Alabama State Department of Education

Request for Proposal (RFP)
RFP # ALSDE2012-05

Alabama Career Planning System

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

Mailing Address:
Dr. Philip Cleveland
Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development
Alabama State Department of Education
5212 Gordon Person Building
50 North Ripley Street
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

Deadline:
An original signature is required on the proposal. Clearly mark on the outside of the envelope, RFP# ALSDE2012-05
The proposal must be received in the office of the Director, Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development no later than 4:00 p.m., on October 1, 2012.

Proposal Public Opening:
October 3, 2012
2:00 P.M.
Career and Technical Auditorium
Wallace Office Building
500 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36130
# Table of Contents

## Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.01 Purpose and Vision  
1.02 Anticipated Timetable  
1.03 Submission of Request  
1.04 Rejection of Response  
1.05 Application Evaluation  
1.06 Conditions and Terms

## Section 2.00 Scope

2.01 Scope of Provider's Work and Responsibilities  
2.02 Scope of ALSDE Work and Responsibilities

## Section 3.00 General Requirements

3.01 Requirements of Proposal  
3.02 Procedures for Delivery of Request For Proposals  
3.03 Signed Cover Letter  
3.04 Executive Summary  
3.05 Disclaimer Notice  
3.06 Selection Process  
3.07 Assurance  
3.08 Criteria for Evaluation of Request for Proposals  
3.09 Bid Quotation Summary

## Section 4.00 Availability of Funds

## Section 5.00 General Terms and Conditions

5.01 Governance  
5.02 Immigration  
5.03 Conflict of Interest  
5.04 Discrimination

## Section 6.00 Inquiries
Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.01 Purpose and Vision

Purpose

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) seeks to contract with a vendor to provide a collaborative education planning, career exploration, work skills, and work values platform starting November 1, 2012 and ending on September 30, 2014 with an option, at the discretion of the ALSDE, to extend the services up to a total of three more years. ALSDE is not committed to entering into any contract as a result of this RFP. All responses to this RFP become the property of ALSDE and will not be returned to the vendor once opened. Responses become public documents upon submission. ALSDE’s decision to award a contract will depend upon the appropriateness of vendor responses to the requirements outlined herein, the demonstration of product, and to economic considerations. The contract will be awarded to the prospective responsible vendor who meets the specifications herein, exhibits an established history of providing these services in a satisfactory manner, and proposes to provide the specified services at the lowest responsible price. The ALSDE has appointed a manager, who will oversee all aspects of the review and selection of a winning vendor. Members of the ALSDE will review and evaluate all response received under this RFP, select finalists for possible presentations or “best and final” requests, and make recommendations for the final winning vendor. ALSDE will assume responsibility for all contractual negotiations upon selection of the winning vendor, and will become the counter-party on the contract with the successful vendor.

Vision

In accordance with the goals and strategies contained in Alabama Plan 2020, the ALSDE will work to provide a collaborative education and career exploration platform in order to:

- Create a comprehensive Education-to-Workforce solution is a kindergarten-to-work solution.
- Link to various state agencies have developed other resources and utilities that provide valuable data for our citizens. State-developed tools, together with data from national and federal sources, will make the Education and Career Exploration platform a powerful online resource for Alabama citizens who wish to make informed educational and occupational decisions.
- Assist underrepresented student populations with financial aid information including access to the Federal Financial Aid information.
- Assist Alabama’s citizens in making informed decisions about education, career opportunities, financial aid options, training, and employment.
- Identify and fill gaps in state resources, including the addition of an education and employment electronic portfolio tool.
• Integrate into a single online planning application, existing resources from different agencies.
• Coordinate efforts to deploy information technology within the state of Alabama for purposes of providing career exploration and postsecondary education.

In short, the ALSDE will deliver a comprehensive selection of services, products, and tools on an integrated, web-based platform that will assist all Alabamians with planning and preparing for educational and career success. This RFP is to address the education planning, career interest inventory, work skills assessment, and work values instruments, career portfolio, and the development and maintenance of the Student Education Plan (SEP).

