Request for Proposal  
RFP # ALSDE 2016-10  
Special Education Services

PRESCHOOL AUDITORY-VERBAL THERAPY

Note: FAXED OR E-MAILED APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Inquiries and response submissions related to this RFP are to be addressed to:

Mr. Jacky P. Todd  
Administrator – Office of Operations  
Alabama State Department of Education  
50 N. Ripley Street, Room P305  
Gordon Persons Building  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
Telephone 334-242-9760  
Email: jtodd@alsde.edu

Deadline:

Applications must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on August 08, 2016

It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP# ALSDE 2016-10 in the lower left corner of the envelope (Response packages that are not marked will be rejected).

The application package must contain the following:

1. Original application plus four copies with original signatures (the proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided).
2. Information to certify that the vendor is currently registered with the Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Purchasing, as a State Vendor and provide the STAARS VSS Portal Vendor Number.
3. A completed affidavit for business entity/employer/vendor. Verification of enrollment in E-verify should be presented on the form found in Appendix A.

Proposal Public Opening  
August 09, 2016  
9:00 a.m.  
Gordon Persons Building  
Mabrey Whetstone Conference Room # 3346  
50 North Ripley Street  
Montgomery, AL 36104
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1.01 Purpose and Background

Purpose:
The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) is seeking proposals from eligible applicants to establish a preschool program for children between the ages of three and five years who are deaf and hard of hearing. The program will utilize an auditory-oral approach, including the provision of Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) by a certified Listening and Spoken Language Auditory-Verbal Educators (LSLS AVEd) or Auditory-Verbal Therapists (LSLS Cert. AVT) for all children in the program according to individual needs, many of whom may have cochlear implants. Services shall be provided for students attending the program both in the regular early childhood environment and through individual auditory-verbal therapy sessions, according to individual needs. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) of residence of the child will include these services and any related goals for same in the child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) and will remain responsible for developing annual IEPs and all paperwork pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The ALSDE seeks to offer a program for a maximum of 36 preschool students. The contract will be for a one year period with an option for a second year.

A lack of training in spoken language development for children with hearing impairment, as well as a lack of professionals certified to provide these services, leads to one of many challenges facing many LEAs: their ability to provide appropriate services to these children. Most often these services, if available at all, must be contracted to outside sources for various reasons: lack of qualified staff, insufficient staff, appropriate services not available within reasonable driving distance, etc. The financial burden of this outsourcing, combined with mileage reimbursements, often results in significant expense for the LEA.

Background:
The major goals of this project are to:

- Increase accessibility of Auditory-Verbal Therapy services to LEAs
- Provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for preschool children who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Increase the receptive and expressive language and vocabulary skills of preschool students with hearing impairments

Permanent hearing loss is the most frequent birth defect in the United States (3/1000 live births). When detected early and accompanied by appropriate hearing technology along with early intervention and a solid education foundation in the development of spoken language, many children born with hearing loss have the ability to develop spoken language, vocabulary, and literacy skills comparable to their hearing peers if the family chooses to pursue oral language.

One of the greatest challenges faced by families of children with hearing impairments is a lack of professionals trained in spoken language development of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, partnering with the University of North Carolina, Greensboro confirmed that professionals in Auditory-Verbal/Spoken Language Development were the most challenging services for families to obtain. Lack of available staff was the most cited reason for this difficulty. In 2015, there were twelve LSLS Certified Auditory-Verbal Therapists/Educators in Alabama.
Those eligible to apply are non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and professional organizations with the necessary expertise and demonstrated experience in providing skilled services pursuant to the RFP.

The approved contract will become effective on the date it is signed by all parties and may extend two years from the execution date of the contract agreement. This agreement is subject to termination in the event of proration of the fund from which payment under this agreement is to be made or be terminated by either party upon receipt of a thirty (30) day written notification. This agreement shall not be subject to modification or amendment except by written agreement with the appropriate authorized signatures. Neither party shall have the right to assign or transfer its rights or obligations under this contract without the written consent of the other party.

1.02 Anticipated Time Table

August 08, 2016 Proposal Submission Deadline
August 09, 2016 Bid Opening

1.03 Application Evaluation

An Evaluation Team will review the proposals and make the selection. 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 40 points
Vendor experience 30 points
Budget Proposal 20 points
References 10 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 for consideration of an award. After discussions are concluded, a vendor may be allowed to submit a “Best and Final Offer” for consideration.

The ALSDE will make all decisions regarding evaluation of the RFP. 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 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 applicants.
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For the purpose of verifying the contents of the applications, the ALSDE may request additional information, vendor interviews, and content presentations or materials. Discussions may be conducted with applicants that submit RFPs determined to be reasonably suitable for being selected for the purpose of clarifying and assuring full cooperation in meeting the required terms. The ALSDE reserves the right to reject at its sole discretion the proposals it deems non-cooperative applications.

**Method of Payment:**
Payment will be made upon receipt of an itemized, signed invoice documenting the services provided per individual student, and/or itemized receipts materials purchased. Any purchase of consumable items will not be reimbursed. Supporting documentation must be submitted if requested by the ALSDE. Final claims must be submitted monthly, no later than fifteen (15) days from the end of the previous month.

**Rejection of Proposal:**
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.

**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 publically available. This RFP is provided for the sole purpose of allowing vendors to respond to these specifications.

**Selection Process:**
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. 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.

**Disclaimer Notice:**
The ALSDE will 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.

**1.04 Conditions and Terms**

**Contract Terms:**
The contract resulting from this RFP is renewable for one additional year pending agreement of the vendor and ALSDE. The contract will commence pending Legislative Review Committee approval and the Governor’s signature.

