

Mission Statement

The mission of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education is to inspire, support, and deliver cohesive, comprehensive systems of high-quality education and care so that all Alabama children thrive and learn.

Departmental Offices

1. Children's Policy Councils
2. Head Start State Collaboration Office
3. Office of School Readiness
4. Office of Family Support
5. Office of Early Childhood Development and Professional Support

Request for Proposal Application

On behalf of the State of Alabama and with designated authority from the Office of the Governor, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) applied for the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) through the United States Departments of Health and Human Services and Education on November 2, 2018 and received notice of the federal grant award of \$10.6 million on December 31, 2018. On November 1, 2019 the Department applied for a renewal of the state's PDG B-5. On December 18, 2019 the Department was notified of a \$33 million grant award by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education for a renewal of Alabama's PDG B-5 initiative over the next three years.

With the support of a PDG B-5 renewal grant, Alabama will continue longstanding efforts to expand access to high quality early childhood care and education for all children. The vision for the grant, titled Alabama Connections for Early Care and Education, was: "All Alabama children are healthy and emotionally ready to enter kindergarten, particularly low-income and disadvantaged children, and strong supports are provided to assist families in making informed choices." During 2019, ADECE completed a comprehensive assessment of early childcare and education needs in the state of Alabama and constructed a strategic plan to meet these needs. The strategic plan identified four goals for Alabama's system of early childhood education: 1) Access and Affordability; 2) Family Partnerships and Support; 3) Well-prepared, Well-supported Workforce 4) Quality and Affordability.

The PDG B-5 renewal grant will assist ADECE in meeting these four goals while continuing to deliver high quality early childhood education and while expanding access to programs that support all children, especially low-income, rural, and disadvantaged children. It will also support the scaling of evidence-based supportive programs for children, their families, and their teachers across the entire birth-five continuum to ensure all children—particularly low income, disadvantaged, and otherwise vulnerable children, including children with, or at risk for, disabilities and delays—enter kindergarten ready for success.

ADECE will continue to execute the work laid out in the initial PDG B-5 grant application—to build a coherent and coordinated system of early care and education—while using the recently completed needs assessment and strategic plan as guides for how to meet the specific and urgent needs of Alabama children and families. These needs include increased professional development

for early childcare professionals; coaching and information-sharing to improve parental agency and choice; mental health resources for children and families with trauma-informed interventions; early interventions for children experiencing developmental delays and behavioral challenges; and expanded access to high-quality pre-k.

ADECE's proposal also aligns with Governor Ivey's Strong Start, Strong Finish initiative, an ambitious preschool to third-grade plan to ensure all third graders are proficient readers by 2022. The governor's education-to-workforce agenda has placed focus on the B-5 continuum, recognizing a child's first five years as foundational for lifelong success. The PDG B-5 renewal grant will help ADECE support the goals laid out in the Strong Start, Strong Finish initiative while continuing to improve system coordination, conducting a further needs assessment, and meeting the ambitious goals laid out in its strategic plan.

Expected Outcomes: The expected outcomes of Alabama's PDG B-5 proposal are informed by the strategic planning effort undertaken by ADECE and the multi-stakeholder state PDG B-5 Steering Committee during the 2019 year. The strategic plan identified four major goals to guide the state's ongoing work to meet needs in early childhood care and education and to improve coordination and collaboration across early childcare and education programs and systems. The plan's four goals emphasize rigor, accountability, and high standards for all early childcare and education programs in the state while expanding access to these programs to currently underserved populations, including low-income and disadvantaged children and those living in rural areas.

The stated purposes of Alabama's PDG B-5 Initiative are:

1. Develop, update, or implement a strategic plan that facilitates collaboration and coordination among existing programs of early childhood care and education in a mixed delivery system across the State;
2. More efficiently use existing Federal, State, local, and non-governmental resources to align and strengthen the delivery of existing programs;
3. Encourage partnerships among the wide range of early childhood education programs and service partners that make up the B-5 Early Childhood State System;
4. Expand parental choice and knowledge about existing programs through *Born Ready*; and
5. Enhance school readiness for children from low-income and disadvantaged families, including during children's transition into elementary school by sharing best practices between and among ECE providers.

The purpose of this RFP is to identify a consulting firm to offer strategic planning and communication services to conduct and update Alabama's statewide birth through five needs assessment and strategic plan as specified in the federal PDG B-5 grant. ADECE intends to enter into a contract for a period of two years with an option to renew the contract for a total of a three-year grant period.

ADECE is seeking proposals for professional service provider(s) with primary responsibility for:

1. Continue to develop and update a thorough statewide birth through five needs assessment of the availability and quality of existing programs/services in the State;
2. Collaborate with the Alabama Children's Policy Councils to develop and execute a needs assessment to be completed by July 2020 pursuant to Alabama law; and

3. Implement a strategic plan, based on needs assessment results, that recommends collaboration, coordination, and quality improvement activities among existing programs.

The duration of this contract will be for two years (March 5, 2020 – March 5, 2022) with the option for renewal through December 2022. All services must be provided by the vendor and cannot be subcontracted to a third-party vendor. Invoices will be billed monthly. Inability or refusal to perform duties, responsibilities, and expectations as outlined below will establish grounds for contract termination.

The selected vendor will be required to demonstrate its ability to work with multiple state and federal government entities and non-governmental organizations in addition to providing an effective long-term strategic platform and flawless project execution, all at a competitive cost to ADECE. The estimated time frame for this proposal will start on March 5, 2020 and continue through March 5, 2022.