1.02 Anticipated Time Table

RFP Issued: September 11, 2012
Proposal Submission Date: October 1, 2012
Bid opening; October 3, 2012
Bidder presentations: October 10, 2012 – if requested
Implementation Date: November 1, 2012

1.03 Submission of Requests

Applications must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on October 1, 2012. Clearly mark the envelope RFP #ALSDE2012-05. The application including four copies with original signatures of the proposal shall be received by:

Dr. Philip Cleveland
Director, Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development
Alabama State Department of Education
5215 Gordon Persons Building
50 North Ripley Street
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

1.04 Rejection of Response

The ALSDE reserves the right at any time and for any reason to cancel this RFP. The ALSDE reserves the right to reject any and all applications received as a result of this RFP. The ALSDE accepts no obligation for costs incurred by an applicant in preparing or submitting a response to the RFP.
1.05 Application Evaluation

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. At the ALSDE’s request and discretion, RFP revisions may be permitted after submission, but before selection. Any further information disclosed about the RFP during this process will be provided to all applicants.

For the purpose of verifying the contents of the applications, the ALSDE may request additional information, staff interviews, and content presentations. Discussions may be conducted with applicants that submit RFPs determined to be reasonably suitable of being selected for the purpose of clarifying and assuring full cooperation in meeting these terms is required. The ALSDE reserves the right to reject at its sole discretion the proposals it deems non-cooperative applications. No decision will be made as to the awarding of the RFP at the bid opening.

1.06 Conditions and Terms

Responses should reference each element in the RFP by number on the cover of each copy and be arranged in the same sequence. On each of the four copies submitted, there should be an original signature of the official authorized to bind the organization on the cover. Responses that fail to be submitted by the deadline will be rejected. All fees and costs are to be stated in United States currency. Only requests in English will be accepted. Respondents must reply to each element of the RFP.

Section 2.00 Scope

2.01 Scope of Provider’s Work and Responsibilities

- Bidder must be experienced working with entire state data systems.
- Bidder must have application installed in at least five (5) school systems that include but are not limited to information from the Department of Labor, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education.
- Bidder must be available to demonstrate program if requested to do so on October 10, 2012, at the Lurleen B. Wallace Building, Montgomery, Alabama.
- System must be able to export and import data in delimited format.
- System must be web-based using standard browsers.
- Bidder must create a customized interface tailored for the requirements of the system.
- System interface must be consistent with the design, look, and feel of the portal.
System must provide ample storage space for each student’s four-year education plan. Capacity to handle a minimum of 300,000 students in year one and a minimum of 360,000 students in year two, includes 60,000 new students. System must have the capacity to handle 800 + school locations.

- System must be able to integrate with INOW Alabama’s student information system.
- System must have the capacity to interface with or download/integrate specific student data from other vendors.
- System must keep all information active from initial date of use through the life span of the individual user.
- System must be accessible from a variety of platforms (Windows 2000 up, Macintosh 10.1 up).
- System must use the system designated unique student identification number for each student with a secure, separate logon and password.
- System must allow for school/district level addition and alteration of student logon and password.
- System must provide parents, guardians with limited access to designated student portfolio.
- Multiple levels of access: state administrator, district, school, instructor, and student with appropriate training at each level of access.
- System must provide multiple administrative levels so each district and school has administrative access to manage district and school student four-year education plans.
- System must provide reporting system at student, school, district and state levels.
- System must provide integration with statewide efforts to standardize transcript information to facilitate online student applications to college.
- System must provide language options including English and Spanish.
- System must provide access to individuals with vision, hearing or physical impairments.
- System must provide alternate access to individuals with limited reading levels.
- System must provide a variety of times to complete required tasks to maintain student interest.
- System must provide customization of Alabama System within a 2-month window.
- System must provide a link to individual, system, and state data in currently established system.

System includes:

- Four-Year Education Plan Portfolio.
  - Portfolio completion standards
  - Portfolio tools
  - Personal data
  - Career goals
  - Assessment information including career interest inventories, aptitude, and work value assessments linked to 16 national career clusters
  - Student educational goals
  - Résumé builder with sample formats
Request for Proposal (RFP)
RFP # ALSDE 2012-05
Alabama Career Planning System

- Career advisor management system.
- Educational and occupational opportunities.
- Career exploration and preparation activities.
- High school course schedules, including career pathways.
- The master course list provided by ALSDE. It should allow school counselors to select courses that are available to students in their school. These selected courses should be available to students who create a four-year education plan.
- Extracurricular activities, employment, work experience, skills, abilities, awards and recognitions, volunteer experiences.
- Access to US DOL information on Occupational Outlook Handbook, 16 Career Clusters, etc.
- Link(s) from career interest inventory, aptitude, and work value assessments results to 16 career clusters.
- Access to post high school career information including apprenticeship programs, career and technical programs, and links to 2 and 4 year colleges from career interest inventory results.
- Financial aid links.
- Personalized feedback.

