

## FAQ

### 1.3 Scope of Procurement

Can you please define/clarify by the meaning of “application development services or general consulting professional services”? Can you provide examples of what can not be offered?

*Application development is the designing, writing, and testing of custom code for a specialized business function. General consulting professional services includes network engineering/design services, technical maintenance, installations, and training. Other examples of what can not be offered might include: design and implementation of a VOIP network, external security audit, web development and web hosting.*

### 3.20 Insurance

Does “The vendor shall bear the full and complete responsibility for all risk of damage or loss of equipment, ... from any cause whatsoever and shall not...” mean that if [Company Name]’s equipment is stolen or vandalized once it has been installed and accepted by the Joint College System, that [Company Name] would be expected to replace the equipment for no additional charge?

*No, this only applies to damage or loss during shipping. Once equipment is received it becomes the property of the institution.*

### 3.22 Product and Service Delivery Overview

“... include a map with an indication of the locations where products may be delivered plus the number and type of support personnel or other resources that may be employed to service procuring entity purchase orders.” Can you clarify what specifically is being asked for? Please provide an example of what is being asked for. Are you asking for the locations that the vendor has in AL?

*This is seeking to determine where the product will be shipped from and from where will any service personnel come. A very basic example for a fictitious company has been included.*

### Section 3.28 Pricing Level and Guarantee

This section requests a narrative that describes the baseline (published) pricing and the pricing level percentage discounts by product class or category in the ESS.

### Section 3.30 Equipment and Services Schedule

This section request a complete ESS include the products and services offered, at the initial pricing level

Question – Is the ESS required in Section 3.30 to be the published with the discount percentages listed, or is the ESS to be a price catalog with discounts already taken? Example – Desktop published prices is \$1,000. Could be listed for evaluation purposes as \$1,000 less 5% discount, or as \$950 bid price.

*Each vendor may determine which methodology they would like to use to create the ESS. It is the vendor’s responsibility, though, to clearly articulate in their bid response which methodology they are using. Therefore, it is not necessary to list the discount percentages as long as the vendor determines the discount and applies it to the catalog.*

### 3.30 Equipment and Services Schedule

Can we present a link to [Company Name]’s Alabama College System Website (this site has been established in the evaluation purpose of this RFP) in place of sending a floppy disk or CD of Equipment and Service Schedule?

*This would be satisfactory, as it is an electronic format. For purposes of evaluation the committee will print the catalog. The hardcopy of the evaluation site will become part of the official response.*

Will this bid award be open to participation by any K-12 entities in the state.

*No.*

Is an “agency model” proposal acceptable?

*Yes.*

Exactly who is eligible to purchase from this agreement?

*Any of the entities listed in Appendix C of the RFB.*

Can there be more than one award for each “brand” of equipment? For example, could the manufacturer AND resellers of the same brand be on the contract? Can more than one reseller of one brand be on the contract?

*This is a catalog award, not a brand award. The Committee will evaluate the submitted bid on the breadth, scope, and pricing levels of the vendor's catalog offering. It is the intention of the committee that if a vendor is awarded the bid, then any entity in the Alabama College System could buy any of the product categories listed on the vendor's initial bid response.*

Can the bidder bid, and receive an award, for more than one brand of equipment?

*As mentioned in the above answer, this is a catalog award, not a brand award. Therefore if a company has several brands of equipment in their catalog offering and they are awarded the bid, then any entity may purchase any of the product categories listed in the catalog.*

Does the bidder have to present proof with the proposal that he is authorized to bid the brand for this opportunity?

*Yes. Due to the fact that some manufacturers sell direct and not through a reseller, it is vital to ensure that a reseller does indeed have authority from the manufacturer to offer the manufacturer's product. This proof of authorization should be included with the other references, certifications, and other documentation required by the RFB.*

Is a percentage discount off the vendor's catalog the only allowable price structure, or will a cost-plus structure be allowed?

*A cost-plus structure is an allowable price structure.*

3.30 Equipment and Services Schedule states, "[Presenting a link to the vendor's Alabama College System Website] would be satisfactory, as it is an electronic format. For purposes of evaluation the committee will print the catalog..." We wish to offer our full catalog to the System; this catalog, in Excel format, includes hundreds of pages of product, and the online catalog would be more cumbersome. Will the system allow the link to the website, even if it is not possible to print or does the system, in the case, desire the catalog sent in hard copy?