Reports to: Secretary of Early Childhood Education

Day-to-Day Direction: Senior Director of Early Childhood Education; Director of Family Support; Director of Early Care & Education; and other individuals as designated by Senior Director and/or Secretary of Early Childhood Education

Other internal contacts: Senior Accountant; Staff Accountant; and Government Affairs Manager.

Evaluation Criteria & Award Process

ADECE reserves the right to conduct discussions with any or all respondents, or to make an award of a contract without such discussions based only on evaluation of the written proposals. ADECE reserves the right to contact and interview anyone connected with any past or present projects with which the respondent has been associated. ADECE likewise reserves the right to designate a review committee to evaluate the proposals according to the criteria set forth under this section. ADECE may make a written determination showing the basis upon which the award was made, and such determination shall be included in the procurement file.

ADECE reserves the right to award this contract in whole or in part depending on what is in the best interest of ADECE with ADECE being the sole judge thereof.

The major criteria to be used in evaluating the proposals are:

- Adherence to the format and timetable set forth by the RFP
- Demonstrated experience in the performance of comparable work and analysis
- Pricing of services

A committee to be chaired by the Director of Family Support will evaluate each properly submitted proposal.

The evaluation committee may invite finalists for interview and/or presentations. Failure to attend a requested interview presentation before the committee may result in a proposal not being considered. It is the agency's expectation that, upon selection, we will develop and agree to an annual scope of work to be delivered by the agency, keeping in mind that ADECE is held to stringent cost-control measures and always seek to be good stewards of the state's resources.

Instructions for Submitting a Proposal

Please email the proposals. With requests for further information, please contact the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education at **(334) 224-3171**. Transmit proposal via email to **ada.wyhe@ece.alabama.gov**.

Title Page

Instructions: Complete each item. The authorized person must sign and date.

Name:

Address:

City: County: Zip Code

Application Contact Person:

Title:

Telephone Number:

E-mail Address:

Mailing Address:

City: County: Zip Code

Description

Instructions: Please explain, in detail, your efforts in the areas below. This section should be no more than five pages. For all attachments (excluding application forms), please use single spaced, Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, font size 12.

1. Proficiency in project development and management; state and national technical assistance and resource support; and coordination and support of federal grants for efficient data reporting to meet requirements of grant awards.
2. Demonstrated background in providing technical assistance for the integration, coordination, and development of statewide needs assessment and strategic planning.
3. Ability to meet and exceed expectations for performance, including:

Communication – Copy designated agency contact on all communications and respond to all calls, texts, and emails within 24 hours.

Meetings – Schedule bi-weekly meetings with the ADECE to coordinate efforts and ensure action items are completed according to the determined timeline. If individual(s) cannot attend an in-person meeting, a conference call will take place of the meeting. Confirm all meetings and/or appointments within 24 hours.

Schedule – Work completed during this time will take place during regular business hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM during the workweek Monday – Friday, with the ability to schedule other work time as needed.

Accountability – Data evaluation and collection as required by federal reporting timelines and federal grant requirements.

Compliance and Confidentiality – The provider awarded the contract must maintain confidentiality of all information and data accessed through the provision of work. The provider must comply with all applicable state and federal laws. Failure to comply may require sanctions, up to and including termination of any Contract awarded from this RFP. The respondent must provide its own workspace and equipment needed to carry out the services required. Materials, information, and records furnished to the contractor will be considered property of the ADECE and shall be treated as confidential by the contractor, except such information and materials as may already be public knowledge or established to be in the public domain.

Vendor Certifications

Instructions: All applicants must place a (√) by each of the following statements and provide the signature of the vendor legally authorized to conduct business within the state of Alabama and to carry out the services described in this RFP.

1. By submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, the vendor warrants and represents to the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE) that the vendor accepts and agrees with all of the terms and conditions of the RFP. Further, by so submitting, the vendor certifies to the DECE that it is legally authorized to conduct business within the state of Alabama and to carry out the services described in this RFP.
2. The vendor warrants that neither the vendor nor any of the vendor's trustees, officers, directors, agents, nor employees is a current employee of the ADECE, and none of the said individuals have been employees of the DECE within a two-year (24 month) period ending with the date of this RFP.
3. The vendor certifies by submission of this proposal and resulting contract that the vendor has not publicly or privately colluded with any other vendor to fix prices or conditions of the proposal.
4. The vendor certifies that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this contract by any Federal department or agency.

Signature of Authorized Vendor

Date

Budget

Instructions: Please explain, in detail, your price schedule and information below.

The following cost estimate is provided to allow ADECE an insight and estimate of the vendor's fee to accomplish a scope of work that closely represents the tasks approved and executed by ADECE.

1. Each response must provide prices for professional services only; no equipment is to be priced in the proposal.
2. The respondent must be able to work within the ADECE office in Montgomery, as needed, to carry out the services required.

Required Attachments

***Instructions:* Please print, complete, and submit the four (n=4) documents below with your proposal. Proposals without these documents will NOT be reviewed.**

The documents below can be found at www.legislature.state.al.us
(Resources > Joint Interim Committees > Contract Review Permanent Legislative Oversight Committee)

1. Immigration Status Form
2. Vendor Disclosure Statement
3. Certificate of Compliance
4. W-9 Form