

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
Alabama Rural Learning Accelerator Evaluation

Alabama Industrial Development Training**

RFP Number: 2024-13

Issue Date: 8/19/24

Deadline for Questions and Answers: 9/9/24

Due Date: 9/17/24

1. Purpose

The Alabama Industrial Development Training (“AIDT”) as the fiscal agent of The Alabama STEM Council is soliciting proposals from qualified professionals (referred to as “Responder”) interested in providing evaluation for the Alabama Rural Learning Accelerator (ARLA) program for select schools in Alabama. This Request for Proposals (“RFP”) is issued in accordance with the requirements of Section 41-16-72(4), Code of Alabama (1975). This RFP is not an offer to contract but seeks the submission of proposals from qualified, professional firms that may form the basis for negotiation of evaluation support functions.

2. Intro

The Alabama STEM Council is currently accepting proposals from Alabama-based evaluation entities interested in providing evaluation and reporting services to track the success of ARLA programming. Our primary goals are to help provide students with access to STEM qualified educators in rural parts of Alabama and collaborate/mentor classroom teachers and raise the proficiency of math education in the impacted schools

The ARLA initiative is part of comprehensive efforts in Alabama to improve STEM education and address STEM teacher shortages in rural areas. The selected vendor will be awarded up to \$200,000 in funding through October 31, 2025, to implement, track, and report on designated Alabama schools currently participating in the program. There is potential for extension, contingent upon continued funding for the line item over multiple years.

About the Alabama STEM Council

The [Alabama STEM Council](#) was formed on September 21, 2020, by Governor Kay Ivey. The Council members represent leaders from Alabama businesses, education entities, and state government. The Council’s work builds on and extends Alabama’s Roadmap to STEM Success by advising on ways to improve STEM education and STEM-related career awareness and workforce pathways.

About ARLA

The ARLA initiative is a state-funded program in Alabama that pairs experienced educators from urban and suburban areas with on-site teachers in rural mathematics and science classrooms to provide collaborative support, including co-teaching. The program's goals are to enhance student achievement and persistence in STEM subjects, and to aid educators in planning and delivering STEM content. Key objectives include increasing access to quality STEM education in underserved areas, boosting student interest and resilience in STEM, and fostering educator collaboration on inquiry-based instruction. Additionally, the program involves UAB undergraduate STEM majors seeking teacher certification, who provide ACAP-aligned tutoring to students in rural and underserved districts.

3. Minimum Qualifications

For a proposal to be considered, the Responder must include documented proof that the following minimum qualifications are met. In addition, the Responder has a continuing obligation to disclose information throughout the RFP process should any qualifications or situations change that might render the Responder an unqualified candidate.

- If selected, the Responder will comply with all state regulations to conduct business in the State of Alabama and will register with the Secretary of State, if applicable.
- The Responder and its personnel have all authorizations, permits, licenses, and certifications as may be required under federal, state, or local law to perform the services specified in this RFP at the time it submits a response to this RFP.
- The Responder is experienced in working with bodies of diverse membership to engage stakeholders and convene committees toward the development of deliverables.
- The Responder is experienced in empirical and methodological STEM activities.
- The Responder has a company policy and practice of equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination based on age, race, creed, and gender.
- If applicable, the Responder will maintain sufficient procedures and capabilities to ensure the timely and accurate backup and full recovery for all servers and other data storage systems related to the project.
- If selected, the Responder will maintain commercially reasonable insurance policies to cover negligent acts or omissions that may arise in its performance of the services discussed in this RFP.
- If selected, the Responder will be in compliance with Section 9(b) of Act 2011-535, *The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act*.

4. Scope of Services

The Alabama STEM Council seeks to contract with an Alabama-based entity with evaluation expertise to develop and implement an evaluation strategy and plan. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, defining measures, developing instruments, using instruments to collect data, analyzing data, development and implementation of a measurement sustainability plan, showing students improved proficiency in grade level content and should include a focus on Algebra

preparedness and success where applicable.