Responses 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. Respondents must reply to each element of the RFP.
Section 2.00 Scope of Work

2.01 Scope of Provider’s Work and Responsibilities

- Establish a preschool program for children between the ages of three and five years who are deaf and hard of hearing utilizing an auditory-oral approach, including the provision of Auditory-Verbal Therapy (AVT) by a certified Listening and Spoken Language Auditory-Verbal Educators (LSLS A VEd) or Auditory-Verbal Therapists (LSLS Cert. AVT) for all children in the program, many of whom may have cochlear implants, based upon individual needs determined by the child’s IEP Team.
- Maintain a copy of each child’s IEP securely at the program facility.
- Adhere to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) confidentiality, providing instruction to program staff as necessary.
- Provide indoor classroom space, outdoor space and furnishings developmentally appropriate for preschool students.
- Retain a teacher with academic experience in early childhood special education and/or speech-language pathology.
- Retain an LSLS A VEd or LSLS Cert. AVT for provision of auditory-verbal therapy.
- Purchase any curricular materials required for the program. Any purchases over $500 must be pre-approved by the ALSDE Special Education Services (SES) staff liaison. Consumable purchases will not be reimbursed.
- Establish and provide a program calendar that approximates that of the local LEA(s).
- Provide a progress report quarterly at established intervals, and provide a written summary of the child’s current level of academic/functional performance and recommendations of goals and services for the upcoming school year at least annually when requested in a reasonable time from the LEA of residence of the child.
- Promptly notify the LEA of residence if any student has excessive absences and/or exhibits any cognitive, behavioral, or other concerns while attending the program.
- Provide the ALSDE with a written roster of students attending the program and the LEA of residence for each child upon request from the ALSDE.

2.02 Scope of Alabama State Department of Education’s Work and Responsibilities

- Approve the scope of work proposed as outlined above.
- Provide a liaison(s) from ALSDE SES to work with the awarded vendor in developing the program and/or curricula.
- Facilitate communication between the LEAs requesting services and the awarded vendor.
- Provide a liaison(s) from ALSDE SES to approve submitted requests for reimbursement.
- Bear the cost of the program and auditory-verbal therapy services deemed necessary for each child by his IEP Team.
3.01 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 applicant’s proposal. The vendor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the application in response to the RFP. The cover letter must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the applicant. It will state that the applicant is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted application. The cover letter accompanying the application 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 application 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 the vendor’s professional experience, including names or persons who may be contacted, position of person, addresses, and phone numbers who can support and validate the qualifications and ability to provide the program and services outlined in this RFP.

Executive Summary:
An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor’s application.
Part IV
Cost Proposal:
The vendor shall include the fee structure and pricing for the program, including the hourly cost for the auditory-verbal therapy services. 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 response and provide qualifications for such individuals. Subcontractors must be identified and the services they will provide or work they will perform must be clearly defined. The ALSDE retains the right to refuse the subcontractor the vendor has selected. The vendor and associated personnel shall remain solely responsible for the performance of all work, including work that may be subcontracted.

Describe your rationale for utilizing Subcontractors, including relevant past experience partnering with the stated Subcontractor(s). Documents for E-verification of subcontractors are the sole responsibility of the vendor and must be available upon request to ensure compliance.
Section 4.00 General Terms and Conditions

4.01 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. Applicants agree to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

4.02 Immigration

The proposal must contain a statement that the entity is aware of the requirements of the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; a statement that the Proposer 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 comply with that law.

For the purposes of this RFP and any responding Proposal, the following sections of that law impose specific requirements: Section 9 (a) of the Act provides “As a condition for the award of any contract, grant, or incentive by the state, any political subdivision thereof, or a state-funded entity to a business entity or employer that employs one or more employees, the business entity or employer shall not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama.”

Section 9(b) of the Act requires “As a condition for the award of any contract, grant, or incentive by the state, any political subdivision thereof, or a state-funded entity to a business entity or employer that employs one or more employees within the State of Alabama, the business entity or employer is enrolled in the E-Verify program.”

As provided in the Act a “business entity” is any person or group of persons performing or engaging in any activity, enterprise, profession, or occupation for gain, benefit, advantage, or livelihood, whether for profit or not for profit and an “employer” is defined as any person, firm, corporation, partnership, joint stock association, agent, manager, representative, foreman, or other person having control of 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 proposal must include a statement that the Proposer has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Before a contract is signed, the Contractor awarded the contract must submit a Certificate of Compliance using the form at Appendix A to this RFP and, unless exempt because it has issued by the United State Department of Homeland Security upon enrollment in the E-Verify Program. E-Verify enrollment can be accomplished at the website of the United States Department of Homeland Security at [http://www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).

See Section 10 for additional language required by Section 10(k) of the Act to be included in the contract. 
*Rev.5-24-13*
4.03 Conflict of Interest

The applicant attests that no employee, officer, or agent of the applicant shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest would 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 entity selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the applicant, if selected as the vendor, shall neither award nor offer gratuities, favors, nor anything of monetary value from vendors or subcontractors.

4.04 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) 242-8165.

Federal Non-Discrimination Statement:
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parents status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found on http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7443 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).
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)

__________________________________________________________ (State Agency, Department or Public Entity)

The undersigned hereby certifies to the State of Alabama as follow:

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 entit, and has knowledge of the provisions of THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAZPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT2011-535 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. “Business entity” shall include, but no be limited to the following:

a. Self-employed individuals, business entities filing articles of incorporation, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, foreign corporations, foreign limited partnerships, 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 possess 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.

As of the date of this Certificate, 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; 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