

Title of RFP: RFP2025-0001-ACCS

RFP Issue Date: October 24, 2024

Purpose: Select a qualified and experienced company to provide a comprehensive identity verification software and support services solution

Procurement Method: Invited competitive proposals

Contract Term: To be determined based on selected proposal

Issuing Office: Alabama Community College System, Fiscal Services

Issuing Office Point of Contact: Billy Merrill, email: Billy.Merrill@accs.edu

Deadline for Receipt of Proposals: Nov. 8, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. Central Standard Time



SECTION I:

INTRODUCTION

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) is seeking proposals from qualified and experienced companies to provide a comprehensive identity verification software and support services solution to assist our community college system in identifying and reducing fraudulent student applications and maintain data integrity. The selected vendor should provide a robust software platform, along with thorough training and ongoing support across our System. The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals from qualified vendors who can meet our requirements.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY:

The ACCS is Alabama's gateway to world-class, affordable education and technical training for the necessary skills to compete in a constantly evolving workforce. The ACCS consists of the System Office, 23 community and technical colleges, the Alabama Technology Network, and Marion Military Institute – one of five junior military colleges in the nation. The Alabama Technology Network (ATN) is a part of the ACCS and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership. ACCS is governed by the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees.

SECTION II: PURPOSE OF RFP

The ACCS invites responses to this RFP to engage a qualified and experienced company to provide a comprehensive identity verification software and support services. The proposal shall not be limited to the general requirements listed below and each vendor is encouraged to respond with their ability to perform or expand on each item as well as provide additional capabilities not listed.

SECTION III: SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Alabama Community College System requires that the successful proposer provide, at a minimum, the following scope of services:

1. Identity Verification Software:
 - a. A proven identity verification software solution that enhances fraud prevention efforts.
 - b. User-friendly interface for data management, record review, and reporting. The interface should be intuitive, requiring minimal training for end-users.
 - c. Seamless integration process into Liason's Target X solution built on Salesforce CRM.
2. Training and Onboarding:

- a. Comprehensive training sessions for system administrators and end-users on software functionality and best practices.
 - b. Training materials, user manuals, and documentation to support the implementation and ongoing usage of the software.
 - c. Optional on-site or virtual training sessions tailored to the specific needs of our colleges and system.
- 3. Technical Support and Maintenance:
 - a. Timely and responsive technical support to address software-related queries and issues.
 - b. Regular software updates and enhancements to ensure compliance with evolving fraud methodologies.
 - c. Assistance with troubleshooting, bug fixing, and system maintenance.
- 4. Data Security and Confidentiality:
 - a. Robust security measures to protect sensitive financial data, including encryption, access controls, and audit trails.
 - b. Compliance with relevant data protection regulations (e.g., FERPA, GDPR, HIPAA) and industry best practices.
 - c. Regular data backups and disaster recovery procedures to minimize the risk of data loss.

SECTION IV: PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS:

Interested vendors are requested to submit a detailed proposal addressing the following points:

- 1. Company Overview: Provide a brief overview of your company, including its history, experience, and expertise in identity verification software and support services. Please include specific examples of past projects similar to what is being requested.
- 2. Software Features and Functionality:
 - a. Describe the key features and functionality of your identity verification software.
 - b. Highlight how your software specifically addresses identity verification and fraud deterrence in relation to student applications.
 - c. Describe how well the product integrates with Salesforce's Target X CRM system.
 - d. Describe the scalability of the solution. Can the solution grow to future needs?
 - e. Describe the analysis & reporting capabilities included with the solution.
 - f. Include any relevant certifications or compliance with industry standards.
 - g. Include screenshots to support the narrative describing the user interface and functionality.
- 3. Training and Support:
 - a. Outline your training approach and methodology for system administrators and end-users. Please include expected duration and frequency of training sessions.

