

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT)

RFP Number: 2023-1

Issue Date: March 23, 2023

Deadline for Questions: April 13, 2023

Deadline for Answers: April 20, 2023

Due Date: April 27, 2023

1. Purpose

The Alabama Industrial Development Training (“AIDT”) solicits proposals from qualified professional firms (“Firm” or “Responder”) interested in customized public relations and media engagement support for the SHIFT Campaign (the “Campaign”).

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 marketing and administrative support functions.

2. Background

SHIFT is the statewide branding campaign for the automotive industry. The development of a paid media plan focused on increasing awareness, interest and applicants to the state’s available automotive careers needs to be maintained,

3. Minimum Qualifications

In order for an RFP 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 Firm has been in operation for at least five years.
- The Firm has at least three years of documented public relations experience working with the primary media outlets in the State of Alabama, including broadcast, print, and digital firms.
- The Firm is familiar with the operations of the Campaign and is experienced in working with state workforce agencies.
- The Firm is experienced in storytelling, providing editorial services, and producing editorial and digital media content in the field of workforce development and education.

- The Firm is committed to complying with established time-lines and working closely and cooperatively with the Campaign to implement and enhance the project.
- The Firm has a company policy and practice of equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination based on age, race, creed, and gender.
- If applicable, the Firm 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 Firm will maintain commercially reasonable insurance policies to cover the Firm's negligent acts or omissions that may arise in its performance of the services discussed in this RFP.
- If selected, the Firm 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 Firm will work with the Shift Campaign manager and his representatives developing messaging around the Campaign activities and engaging media outlets to drive applicant conversations with media placements. The Firm will provide digital tactics that focus on generating awareness of jobs in the automotive industry in Alabama and drive traffic to the SHIFT website.

5. 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); and
7. Other required documentation, as requested by AIDT during the course of the solicitation process.

6. Submission of Proposals

Issuing Office:

AIDT
One Technology Court
Montgomery, AL 36116

Submission of Proposals: Format and layout should follow the proposal format as listed in Item #5 on Page 2 of this document.

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 on or before 4:00 p.m. on April 27, 2023. Responders should additionally provide two (2) electronic versions of their response on a USB jump or flash drive. The electronic data must be an exact duplicate of the written version. 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. RFPs will be 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 Chris Brown, AIDT Purchasing Agent. **Any questions or inquiries should be in writing and emailed to cbrown@aidt.edu.** All written questions should be submitted by 4:00 p.m. April 13, 2023. Written responses to written questions and inquiries will be posted on AIDT's website by April 20, 2023. 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.

7. 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 Shift Campaign manager. After the review and evaluation of the proposals, AIDT and the Shift Campaign manager may conduct interviews. All interviews will be scheduled in Montgomery, AL. Finalists chosen for interviews, if any, will be notified. AIDT reserves the right to request a best and final offer for fees from finalists.

On the advice of Shift leadership, AIDT will select the Firm 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 Firm, if any, AIDT may initiate negotiations for contract terms and conditions.

8. 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.

9. Agreement

All duties of the Firm 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 two years with a one-year extension option. 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 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 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.

10. 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 Firm 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 Firm, 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 Firm 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 proposed process for working with the Shift campaign manager to fully develop communications strategies that include writing press pieces and creating editorial content.
5. Provide a complete listing of fees, including all optional services that may be offered.
6. Provide information on all “related” or “affiliated” firms that will assist in providing the services described in this RFP.
7. Provide details of any claims, disputes, litigation, or other legal proceedings where the Firm is involved, or has been involved in the three preceding years, with the State of Alabama or any of its agencies.
8. Describe any activities in which the Firm is engaged which may constitute a conflict of interest.
9. Describe the Firm'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).
10. Describe factors or reasons why AIDT and the Shift campaign manager should consider the Firm more favorably than its competitors.
11. Describe the Firm's ability to create print pieces in support of the Campaign's initiatives and recommendations.
12. Describe the Firm's experience in storytelling, providing editorial services, and producing editorial and digital media content in the field of workforce development and education.

Exhibit B

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

In order for your RFP 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 Firm represented by the Responder has been in operation for over five years.

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. The Firm is committed to being a neutral party for workforce and education-focused policy support.

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. The project manager at the Firm responsible for providing the services described in this RFP has at least three years of experience in communications and administrative support.

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. The Firm is committed to work closely and cooperatively with the Campaign to facilitate the implementation of any enhancements or modifications required by the Campaign Manager.

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. The Firm has a company policy and practice of equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination based on age, race, creed, and gender.

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. If selected, the Firm will carry errors and omissions insurance or a comparable instrument to cover the Firm's negligent acts or omissions.

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. If selected, the Firm 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 make payment for services in arrears. Please provide what annual compensation per year for three years would be, and please list in detail compensation for any other services beyond such scope.

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 _____, 2020.

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