*The system's desired goal of having the ESS sent on disk is to maintain as a permanent record a copy of the ESS that can not be modified by the vendor in the event that the award is audited. By printing the ESS from the website, the goal is maintained, making it a viable, but not desirable, alternative. The committee would rather not have to cope with hundreds of printed pages of a catalog for the evaluation process. An ESS that is sent in on disk in Excel format will not be printed, thus saving valuable storage space and paper resources. It is the desire of the committee that the ESS be submitted in the format requested in section 3.30 of the Request for Bid, however, to facilitate the work of vendors, the link will suffice.*

Will a publicly distributed line card of manufacturers a bidder is authorized to sell serve as documentation or must bidders send authorizations letters for every manufacturer bid?

*The committee only requires proof of authorization to resell and will accept that proof in any format that best serves the needs of the vendor.*

Section 3.16 states that "the vendor may offer only those products and services that are included on the Equipment and Service Schedule," and also states that the "Vendor shall keep the schedule current ... and shall reflect changes in technology." These appear to be incongruent. May a vendor include additional items on the ESS as technology changes and new, better products are developed?

*Yes.*

Will you allow interested manufactures to bid their Multi-Function devices, accessories, and software?

*Yes. Multi-function devices are considered technology devices. According to an Attorney General's opinion dated April 14, 2005 in response to this question being asked by the Brewton City School Superintendent of Education, Multi-Function devices qualify as a technology device so long as it can be used for scanning, printing, or faxing in addition to copying.*

We are a small business that would like to bid, but are unclear as to whether ISO 9001 certification "as required by Alabama law" applies to a company our size. Are you able to share details regarding this requirement?

*Yes, the ISO 9001 requirement contains no exceptions based on the size of the company. The RFB states:*

*"any companies or contractors whose affiliates, subdivisions, subsidiaries, or departments have ISO 9001 certification can bid on the information technology to be jointly purchased by educational institutions"*

*The Joint Purchase Committee takes a very broad interpretation of this statement. The word "affiliate" implies that if any business from which a company that is bidding obtains equipment is ISO 9001 certified, then the requirement of the statement has been met.*

Can the Joint Purchase Agreement users acquire equipment via Lease/Lease Purchase as well as Outright Purchase based on the awards?

*Yes, vendors may make lease/lease purchase arrangements as stated in section 3.52 of the RFB which reads: "Vendor may lease equipment to procuring entities in accordance with terms and conditions approved by the appropriate governing authority for the procuring entity."*

On the last JPA, one vendor offered "Wide Format" products as an option, I would like to offer mine on this RFB. Since they meet the criteria of copying and network printing, will it be acceptable for me to include those products?  
*Yes.*

I do not completely understand the "Evaluation Process" and factors that are assigned a point value. Could you please explain the factors which are critical to meet for the evaluation process?

*The following is a summary of evaluation factors. Each of these factors has been assigned a point value. These weighted factors will be used in the evaluation of the individual vendor responses. Only finalists will receive points for their oral presentation and demonstration. If no oral presentation is deemed necessary by the Evaluation Committee, each finalist will receive full points.*

*Specification*

- 1. Product and Services Delivery Overview*
- 2. Reporting*
- 3. Electronic Commerce*
- 4. Breadth of Offering*
- 5. Primary Account Representative*
- 6. References*
- 7. Pricing Level and Guarantee*
- 8. Oral Presentation and Demonstration*

Is a "distribution model" proposal acceptable?

*Yes. The System recognizes that potential vendors have different business models for the delivery of products and services. It is not the System's desire to exclude any potential vendor based on the model that the vendor has found works well for them. Therefore, a Manufacturer may provide a bid response in which they set base pricing of the equipment and provide a list of local partners through whom that equipment can be acquired. Purchase orders can then be sent to the local partner instead of to the Manufacturer provided that the local partner is on the list of authorized resellers maintained by the awarded vendor. The list of authorized resellers may be updated by the Manufacturer at any time during the contract period. Local partners will only be allowed to sell equipment that the Manufacturer has listed in the bid response and approved that particular local partner to sell on the behalf of the Manufacturer.*

Since all entities that will utilize this JPA are eligible for 'State' pricing, will it be acceptable for me to bid our published "State and Local" pricing without a percent discount since it is already discounted?

*Each vendor may determine which methodology they would like to use to create the ESS. It is the vendor's responsibility, though, to clearly articulate in their bid response which methodology they are using. Therefore, it is not necessary to list the discount percentages as long as the vendor determines the discount and applies it to the catalog.*

Does the bidder have to present proof with the proposal that he is authorized to bid the brand for this opportunity?

*Yes. Due to the fact that some manufacturers sell direct and not through a reseller, it is vital to ensure that a reseller does indeed have authority from the manufacturer to offer the manufacturer's product. This proof of authorization should be included with the other references, certifications, and other documentation required by the RFB*

Will a publicly distributed line card of manufacturers a bidder is authorized to sell serve as documentation or must bidders send authorizations letters for every manufacturer bid?