1. Define Clear Objectives and Outcomes

- Logic Model Development: Create a logic model that outlines the inputs, activities, outputs, and expected outcomes of the program

2. Define Stakeholder Engagement

- Conduct interviews with key stakeholders, including program administrators, teachers, students
- Facilitate focus groups to gather in-depth qualitative data from different stakeholder groups.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

- Surveys and Questionnaires: Use pre- and post-program surveys to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors
- Standardized Tests and Assessments: Measurement sustainability plan: Measure student learning outcomes using standardized tests or work with program leadership and/or schools to administer assessments aligned with the program's objectives
- Attendance and Participation Data: Collect and analyze school records of student participation rates, and engagement metrics.
- Classroom Observations: Using established observation protocols, conduct classroom observations of classroom interactions, teaching methods, and student engagement to gather qualitative data

4. Formative and Summative Evaluation

- Formative Evaluation: Collect and analyze data throughout the program to provide ongoing feedback.
- Summative Evaluation: Conduct a comprehensive evaluation at the end of the program (1 year) to assess overall effectiveness and outcomes.

5. Comparative Analysis

- Control Groups: Where possible, use control groups to compare outcomes between participants and non-participants.

6. Data Triangulation

- Use multiple data sources and methods to validate findings and ensure a robust and accurate evaluation.

7. Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Communication

- Summative Evaluation: Conduct a comprehensive evaluation at the end of the program (1 year) to assess overall effectiveness and outcomes.
- Participate in regularly scheduled meetings with the Alabama STEM Council at a mutually agreed upon frequency and cadence, for planning, progress updates and reporting.
- Deliver a quarterly status update summarizing current evaluation findings and project progress to the Alabama STEM Council that includes a detailed report of evaluation performance in the previous quarter and to date. This report will provide insights on key metrics being tracked. The reports must cover both quantitative and qualitative data about the performance of ARLA as well as areas to improve ARLA.
- Create an annual report of progress to be delivered to the Alabama STEM Council at the conclusion of the evaluation contract with final recommendations.

Proposal Required Information

Proposals should be as thorough and detailed as possible so that the Responder's capabilities to provide the required services can be properly evaluated.

To be considered, proposal responses to this RFP must include:

1. Brief transmittal letter
2. Exhibit A: Proposal
3. Exhibit B: Minimum Qualifications (Reference Item #3 of this document)
4. Exhibit C: Cost Proposal based on Scope of Services (Reference Item #4 of this document)
5. Exhibit D: Vendor Disclosure Statement
6. Exhibit E: Beason-Hammon Affidavit (must be submitted prior to award of contract)
7. Other required documentation, as requested by AIDT during the course of the solicitation process.

5. Submission of Proposals

Issuing Office:

Alabama Industrial Development Training
One Technology Court
Montgomery, AL 36116

Submission Deadline: It is the responsibility of the Responder to ensure that one printed copy of its proposal is delivered to and received by AIDT at the above address in a sealed envelope or via email rfp@aidt.edu on or before 4:00 p.m. on September 17, 2024. AIDT will not consider proposals received after the date and time specified herein. AIDT assumes no responsibility for late delivery by the U.S. Mail, the State's Central Mail Facility, a commercial courier service, or any other method of delivery selected by the Responder. We also offer to have your RFPs sent to our RFP email by the deadline: rfp@aidt.edu. RFPs will be publicly opened beginning at 4:01 p.m. CST and prepared for distribution to the committee; however, no opinions, decisions or judgments will be rendered at that time regarding response content. Other than questions and answers (see next item), vendors should not contact the AIDT Purchasing Agent for updates on the review process.

Questions and Inquiries: The sole point of contact for purposes of this RFP is Ashley Price. Any questions or inquiries should be in writing and emailed to rfp@aidt.edu. All written questions should be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on September 9, 2024. Written responses to written questions and inquiries will be posted on AIDT's website, <https://www.aidt.edu/>. Questions will not be answered orally or in person. Any oral communications will be considered unofficial and nonbinding.

