

Alabama State Department of Education



Request for Proposal

RFP ALSDE 2024-11

Systematic Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation of the Implementation of the *Alabama Literacy Act* and its Impact on Student Reading Achievement and the Alabama Reading Initiative's Role in Implementation

Alabama State Department of Education

Division of Instruction, Alabama Reading Initiative

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

Deadline:

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on July 15, 2024.

It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2024-11 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 through the FORM provided.** (The proposal must be digitally signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided).
2. Must be currently registered with the Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Procurement per the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) 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 which may be emailed to cgillespie@alsde.edu.

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background (review ALA Section 3, Page 5)

According to the *Alabama Literacy Act (ALA)*, funds dedicated to the Alabama Reading Initiative shall be expended on local and regional reading specialists, professional learning activities, and administrative activities that support all the following activities for kindergarten through third-grade students in public K-12 schools; continued funding shall be contingent upon measurable performance growth.

Purpose: This RFP seeks the submission of proposals from interested vendors who have historical knowledge of literacy in Alabama, especially since the implementation of the *Alabama Literacy Act*, including data related to the implementation of *the Alabama Literacy Act*, the Alabama Reading Initiative’s responsibilities in implementing the *Alabama Literacy Act*, and Alabama’s kindergarten through third grade reading data trends. This information should be available through a pre-developed data dashboard with drill down capacity that will support monitoring progress toward objectives and key outcomes and have the capacity to add ongoing data to it. Areas of effective literacy policies as deemed by national organizations will be the subject of the data collection.

Specific terms and requirements in this RFP may be waived or modified by the state of Alabama as it deems necessary and appropriate. The state has no liability for any costs incurred by a vendor for the preparation and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the issuance of a contract. The ALSDE reserves the right to reject all proposals if that is determined to be in the best interest of the state of Alabama.

1.2 Anticipated Time Table

June 25, 2024	Question Submission Deadline
June 28, 2024	Question Responses Due
July 15, 2024	Proposal Submission Deadline

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	20 points
Evidence of Historical and Current Understanding of the charge of ARI and K-3	
Reading Data	20 points
Dashboard Capable of drilling into historical data	25 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:

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. 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 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:

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.

Unless provided by law, nothing in this RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of ALSDE or any respondents. 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 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

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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.

Intent to Award

Division of Procurement will send out an intent to award to participating suppliers, defining the protest period. The Chief Procurement Officer (CPO), is the awarding authority and as such is a signatory on the agreement/contract.

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 initial contract resulting from this RFP is for a period of 12 months and may be renewable for up to 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 CPO's signature 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.

Section 2.00 Scope

2.1 Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities

A successful vendor must address each of the following sections (A, B, C, D) of the evaluation criteria through the provided [FORM link](#) and will send Appendix A via email to cgillespie@alsde.edu. Please reference the RFP number in the "Re:" box of the email.

A. Vendor qualifications and experience

- a. Provide evidence that your organization has provided similar evaluations before and that you have completed the project within the time limits provided and to the satisfaction of the contracting entities.
- b. Provide evidence of previous utilization of an existing interactive dashboard with layered drill-down

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capacity that will support monitoring progress toward objectives on key student outcomes. *Note that you are not being asked to develop one for our use. We are asking that you explain how you can utilize one of your existing platforms to meet our requirements.* A digital sample of that dashboard is required. You may use voiceover on the video. The video is not to exceed ten (10) minutes.

- c. Provide evidence as to how you have used quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting similar data in the past.
- d. Provide evidence on how historical reading data will be accessed and utilized.

B. Budget Proposal

Provide a budget proposal outlining the total cost for the full review. You may provide a budget for the initial year of support and the four possible additional years (each done separately) of support and evaluation. Be sure each year is broken down separately.

