

**MARKETING AND REBRANDING INITIATIVE
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

1. BACKGROUND

THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

The Department of Postsecondary Education (DPE) was established by the Alabama Legislature as a separate state agency in May of 1982 with the passage of Act No. 82-486. This Act authorized the State Board of Education to appoint a Chancellor for the purpose of: (1) assisting the State Board in carrying out its authority with respect to the management and operation of the community, junior, and technical colleges, and Athens State University; and (2) administering the Office of the Chancellor, including the appointment of personnel as needed to carry out the tasks and responsibilities of the Department. The Department is supported by both state and federal funding. Department employees are not subject to or governed by the provisions of the State Merit System laws, but are entitled to all benefits accruing to Merit System employees, including the right to accumulate leave and participate in the Teachers' Retirement System and State Employee's Health Insurance Plan. All personnel serve at the pleasure of the Chancellor.

MISSION

The DPE has direct responsibility to the State Board of Education for the direction and supervision of educational programs and services provided by the Alabama Community College System. The Department provides leadership, service, and regulatory functions for the member institutions of the Alabama Community College System to ensure educational accessibility, excellence, and equity for all citizens of Alabama. The Department of Postsecondary Education is supported by both state and federal funding. The Department's three core missions are *academics*, *adult education*, and *workforce development*.

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Governed by the State Board of Education, the Alabama Community College System consists of 22 comprehensive community colleges and four technical colleges; Athens State University; and, extensive workforce development initiatives, including the Alabama Industrial Development Training Institute and the Alabama Technology Network.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

The Mission of the Alabama Community College System is to provide a unified system of institutions dedicated to excellence in delivering academic education, adult education, and

workforce development. Our Vision is to develop an educated, prosperous population by providing an affordable pathway to help citizens of any walk or stage of life succeed through quality education and training; a community college system where education works for all. We value integrity, excellence, accessibility, accountability and diversity.

Approximately 300,000 people are served annually by all of the entities of our system, including AIDT, ATN, workforce development, and adult education. Of those served, 24,000 are enrolled in the adult education program.

The Alabama Community College System's commitment to accessibility is characterized by statewide geographical locations, open enrollment, and low-cost tuition. A variety of programs and services remove barriers to college entrance, and provide pathways to educational programs and workforce training opportunities. In addition, thousands of citizens statewide enjoy access to our facilities for community activities and enrichment programs.

The Alabama Community College System provides:

- General education and other collegiate programs at the freshman and sophomore levels prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions to complete baccalaureate degrees, as well as an upper division university that provides selected baccalaureate programs.
- Adult Education focuses on improving individuals' skills, productivity, and training readiness by providing GED preparation and testing, basic skills instruction, and English as a Second Language classes.
- Workforce development initiatives provide customized, flexible, short-term training programs that are responsive to industry needs—from highly specialized training to programs that help prepare entry level employees to meet growing demands.

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

As the fiscal agent for federal and state adult education funding, the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education provides grants to eligible agencies that help individuals become more literate and obtain knowledge and skills that can improve their lives. As part of the Instructional and Student Services Division, the Adult Education (AE) Unit assists Alabamians in achieving the basic skills and the credentials they need to be productive workers, responsible family members, and engaged citizens. The Adult Education Program provides free basic skills instruction in reading, writing, math, English language competency, and GED Test preparation. Adult education's target population are individuals: 1) 17 years of age or older, not enrolled in secondary school, not required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law, and function below the level of a high school graduate, and 2) whose primary language is other than English. Services are provided by eligible providers that currently include two-year colleges and a community based organization. Services are provided to both the institutionalized and general populations. Services for the sensory impaired are provided by Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind.

The GED Tests provide an opportunity for those who have not graduated from high school to earn a high school equivalency diploma. In Alabama, individuals passing these tests earn the State of Alabama High School Equivalency Diploma. There are 53 Official GED Test Centers in Alabama. Thirty-eight are located at the state's public two-year colleges. The remaining centers are located at four-year universities, county/city boards of education, the Department of Youth Services, and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind.

