

Alabama State Department of Education



Request for Proposal
Amended RFP ALSDE 2023-05
External Evaluation Provider
Alabama State Department of Education
Special Education Services Section

Note: FAXED OR E-MAILED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Inquiries and response submissions related to this RFP are to be addressed to:

Cindy Gillespie
Office of Operations
Alabama State Department of Education
50 N. Ripley Street, Room P305
Gordon Persons Building
Montgomery, AL 36104
Email: cgillespie@alsde.edu

Amended Deadline: May 8, 2023

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on May 8, 2023.
It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2023-05 in the lower left corner of the envelope (Response packages that are not marked will be rejected).

The proposal package must contain the following:

1. Original proposal **plus** four copies with original signatures (The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided). One (1) electronic copy on a USB flash drive in MS Word format.
2. Must be currently registered with the Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Purchasing as a State Vendor and **provide vendor number**. <http://www.purchasing.alabama.gov>
3. The vendor must complete the affidavit for business entity/employer/vendor. Verification of enrollment in E-verify should be presented on the form found in Appendix A.

Amended Proposal Opening

May 9, 2023

9:00 am

Gordon Persons Building, Personnel Training Room
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

(No Visitors Due to COVID-19)

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background

Purpose:

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Special Education Services (SES) Section is seeking proposals from vendors to serve as an external researcher, evaluator, assessment analyst, and assessment reporter (i.e., External Evaluator) for the Alabama (AL) State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). The AL SPDG project, Alabama Literacy Interventions and Support for Transition (AL LIST) funding is designed to support professional learning of educators to improve results for students with disabilities (<https://alspdg.org/>). The External Evaluator will be responsible for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, and the use of formative and summative evaluations. The External Evaluator will oversee the evaluation activities and work closely with Districts and Coordinators to manage the data collection of training, coaching, fidelity, and outcome data.

Applicants can access a copy of the 2022 Alabama SPDG application, AL L.I.S.T. that is the basis for this RFP at: <https://alspdg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/al-list-narrative2023.pdf>

Background:

The project design is based on two goals. The first goal is to increase reading achievement results for students with disabilities in Grades 4-8 through professional learning on implementing Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) supports for teachers and leaders in selected AL-MTSS cohort districts and schools. The second goal is to improve Part C to Part B, elementary, middle school, and high school transition outcomes for toddlers and students with disabilities through training, coaching, and resources for early intervention providers, teachers, administrators, and families of students with disabilities.

The state specifically seeks to improve instruction, structures, and support for Alabama students with disabilities to prepare them for each level of education and post-school success. Although the process is based upon differentiated needs of the districts/schools, there is a need for consistent structures to be in place to ensure that quality reviews result in identification of prioritized needs of the districts/schools.

1.2 Anticipated Timetable

May 8, 2023
May 9, 2023

Proposal Submission Deadline
Bid Opening

1.3 Proposal Evaluation

An Evaluation Team will review the proposals and make a recommendation. The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate the proposals for the purpose of ranking them in relative position based on how fully each proposal meets the requirements of this RFP.

Evaluation Criteria:

Vendor qualifications and experience	35 points
Budget Proposal	15 points
Detailed description and delivery of services	50 points

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Best and Final Offers:

The ALSDE may either accept a vendor's initial proposal by award of a contract or enter into discussions with vendors whose proposals are deemed to be reasonably acceptable consideration for award. After discussions are concluded, a vendor may be allowed to submit a "Best and Final Offer" for consideration in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE. By submitting a proposal each vendor accepts and agrees to all conditions and requirements herein.

The ALSDE will make all decisions regarding evaluation of the proposal. The ALSDE reserves the right to judge and determine whether a request is compliant with and has satisfactorily met the requirements of the RFP. The ALSDE reserves the right to waive technical and other defects if, in its judgment, the interest of the ALSDE so requires. Any further information disclosed about the RFP during this process will be provided to all vendors in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE.

Rejection of Proposal:

The ALSDE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals which are deemed to be non-responsive, late in submission, or unsatisfactory in any way. The ALSDE shall have no obligation to award a contract for work, goods and/or services as a result of this RFP.

Qualified bidders aggrieved in connection with the solicitation of a contract may protest to the Chief Procurement Officer. See generally State of Alabama Department of Finance Administrative Code Regulations at <https://finance.alabama.gov/media/rnii4ga1/administrative-code-355-4-1-01-thru-06.pdf>.

