protected meets the definition of a “trade secret” as defined in such act.

Any RFP proposal submitted that contains confidential information, trade secrets, or proprietary commercial information must be conspicuously marked on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be conspicuously marked as such. Identification of the entire bid proposal as confidential is not acceptable unless the Firm enumerates the specific grounds or applicable laws that support treatment of the entire material as protected from such disclosure according to the foregoing statutes or other applicable law.

The owner of the confidential information shall indemnify and hold the State of Alabama, AIDT, and their respective staffs harmless from all costs or expenses, including but not limited to attorney fees and expenses, related to any litigation concerning disclosure of said information and documents.

Exhibit A
PROPOSAL

Part I. Qualifications

1. Provide a description of the Firm, including a company overview, history, and qualifications of staff that would be assigned to this project. Note any changes pending in this description.
2. Provide working links to work and corresponding references of the Firm served in the last two (2) years that are comparable to the scope of this RFP.
3. Provide a well-defined scope of services available and a demonstrated ability to meet the requirements of the RFP.
4. Propose a timeline for completing this project.
5. Provide a proposed process for working with designated staff to fully develop and implement the ACCET.
6. Provide a complete listing of fees, including all optional services that may be offered.
7. Provide information on all “related” or “affiliated” firms that will assist in providing the services described in the RFP.
8. Provide details of any claims, disputes, litigation, or other legal proceedings where the Firm is involved, or has been involved, in the three (3) preceding years, with the State of Alabama or any of its agencies.
9. Describe any activities in which the Firm is engaged which may constitute a conflict of interest.
10. Describe matrixes or data analytics that can be used to evaluate the use and effectiveness of the ACCET tool.
11. Describe the factors or reasons the Department should consider the Firm more favorably than its competitors.

Part II. Other

1. Discuss any creative approaches to dashboard development and alternative suggestions for how to achieve the desired result of this RFP that may not have been specifically requested in this RFP or that would enhance efficiency and/or reduce costs.
2. Discuss the design of the dashboard and describe its functionality for users.
3. How will the Firm provide for upgrades and any changes/updates needed for the dashboard on an ongoing basis?
4. Describe the Firm's process for training Department staff or designees on using the dashboard, accessing/monitoring activity to the site, and management of site navigation, as applicable.

Exhibit B
MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

1. If selected, the Responder will comply with all state regulations to conduct business in the State of Alabama and will register with the Secretary of State, if applicable.
2. The Responder and its personnel have all authorizations, permits, licenses, and certifications as may be required under federal, state, or local law to perform the services specified in this RFP at the time it submits a response to this RFP.
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12. If selected, the Firm must be able to start and complete the project within nine (9) months.

13. If selected, the Firm must be able to provide one local point of contact (within the State of Alabama) as well as a local project team (central to Montgomery).

Exhibit C
COST PROPOSAL

1. Provide a detailed and itemized cost proposal to complete this project. All costs must be included.
2. Provide annual maintenance costs, costs for any upgrades, and an hourly rate to be applicable for updates to the dashboard (if any), which may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Updates to or refreshes of the portal;
 - b. Creation of new portal features; and
 - c. Other continuing services.
3. The Department will make payment for services in arrears. Please provide what annual compensation per year for two years would be, and please list in detail, the compensation for any other services beyond such scope.

The Department is exempted by law from payment of state or local sales taxes. Do not include such taxes in the Cost Proposal.

Exhibit D
VENDOR DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

All proposals in response to this RFP must include a completed Vendor Disclosure Statement, as required by Section 41-16-80, et seq., Code of Alabama (1975). Copies of the Vendor Disclosure Statement and related information may be downloaded from the Alabama Attorney General's website at _____ or refer to pages _____ of this document.

Exhibit E
BEASON-HAMMON AFFIDAVIT

To be completed as a condition for the award of any contract, grant, or incentive by the State of Alabama, any political subdivision hereof, or any state-funded entity to a business entity to employer that employs one or more employees.

INSERT APPLICABLE LANGUAGE