The Alabama Adult Education Program's vision is to be nationally recognized as providing quality services through a network of attractive, accessible adult education centers. Its services represent critical components of the Alabama Community College System's mission and the state's workforce and economic development strategies by providing seamless pathways to postsecondary education and training as a means to provide employment skills to adults who have not followed traditional educational routes. The Alabama Adult Education Program strives to:

- reach its goals by operating in an ethical, open, and cost efficient manner in all of its programs and business affairs,
- maintain a relationship of trust and openness with our communities, funders, students, and educational partners,
- establish and maintain a safe and caring work and educational environment that fosters integrity and excellence,
- provide a nurturing and disciplined learning environment for students of all ages and backgrounds, and does so by providing quality programs and services, encouraging academic rigor, and maintaining a skilled, dedicated, and student-oriented faculty and professional staff,
- utilize the most effective teaching and learning technologies and strategies that enhance student skills and abilities now and into the future,
- be a model civic partner by collaboratively engaging communities, organizations, and businesses in programs, projects, and activities that help lead our students and communities to a better quality of life,
- establish a working culture focused on continuous program improvement and innovation which provide services that lead to successful career and/or higher education pathways for our clients, and
- provide the highest quality teaching staff and does so through accessible and frequent professional development activities.

2. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

This request for proposal will be governed by the following schedule:

Release of RFP: July 16, 2010

Deadline for written questions: July 23, 2010

Responses to questions posted on the web: July 30, 2010

Proposals are due: August 6, 2010

Proposal evaluation completed: August 20, 2010

Approval of contract: Upon approval of Legislative Contract Oversight Committee

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The scope of services shall include the design and implementation of a comprehensive marketing and community outreach effort that:

- A. Increases awareness statewide of the quality, free services offered by the Adult Education Program.
- B. Develops an Adult Education Program brand identity in relation to the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) mission.
- C. Will present to the public a unified image of the adult education program and its employees with user friendly tools and a blueprint for strategic communications.
- D. Improves customer connections resulting in increased enrollment.
- E. Improves the adult education program's image.
- F. Develops a collection of logo versions and collateral materials that arouse a strong sense of identity and purpose.
- G. Recommends the use of various media to increase statewide awareness of adult education services and successes.
- H. Develops an evaluation model which captures the success of the Marketing Plan.

4. PROPOSAL FORMAT GUIDELINES

Interested contractors are to provide the DPE with a thorough proposal using the following guidelines:

Proposal should be typed and should contain no more than 20 typed pages using a 10-point font size, including transmittal letter and resumes of key people, but excluding Index/Table of Contents, tables, charts, and graphic exhibits. Each proposal will adhere to the following order and content of sections. The proposal should be straightforward, concise and provide "layman"

explanations of technical terms that are used. Emphasis should be concentrated on conforming to the RFP instructions, responding to the RFP requirements, and on providing a complete and clear description of the offer. Proposals, which appear unrealistic in the terms of technical commitments, lack of technical competence or are indicative of failure to comprehend the complexity and risk of this contract, may be rejected. The following proposal sections are to be included in the proposer's response:

Cover Letter

A cover letter, not to exceed three pages in length, should summarize key elements of the proposal. An individual authorized to bind the consultant must sign the letter. The letter must stipulate that the price will be valid for a period of at least 60 days. Indicate the address and telephone number of the contractor's office from which the project will be managed.

Background and Project Summary Section

The Background and Project Summary Section should describe your understanding of the DPE and the ACCS, the work to be done, and the objectives to be accomplished. Refer to Scope of Services of this RFP.

Methodology Section

Provide a detailed description of the approach and methodology to be used to accomplish the Scope of Services of this RFP. The Methodology Section should include:

- (1) An implementation plan that describes in detail (i) the methods, including controls by which your firm manages projects of the type sought by this RFP; (ii) methodology for soliciting and documenting views of internal and external stakeholders; (iii) and any other project management or implementation strategies or techniques that the respondent intends to employ in carrying out the work.
- (2) Detailed description of efforts your firm will undertake to achieve client satisfaction and to satisfy the requirements of the "Scope of Services" section.
- (3) Detailed project schedule, identifying all tasks and deliverables to be performed, durations for each task, and overall time of completion.
- (4) Detailed description of specific tasks you will require from staff. Explain what the respective roles of staff and your staff would be to complete the tasks specified in the scope of services.

Staffing

Provide a list of individual(s) who will be working on this project and indicate the functions that each will perform. Include a resume for each designated individual. Upon award and during the contract period, if the contractor chooses to assign different personnel to the project, the Contractor must submit their names and qualifications including information listed above to the DPE for approval before they begin work.

