

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
UTeach Alabama Media Campaign**

Alabama Industrial Development Training

RFP Number: 2024-11

Issue Date: 6/13/2024

Deadline for Questions and Answers: 6/28/24

Due Date: 7/12/2024

1. Purpose

The Alabama Industrial Development Training (“AIDT”) solicits proposals from qualified professional firms (“Firm” or “Responder”) interested in providing marketing and advertising services for AIDT statewide. 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 advertising support functions.

2. Background

The Alabama STEM Council (Council), in partnership with the UTeach Institute (Institute), is currently accepting proposals from Alabama-based media/marketing/advertising entities interested in providing marketing and advertising services to promote STEM teaching as a career choice across the state of Alabama. (See Eligibility to Apply below.)

The initiative is part of comprehensive efforts in Alabama to improve STEM education and address teacher shortages in STEM fields. One selected vendor will receive up to \$150,000 in funding through September 30, 2025, to design and implement a campaign to recruit young people to consider STEM teaching in Alabama.

About UTeach Alabama

UTeach Alabama is a statewide initiative to strengthen the preparation of middle and high school science, mathematics, engineering, and technology (STEM) teachers at seven institutions of higher education through implementation of the nationally recognized UTeach program.

UTeach is a university-based teacher preparation program that began at The University of Texas at Austin in 1997. The program has since been adopted at 54 universities and colleges across the country. The first program in Alabama was UABTeach at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, which began in 2014.

In 2022, the Alabama STEM Council directed a legislative appropriation to launch six new UTeach programs at Alabama universities:

- AAMU*teach* (Alabama A&M University)
- Athens State TEACH (Athens State University)
- AUTeach (Auburn University)
- AUM*Teach* (Auburn University at Montgomery)
- UTeach South (University of South Alabama)

- UWA-Teach (University of West Alabama)

This statewide media campaign is a supplemental project meant to inform high school and college students and their families of the benefits of a teaching career and encourage them to explore one of the seven UTeach programs in Alabama.

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 the UTeach Institute

The [UTeach Institute](#) works to improve secondary STEM teaching and learning through the national expansion of the UTeach secondary STEM teacher preparation program to colleges and universities. Over eighteen years, the Institute has employed a comprehensive approach to successful program development in higher education settings and serves as the national hub to a networked community of 54 universities implementing UTeach programs, including seven in Alabama.

3. Minimum Qualifications

In order 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 familiar with Alabama Act 2019-506 and Alabama Act 2023-365.
- 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 workforce and education research.
- 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 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*.

Scope of Services

The Alabama STEM Council seeks to contract with an Alabama-based entity with marketing and advertising expertise to develop and implement a media strategy and plan to:

- Promote awareness of the need for secondary STEM teachers in Alabama.
- Promote the benefits of STEM teaching as a career in Alabama.
- Drive awareness of the UTeach STEM teacher preparation programs at seven universities in the state.
- Reach target audiences.

Outcomes and deliverables

- Drive traffic to the website (described below) through the overall campaign, including through online ad conversions, social media, and other marketing efforts.
- Sustain and increase target audience traffic to the website.
- Drive interested individuals to complete a form requesting more information.
- Produce marketing plan, timelines, and budget.
- Produce implementation metrics and regular progress reports.

Research and Discovery Phase

This will include but will not be limited to:

- Kickoff Meeting: Contractor will work with the Alabama STEM Council and UTeach Institute to schedule a remote kickoff meeting at the time contract is executed. At the kickoff meeting, all Contractor, STEM Council, and Institute representatives conducting the work included in this scope will be in attendance, and Contractor will collaborate with the Council and the Institute to further refine the project scope, timelines, and processes.
- Research and Discovery:

- Contractor will familiarize themselves with the UTeach Alabama project, the work of the Alabama STEM Council, and the K-12 educational landscape in Alabama.
- Contractor will familiarize themselves with the work of seven Alabama UTeach programs and the UTeach program model.
- Contractor will review existing brand guidelines.
- Contractor will review example local program marketing materials.

Media Strategy and Planning

Contractor will deliver a media strategy, detailed media plan, and budget allocation recommendation for marketing and advertising for the state overall and for regions of the state supported by individual UTeach programs.

Campaign Management

Based on the agreed-upon media plan, Contractor will manage all media campaign creation, placement, execution, and testing and optimization needs.