*The committee only requires proof of authorization to resell and will accept that proof in any format that best serves the needs of the vendor.*

What has been the past \$ volume purchasing history per year on the most current contract? What vendor and manufacturer have been responsible for most of this volume?

*This information has not been gathered on the most current contract and is unknown. Specific language was introduced in this contract in 3.23 that states if reports are not provided by the vendors then a vendor could face removal from the contract. An example report was also presented in Appendix D so that vendors would know exactly what the committee is looking for in regards to reporting.*

Are there currently any existing manufacturer standards in place for the products represented on this contract?

*Section 3.1 of the RFB states that "Vendor must also include ISO 9001 certification as required by State Code governing Joint Purchase Agreements. According to Alabama law, any companies or contractors whose affiliates, subdivisions, subsidiaries, or departments have ISO 9001 certification can bid on the information technology to be jointly purchased by educational institutions."*

Is the Alabama College System interested in bids from vendors representing Tier 1 manufacturers as rated by Gartner, or will other brands be accepted?

*The Alabama College System is interested in bids from all vendors regardless of Gartner ratings.*

Does the Alabama College System (ACS) have prescribed processes or frequency for the review and updating of contract technology and pricing?

*No.*

In terms of value added services, what lifecycle services (imaging, asset tagging, etc.) will the ACS require, or will this vary by institution?

*No value added services are required by the RFB, but are strongly recommended. Use of these services will vary by institution.*

The bid makes reference to an evaluation committee, evaluation criteria, and a point system for scoring the responses. Can the ACS detail what are the evaluation criteria and what points will be assigned to each?

*The following is a summary of evaluation factors. Each of these factors has been assigned a point value. These weighted factors will be used in the evaluation of the individual vendor responses. Only finalists will receive points for their oral presentation and demonstration. If no oral presentation is deemed necessary by the Evaluation Committee, each finalist will receive full points.*

*Specification*

- 1. Product and Services Delivery Overview*
- 9. Reporting*
- 10. Electronic Commerce*
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- 13. References*
- 14. Pricing Level and Guarantee*
- 15. Oral Presentation and Demonstration*

*The committee has decided not to publish the assigned point values to vendors.*

What on-site technical assistance will be required by ACS institutions?

*None is required, but if that is a value added service that a vendor can provide, then they should include that in the value added service section of their bid response.*

Servers: Is the ACS interested in both 32 and 64 bit technology?

*Yes.*

May other Alabama public sector institutions take advantage of any resulting contract with ACS?

*No, only those institutions which are currently part of the Alabama College System (listed in section 1.1 and Appendix A) or any institutions or programs that may be acquired or added to the System during the life of the contract will be allowed to take advantage of any resulting contract*

May I get a Microsoft Word version of the RFB?

*Yes. A Microsoft Word version of the RFB has been uploaded to the Alabama College System website at <http://www.acs.cc.al.us>.*

In a previous Joint Purchasing Agreement, you stated that “each vendor may determine which methodology they would like to use to create the ESS”. Is that the case for this JPA as well? For one of our manufacturers, we have multiple discounts for different product classes. For others we have one discount across the board. Is this acceptable, or do they all need to have the same type of discount.

*As stated in answer 1 above, each vendor may determine which methodology they would like to use to create the ESS. It is the vendor's responsibility, though, to clearly articulate in their bid response which methodology or methodologies they are using.*

I understand and have read the clarifications regarding the ISO-9001 requirement. Each of our manufacturers that we will represent on this Joint Purchasing Agreement has the ISO-9001 certification, however one is not able to provide the actual certificate. Is a copy of the certificate required in this bid?

*Provide those certificates that you can.*

Regarding Section 3.22, pg.12, it states that “Vendors must submit satisfaction statistics or survey results concerning the quality of the products and/or services offered.” We are able to get some customer satisfaction information from some of our manufacturers, however several do not have this information in a survey or customer satisfaction statistics format. Are you flexible on the type of customer information you are looking for?

*Yes. Please provide what can be obtained.*

Regarding Section 3.26, pg, 14, it states that we should “Identify by name and location the proposed primary account representative and marketing supervisor who is responsible for the performance of the agreement.” We have four offices in Alabama, with a different education representative in each one. Should I list each one – one for each territory, or should there be a single primary account representative?

*Please list one single primary account representative that could be contacted by the Joint Purchase Agreement Administrator should a need arise. You may include your other educational representatives and direct that institutions within the system contact those representatives when they have a need for products or services.*

Regarding Section 3.48, pg. 18, it states that the “Vendor agrees that all hardware meets FCC Certifications.” We sell audio-visual communications technology, and by law all communications equipment must meet FCC Certifications to be manufactured. Therefore all of our manufacturers are FCC Certified. Do we need to provide actual FCC Certificates?

*No.*