Confidentiality:

All information contained in the RFP is considered to be the exclusive property of the ALSDE. Recipients of this RFP are not to disclose any information contained within the RFP unless such information is publicly available. This RFP is provided for the sole purpose of allowing Vendors to respond to these specifications.

Selection Process:

Grants awarded depend on the number of proposals submitted and the quality of the proposed projects, funding availability and the best interests of the Agency.

The ALSDE will select the vendor that provides the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal that best fits the needs of the ALSDE. Final selection of the successful vendor will not be based solely on cost. The vendor product will be evaluated primarily on the scope of the activities linked to associated costs as detailed in the RFP. RFPs will be reviewed to ascertain that minimum requirements have been met. The ALSDE reserves the right to conduct discussions with potential vendors in order to clarify information contained in their proposals, but the ALSDE has no obligation to do so. The vendor will provide notice to the ALSDE any partnership with another firm to provide parts of the solution; however, the vendor must provide management of the partner and is responsible for all project performance. Any subcontractor or partner will be subject to the same vetting process as the vendor, and the vendor is responsible for ensuring that each subcontractor acknowledges and is contractually bound by the staffing plan and other commitments listed in this RFP.

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Unless provided by law, nothing in this RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of ALSDE or any respondents. The ALSDE reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue the RFP in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall the ALSDE be liable to respondents for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process, including, but not limited to, any and all costs of preparing a response to this RFP or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFP. No respondent shall be entitled to repayment from ALSDE for any costs, expenses, or fees related to the RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of the ALSDE. Respondents may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any point in time, as more information becomes known. If, within the confines of this RFP, the vendor provides intellectual property be it understood that all RFP contents are subject to Open Records Act laws and thus are subsequently in the public domain.

Only the final results of the ALSDE Evaluation Committee may be considered public. Any work papers, individual evaluator or consultant comments, notes, or score will not be considered public. The final results of the ALSDE Evaluation Committee will not be publicly available until a final contract has received all necessary approvals.

Open Records act requests can be made at the following website:

[https://alsde.mycusthelp.com/WEBAPP/rs/\(S\(f5sv2dmcmpb2aknppsajshwn\)\)/supporthome.aspx](https://alsde.mycusthelp.com/WEBAPP/rs/(S(f5sv2dmcmpb2aknppsajshwn))/supporthome.aspx)

Disclaimer Notice:

The ALSDE shall not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals or negotiations of a contract incurred by any party.

Availability of Funds:

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligations of the ALSDE to proceed is conditioned upon the continued availability of funds that may be expended for these purposes.

1.4 Conditions and Terms

Contract Terms:

The contract resulting from this RFP may be renewable for four (4) additional years pending written agreement of the vendor and the ALSDE, dependent upon required state approvals, availability of funds, performance evaluations of the project, at the full discretion of the ALSDE. The contract will commence pending Legislative Review Committee approval and Governor's signature.

The vendor shall be fully prepared to commence work after full execution of the contract by parties and the receipt of required governmental approvals.

Proposals should reference each element in the RFP by number on the cover of each copy and be arranged in the same sequence. All fees and costs are to be stated in United States currency. Vendors must reply to each element of the RFP.

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Section 2.00 Scope

2.1 Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities

The external evaluator will engage in program evaluation efforts designed to accomplish multiple purposes associated with the AL LIST project goals and objectives.

The AL SPDG external evaluator's work scope includes:

- a. Review and update AL SPDG evaluation plan with timelines, data sources, persons responsible, and performance measures.
- b. Review and share the evaluation plan with AL SPDG staff.
- c. Work with AL SPDG staff to develop performance measures and targets for the 2022 AL SPDG (i.e., AL LIST) internal monitoring and the Continuation Report to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- d. Oversee data collection for AL SPDG sites.
- e. Collect data through interviews, assessments, observations, and surveys.
- f. Compile and analyze data for reporting.
- g. Review evaluation instruments and assessments needed to implement the AL SPDG evaluation plan.
- h. Provide training on the instruments for AL SPDG staff, district staff, coaches, and teachers, as needed.
- i. Develop database programming for a web-based AL SPDG data dashboard to monitor formative evaluation data and implementation goals.
- j. Update data dashboard monthly during the school year to provide current data.
- k. Develop an AL SPDG Data Manual for sites.
- l. Develop and/or provide the AL SPDG staff and AL SPDG sites a platform to share data and access evaluation tools.
- m. Update AL SPDG Activity Log to reflect the 2022 AL SPDG goals.
- n. Analyze and report on formative evaluation data, including training event data, learning measures, coaching data, reading assessments, transition assessments, and fidelity data.
- o. Develop reports for the ALSDE to measure progress toward outcomes, including progress monitoring and transition outcomes.
- p. Disaggregate data by school, classroom, disability type (if feasible), and IEP status.
- q. Draft Section A of the 524B Continuation Report to OSEP.
- r. Analyze data and develop graphs, tables, and narrative for each performance measure.
- s. Analyze data for reporting to monthly meetings with implementation teams.
- t. Draft graphs, tables, and narrative for the evaluation section of the report.
- u. Present data to stakeholders, as requested.
- v. Gather feedback from stakeholders on formative and summary data.
- w. Facilitate evaluation, data, and progress update meetings at least twice a year.
- x. Offer training related to data usage, data interpretation, and AL SPDG evaluation, as requested.
- y. Collaborate with the ALSDE staff to meet the AL SPDG requirements set forth by OSEP.
- z. Provide updates and recommendations to staff through reports, emails, and monthly virtual meetings.

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2.2 Scope of ALSDE Work and Responsibilities

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Special Education Services Section will work collaboratively with the selected vendor to organize information, collect, and distribute resources, and provide technical assistance to local education agencies (LEAs) as needed. The State Personnel Development Grant staff will work with the External Evaluator to identify specific district/school reforms needed, communicate identified needs to the schools/districts, develop support (i.e., on site coaching, virtual meetings, emails) according to needs and participate in professional training to build capacity. The ALSDE is responsible for initiating contracts, processing and paying invoices, articulating deadlines, communicating with the LEAs, and evaluating projects.

Section 3.00 General Requirements

3.1 Requirements of Proposal

The vendor must provide the following mandatory information. **Failure to provide this information may be cause for the proposal to be rejected.** Qualifications, experience, and cost will be evaluated for contract award. The proposal may be submitted under the same cover with Vendor Requirements and Cost Proposal in two distinct sections. E-verify information is required to be submitted for all employees to include contractors of the vendors if necessary and applicable.

Part I

Signed Cover Letter:

The cover letter shall serve as the first page of the vendor's proposal. The vendor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the proposal in response to the RFP. The cover letter must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor. It will state that the vendor is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted proposal. The letter accompanying the proposal must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and e-mail addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

Part II

Vendor Qualification and Experience:

Vendor shall provide satisfactory evidence of the vendor's capability to coordinate the types of activities and to provide the services described in the RFP in a timely manner. Special attention should be given to the discussion of qualifications. The discussion shall include a description of the vendor's background and relevant experience as related to the required activities in the RFP.

Part III

Vendor shall provide a detailed plan describing how the services will be performed to meet the requirements of the RFP. The description shall encompass the requirements of this RFP. The response must be prepared and organized in a clear and concise manner that is easily understandable.

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Vendor Organization:

Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies to be responsive to the requirements of this RFP.

References:

The vendor shall provide a minimum of three (3) references that can support and validate training and/or projects and outcomes, including names or persons who may be contacted, position of person, addresses, and phone numbers where similar training and/or projects to that described in this RFP have been conducted.

Executive Summary:

An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor's proposal.

Part IV

Cost Proposal:

Vendor shall include the fee structure and pricing for the training sessions/program. The vendor shall submit a cost proposal in addition to other required information.

Flat rates for half and/or whole day training sessions should be inclusive of travel and/or supplies and materials costs and identify if the training is in person or virtual, and the proposed number of participants. Flat rates for consulting, coaching, and/or professional services should stipulate the cost per hour and the proposed number of hours. Project costs must include all proposed necessary charges to be made by the grantee in accomplishing the objectives of the grant during the specified grant period (initial grants are generally for a one-year period unless otherwise noted).