Rejection of All Proposals: AIDT reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and/or to solicit additional proposals if that is determined to be fiscally advantageous to AIDT or is otherwise determined to be in the best interests of AIDT.

6. Evaluation and Selection

AIDT will post the RFP on the Alabama Department of Finance Comptroller's website at <http://www.comptroller.alabama.gov>. Interested parties may monitor the progress and status of this RFP process on such database.

All proposals (timely received) will be reviewed and evaluated by AIDT in consultation with the Alabama STEM Council. AIDT reserves the right to request a best and final offer for fees from finalists.

Qualifications to be considered for evaluation include the overall abilities, capabilities, and experience of the Responder to develop the ARLA evaluation plan. On the advice of the Alabama STEM Council, AIDT will select the Responder it determines to be fully qualified and best suited among those submitting proposals to best meet the needs specified in this RFP.

Upon identification of the selected Responder, if any, AIDT may initiate negotiations for contract terms and conditions.

7. Efforts to Influence Selection Process Prohibited

The integrity of the RFP process is of primary importance and will not be compromised. Any written or oral communications beyond the RFP response made by Responders, or others on their behalf, whether paid or unpaid, to influence the selection process, from the time the RFP is issued through its conclusion, made directly or indirectly to AIDT staff (other than the designated contact), will be grounds for immediate elimination from the selection process.

8. Agreement

All duties of the Responder will be set forth in an Agreement to be entered into between the selected Responder and AIDT and its partners. The agreement will be for a period of up to 12 months with an opportunity for extension. The agreement will incorporate the requirements of the RFP and the proposal as negotiated.

AIDT reserves the right to terminate the agreement with thirty days' notice if the terms of the proposal and/or contract are violated.

Termination of the contract by Responder without cause can only occur with at least one hundred and twenty (120) days' notice prior to the termination of the contract.

Responder shall, within two months prior to the end of the contract term, provide AIDT with a copy of any and all materials, in any form including administrator access to websites and social media accounts, produced under the contract.

State law prohibits AIDT from agreeing to (1) indemnify the Responder, (2) waive the right for jury trial, (3) grant a security interest, or (4) agree to binding arbitration. Additionally, it is mandatory that Alabama laws apply to the performance of the contract and that jurisdiction and venue be in Montgomery, Alabama.

9. Public Information

All proposals received and subsequent communications, contracts, reports, and other records developed during the course of the relationship, except as may specifically be exempted, will be subject to the Alabama Open Records Act, Section 36-12-40, Code of Alabama (1975), and may be subject to public disclosure upon request. The Open Records Act is remedial and should therefore be liberally construed in favor of the public. The Alabama Trade Secrets Act is codified in Sections 8-27-1 through 8-27-6, Code of Alabama (1975). Responders are cautioned to be familiar with these statutes. The burden is on the one asserting the trade secret to show that the information sought to be protected meets the definition of a “trade secret” as defined in such act.

Any RFP proposal submitted that contains confidential, trade secrets or proprietary commercial information must be conspicuously marked on the outside as containing confidential information, and each page upon which confidential information appears must be conspicuously marked as such. Identification of the entire bid proposal as confidential is not acceptable unless the responder enumerates the specific grounds or applicable laws that support treatment of the entire material as protected from disclosure according to the foregoing statutes or other applicable Alabama law.

The owner of the confidential information shall indemnify and hold the State of Alabama, AIDT and their respective staffs harmless from all costs or expenses, including but not limited to attorney fees and expenses related to litigation, concerning disclosure of said information and documents.