Management System

- Allows teachers and counselors to view student activities.
- Allows district/state administrators to view student activities.
- Provides student and parent access from other locations.
- Provides regularly scheduled software updates and security updates as needed at no additional costs.
- Has data security which allows student access to only his/her profile; allows parent/guardian limited access to specific student’s profile; allows specified teacher/counselor/administrators access to data to create reports; complies with FERPA.

Training and Support

- Provide training, on-site technical and administrative support.
- Provide ALSDE assistance with marketing product throughout state to all districts.
- Develop a training schedule for schools in all 67 counties.
- Vendor provide Help Desk support; provide information on personnel; access numbers; current abilities to provide technical support 24/7 including amount of time in responding to calls; features of help desk that would provide advantages for the proposed product.
2.02 Scope of Alabama State Department of Education’s Work and Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities of the ALSDE are stated below:
- Identify contact person(s) at the ALSDE who will work closely with the vendor to ensure that operations flow smoothly without interruption to applicant services.

Section 3.00 General Requirements

3.01 Requirements of Proposal


Part I is the cover letter that shall serve as the first page of the applicant’s proposal. The contractor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the application in response to the RFP.

Part II 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 of the request 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.

Part IV shall include the fee structure and pricing for the career planning system.

3.02 Procedures for Delivery Of Request For Proposals

No later than 4:00 p.m. on October 1, 2012, four copies with original signatures of the proposal shall be received by:

Dr. Philip Cleveland
Director, Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development
Alabama State Department of Education
5215 Gordon Persons Building
50 North Ripley Street
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101
Parties submitting a proposal are responsible for ensuring that it is delivered by the deadline to the designated place. No faxed or e-mailed proposals will be accepted. The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided. Applications received after the deadline will be considered late and will not be considered for review.

### 3.03 Signed Cover Letter

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 letter accompanying the application must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and e-mail addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

### 3.04 Executive Summary

An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor’s application.

### 3.05 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.

### 3.06 Selection Process

Final selection of the career planning system will not be based on cost alone. A primary determinant will be the ability of the career planning system to support the goals and strategies found in Alabama 2020. 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. Each responding vendor may be invited to present its proposal to an ALSDE committee as part of the consideration process on October 10, 2012. All expenses associated with any possible presentation if asked shall be incurred by the vendor. A respondent’s inability or refusal to provide a presentation if asked may be cause for rejection of the proposal. 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.

### 3.07 Assurance

The applicant will be responsible for adherence to all state and federal laws and regulations.
3.08 CRITERIA AND EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

An evaluation committee composed of ALSDE staff and possible other external readers will assess the proposals and score each submission according to the criteria listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.08 Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
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<td>Qualifications and abilities of the vendor to provide the project services</td>
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<td>Past record of performance of similar work with systems in Alabama</td>
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BID QUOTATION SUMMARY

Vendor’s Name ____________________________________________

Signature of Company Official ________________________________

Address ___________________________________________________

Telephone and Fax Number ________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price Per Item</th>
<th>Estimated Price</th>
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<td>Total Estimated Program Pricing</td>
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11
Section 4.00 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.

Section 5.00 General Terms and Conditions

5.01 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.

5.02 Immigration

Alabama’s laws require that, as a condition for the award of a contract to a business entity or employer with one or more employees working in Alabama, the business entity or employer must provide documentation of enrollment in the E-Verify program. The contractor’s E-Verify Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) and a certification statement must be submitted before this contract may be awarded. An entity can obtain the E-Verify MOU upon completion in the E-Verify enrollment process located at the federal web site www.uscis.gov/everify. The Alabama Department of Homeland Security (http://immigration.alabama.gov) has also established an E-Verify employer agent account for a qualifying business entity or employer with 25 or fewer employees that will provide a participating business entity or employer with the required documentation of enrollment in the E-Verify program. An Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, is required to enroll in E-Verify or to establish an E-Verify employer agent account.

A vendor that will not comply with Alabama’s law regarding E-Verify cannot be awarded a contract. Please note that this requirement may change pursuant to guidance from the Alabama Attorney General’s office or pursuant to court order. If you do not believe these requirements are applicable to your entity, include an explanation justifying such exemption.

5.03 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 organization selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the applicant, if selected as the career planning system vendor, shall neither award nor offer gratuities, favors, nor anything of monetary value from contractors or subcontractors.

5.04 Discrimination

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.

Section 6.00 Inquiries

Any questions regarding this RFP should be directed by e-mail on or before 4:00 p.m., October 1, 2012, to

Philip Cleveland
Career and Technical Education and Workforce Development
Alabama State Department of Education
E-mail: pcleveland@alsde.edu