

**FEDERAL AFFAIRS CONSULTANT
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

1. BACKGROUND

The Department of Postsecondary Education was established as a separate state agency in May of 1982 by the passage of Act No. 82-486 by the Alabama Legislature. 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.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Department of Postsecondary Education (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

The Department of Postsecondary Education 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.

ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Governed by the State Board of Education, the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) 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 (AIDT) and the Alabama Technology Network (ATN).

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, approximately 125,000 are enrolled in credit courses.

The Alabama Community College System's commitment to access is characterized by statewide geographical locations, open enrollment, and low-cost tuition, as well as a variety of programs and services that remove barriers to college entrance, education pathways 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 is committed to providing a unified system of institutions delivering excellence in academic education, adult education, and workforce development.

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 with GED preparation and testing, basic skills, and English as a Second Language
- 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.

2. SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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

Release of RFP	November 14, 2008
Deadline for Written Questions	November 24, 2008
Responses to Questions Posted on Web	November 25, 2008
Proposals are Due	December 1, 2008
Proposal Evaluation Completed	December 5, 2008
Approval of Contract	December 12, 2008

3. SCOPE OF SERVICES

- A. Advise the DPE on the implementation, compliance, and grant opportunities under the Higher Education Opportunity Act.
- B. Identify potential Federal Government funding opportunities that match the ACCS's workforce funding needs specifically for aerospace, health care, automotive, maritime, and life sciences/biotechnology.

- C. Advise the DPE and ACCS on development of performance based funding formulas and evaluation mechanism in programs areas such as, but not limited to, adult education and career technical education.
- D. Develop strategies to achieve the identified priorities, concentrating first on opportunities with the greatest chance of success.
- E. Generate support for the ACCS's agenda among members of the Alabama Congressional delegation, key congressional committees, federal agencies specifically the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, and NASA.
- F. Develop and maintain good working relationships between the ACCS and the Alabama Congressional delegation, key congressional committee members, federal agencies and through personal meetings, briefing papers, testimony, letters and direct communication with DPE staff.
- G. Work with DPE officials and ACCS in the preparation of grant applications or request as required by funding agencies. Monitor the progress of applications and work on behalf of the ACCS to ensure approval.
- H. Secure funding for ACCS projects through appropriations and follow up support on competitive applications.
- I. Monitor and provide analysis on all regulatory and legislative developments that may affect the interests of the ACCS and work to enhance the ACCS's position by securing timely information about policy and funding opportunities.
- J. Report regularly to designated DPE officials on implementation of the ACCS's agenda and on policy development and opportunities.
- K. Commit the time and resources necessary to develop and implement a successful strategy for the ACCS including coordinating trips to Washington, D.C. to meet with congressmen and agency representatives.
- L. Prepare support materials and represent the DPE and ACCS in congressional hearings in which funding requests of the ACCS are heard.

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. 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:

- A. 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 30 days. Indicate the address and telephone number of the contractor's office from which the project will be managed.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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

F. 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 six (6) 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:

Anita L. Archie, Director of Government Relations
Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education
401 Adams Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama 36130
RE: Request for Proposal

All proposals must be received by no later than 4:00 pm on December 1, 200. Proposal will not be accepted after this deadline. Faxed or emailed proposal will not be accepted.

- **Inquiries**

Questions about this RFP must be directed in writing, via e-mail to:

Anita L. Archie, Director of Government Relations
anita.archie@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 from your firm 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.