Exhibit A PROPOSAL

Part I. Qualifications

1. Provide a description of the responder, including company overview, history and qualifications of staff that would be assigned to this project. Note any changes pending in this description.
2. Provide working links to work and corresponding references of the responder served in the last two years comparable to the scope of this RFP.
3. Provide a well-defined scope of services available and a demonstrated ability to meet the requirements of this RFP.
4. Provide a complete listing of fees, including all optional services that may be offered.
5. Provide information on all “related” or “affiliated” responders that will assist in providing the services described in this RFP.
6. Provide details of any claims, disputes, litigation, or other legal proceedings where the responder is involved, or has been involved in the three preceding years, with the State of Alabama or any of its agencies.
7. Describe any activities in which the responder is engaged which may constitute a conflict of interest.
8. Describe the responder’s general backup procedures in the event of an in-house system failure or a material business disruption (expected to impact operations for more than 8 hours).
9. Describe factors or reasons why AIDT and the Alabama Workforce Council should consider the responder more favorably than its competitors.

Exhibit B

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

For your proposal to be considered, the Responder must include documented proof that the following minimum qualifications are met. In addition, the Responder has a continuing obligation to disclose information throughout the RFP process should any qualifications or situations change that might render the Responder an unqualified candidate.

1. If selected, the Responder will comply with all state regulations to conduct business in the State of Alabama and will register with the Secretary of State, if applicable.
 Yes No
2. The Responder and its personnel have all authorizations, permits, licenses, and certifications as may be required under federal, state, or local law to perform the services specified in this RFP at the time it submits a response to this RFP.
 Yes No
3. The Responder is committed to being a neutral party for workforce and human services-focused policy support.
 Yes No
4. The Responder is committed to work closely and cooperatively with AIDT and the Alabama Workforce Council to facilitate the implementation of any enhancements or modifications required by the AIDT and the Alabama Workforce Council.
 Yes No
5. The Responder has a company policy and practice of equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination based on age, race, creed, and gender.
 Yes No
6. If selected, the Responder will carry errors and omissions insurance or a comparable instrument to cover the responder's negligent acts or omissions.
 Yes No
7. If selected, the Responder will be in compliance with Section 9(b) of Act 2011-535, *The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act*.
 Yes No

Exhibit C
COST PROPOSAL

1. Provide a detailed and itemized cost proposal to complete this project. All costs must be included.
2. AIDT will reimburse for services provided. Documentation will be required for reimbursement. Please provide what annual compensation per year for one would be, and please list in detail compensation for any other services beyond such scope.
3. The total cost for services and expenditures under this agreement shall not exceed \$200,000. Payment for charges over this amount will not be made.

AIDT is exempt by law from payment of state or local sales taxes; do not include such taxes in the Cost Proposal.

Exhibit D

VENDOR DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

All proposals in response to this RFP must include a completed Vendor Disclosure Statement, as required by Section 41-16-80, *et seq.*, Code of Alabama (1975). Copies of the Vendor Disclosure Statement and related information may be downloaded from the Alabama Attorney General's website at <http://www.ago.state.al.us/Page-Vendor-Disclosure-Statement-Information-and-Instructions>.

Exhibit E

BEASON-HAMMON AFFIDAVIT

(To be completed as a condition for the award of any contract, grant, or incentive by the State of Alabama, any political subdivision thereof, or any state-funded entity to a business entity or employer that employs one or more employees.)

State of _____

County of _____

Before me, a notary public, personally appeared _____ (print name) who, being duly sworn, says as follows:

As a condition for the award of any contract, grant, or incentive by the State of Alabama, any political subdivision thereof, or any state-funded entity or employer that employs one or more employees, I hereby attest that in my capacity as _____ (state position) for _____ (state business entity/employer/contractor name) that said business entity/employer/contractor shall not knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien.

I further attest that said business entity/employer/contractor is enrolled in the E-Verify program. (ATTACH DOCUMENTATION ESTABLISHING THAT BUSINESS ENTITY/EMPLOYER/CONTRACTOR IS ENROLLED IN THE E-VERIFY PROGRAM).

Signature of Affiant

Sworn to and subscribed before me this ____ day of _____, 2024.

I certify that the affiant is known (or made known) to me to be the identical party he or she claims to be.

Signature and Seal of Notary Public