Qualifications

The information requested in this section should describe the qualifications of the firm, key staff and sub-contractors performing projects within the past five years that are similar in size and scope to demonstrate competence to perform these services. Information shall include:

- (1) Names of key staff that participated on named projects and their specific responsibilities with respect to this Scope of Work.
- (2) A summary of your firm's demonstrated capability, including length of time that your firm has provided the services being requested in this Request for Proposal.
- (3) Provide at least five references that received similar services from your firm. The DPE reserves the right to contact any of the organizations or individuals listed. Information provided shall include:
 - a) Client Name
 - b) Project Description
 - c) Project start and end dates
 - d) Client project manager name and telephone number

Fee Proposal

Provide a time and material fee schedule. This cost proposal should include direct man-hour rate and any out-of-pocket cost structures that should have prior authorization by the DPE.

5. PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

Content of Proposal

The proposal must be submitted using the format as indicated in the proposal format guidelines.

Preparation of Proposal

Each proposal shall be prepared simply and economically, avoiding the use of elaborate promotional material beyond those sufficient to provide a complete, accurate and reliable presentation.

Number of Proposals

Submit one original and eight (8) copies of your proposal in sufficient detail to allow for thorough evaluation and comparative analysis.

Submission of Proposals

Complete written proposals must be submitted in sealed envelopes to:

Joe Macaluso, Interim State Director of Adult Education
Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education
135 South Union Street, Room 317
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
RE: Request for Proposal

All proposals must be received by no later than 4:00 pm on August 6, 2010. Proposals will not be accepted after this deadline. Faxed or e-mailed proposals will not be accepted.

Inquiries

Questions about this RFP must be directed in writing or by e-mail to:

Joe Macaluso, Interim State Director of Adult Education
Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education
135 South Union Street, Room 317
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
macaluso@dpe.edu

From the date that this RFP is issued until a firm is selected and the selection is announced, firms are not allowed to communicate for any reason with any DPE employee other than the contracting officer listed above regarding this proposal. The DPE reserves the right to reject any proposal for violation of this provision. No questions other than written will be accepted, and no response other than written will be binding upon the DPE.

Conditions for Proposal Acceptance

This RFP does not commit the DPE to award a contract or to pay any costs incurred for any services. The DPE, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to accept or reject any or all

proposals received as a result of this RFP, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel this RFP in part or in its entirety. All proposals will become the property of the DPE. If any proprietary information is contained in the proposal, it should be clearly identified.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The DPE's consultant evaluation and selection process is based upon Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) for professional services. The DPE may use some or all of the following criteria in its evaluation and comparison of proposals submitted. The criteria listed are not necessarily an all-inclusive list. The order in which they appear is not intended to indicate their relative importance:

- A. Compliance with RFP requirements
- B. Understanding of the project
- C. Recent experience in conducting similar scope, complexity, and magnitude for other public agencies
- D. Educational background, work experience, and directly related consulting experiences
- E. Price
- F. References

The DPE may also contact and evaluate the proposer's and subcontractor's references; contact any proposer to clarify any response; contact any current users of a proposer's services; solicit information from any available source concerning any aspect of a proposal; and seek and review any other information deemed pertinent to the evaluation process. The evaluation committee shall not be obligated to accept the lowest priced proposal, but shall make an award in the best interests of the System.

After written proposals have been reviewed, discussions with prospective firms may or may not be required. If scheduled, the oral interview will be a question/answer format for the purpose of clarifying the intent of any portions of the proposal. The individual that will be directly responsible for carrying out the contract, if awarded, should be present at the oral interview.

A Notification of Intent to Award may be sent to the vendor selected. Award is contingent upon the successful negotiation of final contract terms. Negotiations shall be confidential and not subject to disclosure to competing vendors unless an agreement is reached. If contract negotiations cannot be concluded successfully, the DPE may negotiate a contract with the next highest scoring vendor or withdraw the RFP.

7. STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Amendments

The DPE reserves the right to amend this RFP prior to the proposal due date. All amendments and additional information will be posted to the DPE's website. Proposers should check this web page daily for new information.

8. COST FOR PREPARING PROPOSAL

The cost for developing the proposal is the sole responsibility of the proposer. All proposals submitted become the property of the DPE.

Contract Discussions

Prior to award, the apparent successful firm may be required to enter into discussions with the DPE to resolve any contractual differences. These discussions are to be finalized and all exceptions resolved within one (1) week from notification. If no resolution is reached, the proposal may be rejected and discussions will be initiated with the second highest scoring firm.

Confidentiality Requirements

The staff members assigned to this project may be required to sign a departmental non-disclosure statement. Proposals are subject to the Freedom Information Act. The DPE cannot protect proprietary data submitted in proposals.

Financial Information

The DPE is concerned about proposers' financial capability to perform, therefore, may ask you to provide sufficient data to allow for an evaluation of your firm's financial capabilities.