Contractor will work with the UTeach Institute to generate ad copy/creative content that is consistent with the brand and addresses the goals of the initiative. Activities might include, but are not limited to:

- Website landing page design: Creating a landing page supporting the strategic goals of the initiative and driving interest to seven UTeach partner programs across the state.
- Paid search: Contractor will manage paid search campaigns through Google AdWords. Contractor will work with the Alabama STEM Council and its partners to review and optimize keywords. Contractor will manage the ad copy/creation, ad organization/inventory/tracking, keyword research/recommendation, bid management, testing/optimization, and reporting.
- Paid social media: Contractor will manage all paid and promoted content on social media channels, including but not limited to LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, or X.
- Contractor will manage ad copy/creation, ad organization, inventory, tracking, targeting, bid management, testing/optimization, and reporting.
- Display/banner advertising and retargeting: Contractor will manage all display/banner ad creation and ad placements.
- Online audio and video advertising: Contractor will manage ad placements on digital audio and/or video channels.
- Contractor will identify regional or statewide media outlets for public relations placement of news items or radio/tv ads or interviews.
- Ongoing campaign performance optimization: Contractor is responsible for suggesting optimization tactics, refining, and adjusting marketing strategy and tactics over time.

Additionally, Contractor will manage relationships and media buying, including but not limited to:

- Manage media buying with vendors based on the approved media plan.
- Manage all media relationships, including the negotiation of rates, vendor agreements, and payment of invoices to vendors.

Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Communication

Contractor will:

- Participate in regularly scheduled meetings with the Alabama STEM Council, in partnership with the UTeach Institute, at a mutually agreed upon frequency and cadence, for planning and progress updates.
- Deliver a monthly performance review to the Alabama STEM Council and UTeach Institute that includes a detailed report of campaign performance in the previous month and to date. This report will outline spending and provide insights on key metrics being tracked. The reports must cover both quantitative and qualitative data about the performance of campaigns as well as areas to improve the campaign.
- Create annual reports of progress to be delivered to the Alabama STEM Council in August of each year of the project.

Required Proposal Components*

I. Overview of Project Scope

Describe your overall proposal to:

- Promote awareness of the need for secondary STEM teachers in Alabama.
- Promote the benefits of STEM teaching as a career in Alabama.
- Drive awareness of the UTeach STEM teacher preparation programs at seven universities in the state.
- Reach target audiences.

II. Project Team, Expertise, and Capacity to Carry Out Work

- a. Describe your expertise and capacity to carry out the described scope of work.
- b. Provide brief biographies of key staff and describe how they will be involved in the project.
- c. Describe your experience carrying out similar work. Include links to relevant samples.

III. Research and Discovery

- a. Describe how you will carry out research and discovery activities to inform the project approach.

IV. Media Strategy and Implementation Plan

- a. Outline your proposed media strategy and implementation plan. It is understood that this preliminary media plan will be further refined in collaboration with the UTeach Institute and Alabama STEM Council.
- b. Provide a timeline of activities.

V. Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Communication

- a. Describe how you will participate in project monitoring, provide regular reports of progress and impact, and ensure timely and regular communication on project plans and activities. Identify key staff.

VI. Project Budget and Budget Narrative

- a. Provide a budget detailing proposed expenditures by year.
- b. Provide a brief justification for all proposed expenditures.
- c. Total cost cannot exceed \$150,000

***Proposals should be in a PDF document, organized by the six required proposal components described above, and limited to six single-spaced pages using 12-point font and 1-inch margins.**

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.

4. 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 July 12, 2024.

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. 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 Chris Brown. **Any questions or inquiries should be in writing and emailed to rfp@aidt.edu by 4:00 p.m. on Jun 28, 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.

5. 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 timely received proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by AIDT in consultation with the Alabama STEM Council. After the review and evaluation of the proposals, 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 brand and the web portal. 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. Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- I. *Demonstrates expertise and capacity to carry out proposed work. (25%)*
- II. *Proposed budget and staffing are adequate to carry out all project activities (25%)*
- III. *Proposed media strategy and implementation plans are comprehensive. Plans address all components of the described scope of work and identify key metrics to track progress, outcomes, and impact. A compelling creative vision and approach are described. (50%)*

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

6. 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.

7. Agreement

All duties of the Responder will be set forth in an Agreement to be entered into between the selected Responder and AIDT and the Alabama STEM Council. The agreement will be for a period beginning at the selection of the Responder and ending 1 year (12 months) with an opportunity to extend for an additional 1 year (12 months). 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.

8. 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.

9. Budget Proposal

The application must contain a fee proposal with annual budget and budget narratives to address and justify costs such as, but not limited to:

1. Salary/Wages
2. Employee Benefits
3. Travel
4. Materials/supplies
5. Communication
6. Consultants/contracts

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 STEM Council should consider the responder more favorably than its competitors.

Exhibit B

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

In order 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 working closely and cooperatively with AIDT and the Alabama STEM Council to facilitate the implementation of any enhancements or modifications required by the AIDT and the Alabama STEM 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 \$150,000. 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 _____, 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