Subcontractor Disclosure:

If the execution of work to be performed requires the hiring of Subcontractors, **you must clearly state this in the bid proposal and provide qualifications for such individuals.** The Sub-Contractors must be identified and the services they will provide or work they will perform must be clearly defined. The ALSDE will not refuse a proposal based upon use of a Sub-Contractor; however, the ALSDE reserves the right to refuse the Sub-contractor you have selected. Contractor and associated personnel shall remain solely responsible for the performance of all work, including work that may be sub-contracted.

Describe your rationale for utilizing Subcontractors including relevant past experience partnering with stated Subcontractor(s). Documents for E-verification of subcontractors are the sole responsibility of the contractor and must be available upon request to ensure compliance.

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Section 4.00 General Terms and Conditions

4.1 Governance

This RFP and its terms shall be governed and construed according to the laws of the State of Alabama. Any dispute arising out of this RFP shall be brought in the State of Alabama, with venue in Montgomery County, Alabama. Vendors agree to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

4.2 Immigration

The proposal must contain a statement that the firm is aware of and in compliance with the requirements of the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; a statement that the vendor is enrolled in the E-Verify as required by Section 31-13-9 (b), Code of Alabama 1975, as amended:

BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT

COMPLIANCE

The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act (31-13-1 et seq, Code of Alabama, 1975 as amended by Act 2012-491) regulates illegal immigration in the State of Alabama. All contracts with the State or political subdivision thereof must fully comply with each provision as provided by law.

A proposal must include a statement that the vendor has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Before a contract is signed, the vendor awarded the contract must submit a Certificate of Compliance using the form at Appendix A. E-Verify enrollment can be accomplished at the website of the United States Department of Homeland Security at <http://www.uscis.gov>.

See Section 10 for additional language required by Section 10(k) of the Act to be included in the contract.

Rev.5-24-13

4.3 Conflict of Interest

The vendor attests that no employee, officer, or agent of the vendor shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest may be involved. A conflict would arise when the employee, officer, agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein has a financial or other interest in the organization selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the vendor, if selected as the career planning system vendor, shall neither award nor offer gratuities, favors, nor anything of monetary value from vendors or subcontractors.

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4.4 Discrimination

Alabama Non-Discrimination Statement:

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age, genetic information, or any other category protected under the law. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008. Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 694-4717.

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APPENDIX A

State of _____)
County of _____)

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535, as amended by ACT 2012-491)

DATE: _____

RE Contract/Grant/Incentive (describe by number or subject):

_____ by and between
_____ (Contractor/Grantee) and
_____ (State Agency, Department or Public Entity)

The undersigned hereby certifies to the State of Alabama as follows:

1. The undersigned holds the position of _____ with the Contractor/Grantee named above and is authorized to provide representations set out in this Certificate as the official and binding act of that entity and has knowledge of the provisions of THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535 of the Alabama Legislature, as amended by ACT 2012-491) which is described herein as "the Act."

2. Using the following definitions from Section 3 of the Act, select and initial either (a) or (b), below, to describe the Contractor/Grantee's business structure.

BUSINESS ENTITY. Any person or group of persons employing one or more persons performing or engaging in any activity, enterprise, profession, or occupation for gain, benefit, advantage, or livelihood, whether for profit or not for profit.

a. Self-employed individuals, business entities filing articles of incorporation, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, foreign corporations, foreign limited partnerships, and foreign limited liability companies authorized to transact business in this state, business trusts, and any business entity that registers with the Secretary of State.

b. Any business entity that possesses a business license, permit, certificate, approval, registration, charter, or similar form of authorization issued by the state, any business entity that is exempt by law from obtaining such a business license, and any business entity that is operating unlawfully without a business license.

EMPLOYER. Any person, firm, corporation, partnership, joint stock association, agent, manager, representative, foreman, or other person having control or custody of any employment, place of employment, or of any employee, including any person or entity employing any person for hire within the State of Alabama, including a public employer. This term shall not include the occupant of a household contracting with another person to perform casual domestic labor within the household.

____ (a) The Contractor/Grantee is a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

____ (b) The Contractor/Grantee is not a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

3. As of the date of this Certificate, the Contractor/Grantee does not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama and hereafter it will not knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama;

4. The Contractor/Grantee is enrolled in E-Verify unless it is not eligible to enroll because of the rules of that program or other factors beyond its control.

Certified this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient
By: _____
Its _____

The above Certification was signed in my presence by the person whose name appears above, on this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

WITNESS: _____

Printed Name of Witness