

Request for Proposal (RFP)
RFP ALSDE 2024-15
Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)
Career and Technical Education/Workforce Development

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP ALSDE 2024-15
CAREER PLANNING MANAGEMENT PLATFORM
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION/WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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 North Ripley Street, Room P305
Gordon Persons Building
Montgomery, AL 36104
Email: cgillespie@alsde.edu

Deadline:

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00PM Central on August 28, 2024.

It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2024-15 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 Procurement 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.

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background

Purpose:

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit competitive, sealed proposals to establish a contract for the development, implementation, and management of a statewide Career Planning Management Platform. This platform will serve as a comprehensive tool designed to assist local education agencies (LEAs) and K-12 students in managing career development and growth. Additionally, the platform should help students plan, track, and achieve their career goals through a range of features and functionalities.

Alabama's annual average unemployment rate for 2023 was 2.6% and annual average labor force participation rate was a staggering 57%. There is widespread agreement that a statewide Career Planning Management Platform will aid students in their career development, ultimately combatting employment gaps. The *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (Perkins V) echoes this need by emphasizing career exploration and career development activities in the middle grades and allowing funds to be spent on students as early as fifth grade.

In addition to school counselors, career coaches, and teachers, a comprehensive Career Planning Management Platform is designed to provide career guidance and career development opportunities to students seeking to make informed career choices.

The primary objectives of a statewide Career Planning Management Platform are:

- Provide participants with valuable insights into different career paths.
- Equip participants with the necessary tools and resources for effective career planning.
- Foster collaboration between schools, industry partners, and postsecondary institutions.
- Utilize technology and innovative approaches to deliver a dynamic and impactful experience.
- Support career planning and goal setting.
- Improve access to career resources and opportunities.
- Enhance workforce readiness and employability.

Background:

"Every Child. Every Chance. Every Day" is not only our Department's motto, but a guiding philosophy about the work that we undertake on behalf of Alabama's K-12 students. Our guiding philosophy is that *every child* should be afforded *every chance* to succeed in school and thus make wise choices *every day* leading to success in career, family, and life after high school.

The ALSDE recognizes the critical importance of career development in empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their future. With the rapidly evolving job market and the diverse array of career paths available, there is a growing need for accessible and dynamic career planning opportunities. A statewide Career Planning Management Platform will bring career guidance directly to students eliminating barriers to access and ensuring that a wide range of participants can benefit from valuable insights and resources.

1.2 Anticipated Time Table

Thursday, August 15, 2024	Question Submission Deadline
Friday, August 16, 2024	Question Responses Due
Wednesday, August 28, 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	30 points
Detailed description and delivery of training materials, presentations, and/or modules	35 points

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. 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. This may include requesting a presentation of top finalists for final scoring. 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. 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 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 the 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 contract resulting from this RFP may be renewable for four (4) additional years pending written agreement of the vendor & 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 the Chief Procurement Officer's (CPO) 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

- The vendor's proposal should fully address all components outlined below with clarity and precision.
- Development, implementation, and management of a web-based Career Planning Management Platform that includes a platform for:
 - Students, parents, and educators to connect with and explore business/industry partners.
 - Students, parents, and educators to connect with and explore postsecondary institutions.
 - Students to build and maintain an electronic portfolio where they can create and store cover letters; resumes; job applications; interest, aptitude, and achievement assessment results; four-year high school educational plans; education/career preparedness checklists; examples of academic and career preparedness achievements (student organizations, club memberships, honors, credentials, certificates, awards, community service experiences, recommendations)
 - Students to create and manage four-year plans where parents can provide input and approve plans electronically.
 - Students to create and manage four-year plans where educators can provide input and mass manage student's individual plans (print, approve, etc.).
 - Students to participate in high quality, tested, and proven career assessments that assess individual student's interests, aptitude, values, and personality.
 - Students to participate in career assessments that engage them, consume a reasonable amount of time, and include a variety of evaluations that measure a range of depths for student outcomes.
- The Career Planning Management Platform should provide:
 - An administrative dashboard that includes reporting capabilities for each school, school system, workforce region, and state.
 - Students, parents, and educators with data on occupations, industry clusters, and sectors that align with student profiles. This includes workforce information on wages, demand at local and statewide levels, educational attainment requirements, and pathways to achieve these educational goals.
 - Interactive and engaging resources including lesson plans, activities, and presentations.
 - Career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation tools that provide opportunities for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade to participate in career growth and planning activities.
 - Additional features to include test preparation resources (ACT, Accuplacer, etc.).
 - Technology and digital tools to enhance the student, educator, and parent experience.
 - A statewide training and implementation plan for the Career Planning Management Platform to include qualified team members, scheduling and logistics plans, and marketing materials.

- Integration capabilities with the state’s Student Information System, PowerSchool. Integration capabilities should exist or be provided by the selected vendor.
- A platform that works across device types (iPad, chrome book, laptop, etc.).
- The proposal from the vendor should include:
 - An outline of the vendor’s qualifications and experience that answer the following questions:
 - Does the vendor have a diverse background of clients?
 - Is the vendor well established and have the infrastructure to successfully manage the Career Planning Management Platform?
 - Does the vendor have experience with statewide implementation?
 - Does the vendor have experience working with K12 partners to provide career planning services.
 - A budget proposal that:
 - Provides budget justification and rationale for each budget line item.
 - Provides an assessment of the proposed costs in relation to the anticipated benefits and outcomes.

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

- In collaboration with the selected vendor, design, develop, and implement the Career Planning Management Platform.
- In collaboration with the selected vendor, develop a statewide plan for school system expectations in usage of the Career Planning Management Platform.
- Provide qualified facilitators with expertise in career counseling, guidance, and exploration.
- Assist with school system coordination to schedule trainings and promote the Career Planning Management Platform.
- Collect feedback and evaluate the effectiveness of Career Planning Management Platform.

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.

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 if applicable or requested. The vendor shall submit a cost proposal in addition to other required information.

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 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.

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.

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