C. Evidence of Historical and Current Understanding of the charge of ARI and K-3 Reading Data

- a. Provide evidence your understanding of quantitative and qualitative data acquired since deployment of local reading specialists in 2020, including the Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program (ACAP) Reading and English Language Arts Summative data.
- b. Provide insights into best practices in early literacy policy and implementation to evaluate and guide the Alabama Reading Initiative since deployment of regionals in 2020. Areas of focus concerning early literacy best practices include:
 - i. Science of Reading Training
 - ii. Literacy/Reading Coaches
 - iii. Universal reading screening
 - iv. Screeners for dyslexia
 - v. Parent notification of reading deficiencies
 - vi. Parent Read-at Home Plans
 - vii. High Quality Instructional Materials
 - viii. Individual Reading Plans
 - ix. Evidence based reading interventions
 - x. Summer Reading Camp

D. Dashboard Capable of Drilling Into Historical Data

- a. Provide evidence on how you would review and evaluate the best practices in early literacy policy and implementation to evaluate and guide the Alabama Reading Initiative in future support. These elements include both qualitative and quantitative data in the following areas:
 - i. PREVENTION
 - 1. Science of Reading Training
 - 2. Literacy/Reading Coaches
 - a. Local Reading Specialists
 - b. Regional Literacy Specialists
 - c. Regional Literacy Leadership Specialists
 - 3. Higher Education Coursework Alignment to the Science of Reading
 - 4. Higher Education Science of Reading Assessment for Elementary Licensure
 - 5. Universal Reading Screeners used 3 times of year
 - 6. Screeners for the Characteristics of Dyslexia
 - 7. Progress Monitoring
 - 8. Parent Notification of Reading Deficiencies
 - 9. Parent Read-At-Home Resources
 - 10. High Quality Instructional Materials
 - 11. Elimination of Three-Cueing Instructional Materials in Early Literacy and Higher Education

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- ii. INTERVENTION
 1. Individual Reading Plans for Intervention (SRIP)
 2. Evidence-based interventions including those for Certified Academic Language Therapists
 3. Summer Reading Camps
 4. Promotion to 3rd Grade based on state assessment with multiple paths to promotion
 - a. ACAP Summative
 - b. ACAP Supplemental
 - c. Test Based Portfolio
 - d. Good Cause Exemption
 - iii. Good Cause Exemptions for Some Individuals
- b. Provide evidence on how you would inform the Alabama Reading Initiative to what extent human and financial resources are mobilized to support the implementation of the key features as outlined above “best practices in early literacy policy and implementation,” while also considering MTSS/RTI support and barriers to reading.
 - c. Provide evidence on how you would inform the Alabama Reading Initiative on sub-metrics correlated to support levels as outlined in the *Alabama Literacy Act* as full support, LS1, and LS2 schools.

Automatic disqualification will occur for individuals who do not submit a completed [FORM link](#) with evidence outlining each component.

Each component should be addressed:

- In a concise manner.
- Must only address information relevant to the component.
- Appendix A may be sent via email to cgillespie@alsde.edu

NOTE: The full URL for the form link is as follows: <https://forms.office.com/r/kjtA5LxM7i>

2.2 Scope of Alabama State Department of Education's Work and Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities of the ALSDE/ARI are stated below:

- ALSDE/ARI will work closely with the vendor to facilitate professional communication with ARI regional staff members, LEA central office contacts, principals, and local reading specialists when information regarding their work is needed to enhance the support provided.
- ALSDE/ARI staff will have the opportunity to meet with vendor contacts monthly to receive updates on the status of the work, receive needed documentation of this work, and confer with vendor regarding perceived successes, struggles, and needed supporting data.
- ALSDE/ARI staff will review each element of the best practices in early literacy policy and implementation with the team to discuss ways to gather qualitative and quantitative data on these ongoing elements, as well as to share previous evaluation data that has been completed so that alignment to past evaluations can be made for like items. The ALSDE/ARI may wish to involve other personnel to best provide information.

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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. *This is submitted via the FORM for responses. Typical procedure requests hard copy cover letter. In this RFP, the digital signature on the FORM will serve as your official authorization to the proposal and serve to provide your contact information.*

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. *This is submitted via the FORM for responses.*

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. *This is submitted via the FORM for responses.*

Vendor Organization:

Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies to be responsive to the requirements of this RFP. *This is submitted via the FORM for responses.*

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. *This is submitted via the FORM for responses.*

Executive Summary:

An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor's proposal. *This is submitted via the FORM for responses.*

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Part IV

Cost Proposal:

Vendor shall include the fee structure and pricing for any training sessions/program if applicable. The vendor shall submit a cost proposal in addition to other required information. *This is submitted via the FORM for responses.*

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 qualification for such individuals.** Subcontractors 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 subcontractor; however, the ALSDE reserves the right to refuse the subcontractor you have selected. Contractor and associated personnel shall remain solely responsible for the performance of all work, including work that may be subcontracted.

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.

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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.

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