- b. We anticipate that training sessions will be remote sessions.
 - c. Explain the support services you offer, including response times, support channels, and escalation procedures.
 - d. Provide examples of training materials and documentation available to users.
4. Systems Maintenance:
- a. Describe the system maintenance schedule.
 - b. What times are the service typically unavailable due to scheduled maintenance windows?
 - c. What notification is given for emergency maintenance or outages?
5. Technical System Requirements
- a. The proposed solution must be deployed as a SaaS solution.
 - b. Describe the solutions business intelligence and data warehousing approach, architecture, and tools.
 - c. What are the integration capabilities of the proposed solution? Can data be extracted from third-party systems?
 - d. The solution must support all current, modern web browsers
 - e. Describe the solutions auditing capabilities
6. Security and Compliance Requirements
- a. What authentication protocols are supported?
 - b. How are user permissions assigned?
 - c. Are role-based user permissions supported?
 - d. Where will the Systems data be stored?
 - e. How will data be secured? What security standards and policies are in place to protect the Systems data?
 - f. What SLAs are provided for availability of proposed solution?
 - g. Describe the ownership of data methodology
 - h. Describe the disaster recovery plan in place
 - i. Describe the audit and compliance methods in use to verify security, data backups, and the disaster recovery plan.
 - j. Describe the frequency, methods, and recovery objectives of data backups.
 - k. Is the proposed solution compliant with state and federal regulations including FERPA and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act?
 - l. Is the proposed solution compliant with GDPR? What GDPR resources are available?
 - m. How will the vendor support change to state and federal requirements?
 - n. Is the proposed solution ADA or WCAG 2.0 compliant?
 - o. Provide a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template for the proposed solution.
 - p. Provide a copy of the most recent two Type II SOC reports.
 - q. Vendor must acknowledge the willingness and ability to adhere and comply with the Alabama Community College System Information Security Program found here: <https://www.accs.edu/INFOSEC.pdf>.

7. Implementation Plan:

- a. Provide a detailed implementation plan that outlines the steps, milestones, timeline, and resources required for successful deployment.
- b. Describe the utilization of any third-party implementation partners
- c. Highlight any potential challenges or dependencies that may impact the implementation process.

8. Pricing and Licensing:

- a. Present your contract durations and detailed pricing model, including licensing fees, implementation costs, and any recurring charges.
- b. Clarify whether the pricing structure includes ongoing support and software updates or if they are billed separately.

9. Vendor Qualifications:

- a. Responding vendors should show demonstrated experience and competence in designing, installing, and maintaining a similar system for higher education entities.
- b. Provide specific details about the dedicated resources to this project, such as the number of personnel and their qualifications.

10. Client References: Include a list of current client references, preferably from higher education institutions, who have utilized your identity verification software and support services.

11. Describe financial stability and key corporate financial goals planned for the next five years.

- a. If a public corporation, provide you most recent audited finance statements. If privately held, provide a copy of your balance sheet and profit and loss statement for the past three years. Financial information is to be in a sealed envelope within the submittal.
- b. The requested documentation will be used to assist the System in determining the financial health of your company. If unable to or unwilling to comply, you must provide alternate documentation to satisfy this requirement. Failure to include financial documents in your response could disqualify your submission.

12. Any additional information deemed important in assessing your firm's ability to provide the services requested.

SECTION V: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

The ACCS will select based on completeness and clarity of the proposal, understanding of the scope of work, prior experience, references, fees, and other factors which in the judgment of ACCS staff might have an impact to the provider's ability to provide services to the ACCS. In order

to submit a response, Responders must read and follow all instructions, terms, conditions, and specifications of this RFP.

1. Responses must be received by November 8, 2024 by 2:00 p.m. (CST) at:
Alabama Community College System
Attention: Robin Head, Fiscal Agent
135 South Union Street, Suite 451
Montgomery, AL 36104
P.O. Box 302130 (36130-2130)
Email: Robin.Head@accs.edu
Late responses will not be accepted.
2. Responses may be submitted or delivered by regular mail or postal service, express or courier service, or hand delivery within a single sealed envelope or package, where the outside clearly identifies the vendor name, the **RFP2025-0001-ACCS**, and Deadline to Respond of November 8, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. Central Standard Time. Email and faxed responses are not accepted.
3. It is the proposer's sole responsibility to ensure delivery in the Fiscal Office by the deadline. ACCS does not accept late responses for any reason including those due to postal or courier service delay.
4. ACCS requires an original and one exact digital copy on a USB drive of the signed response to include any required addendum(s) and documentation. The original and the copy should be submitted together as a response package.
5. An authorized officer of the proposer must sign all proposals in ink and obtain proper notarization; failure to do so will result in rejection of response.
6. No response may be withdrawn without approval from the Alabama Community College System. Any request for withdrawal must be in writing to the Alabama Community College System representative within received within five (5) days after the opening date with justification for reason of withdrawal. No response may be withdrawn after awards have been made. The vendor will be required to provide the item or service quoted at the price quoted. If a withdrawal is made after the award the vendor will be considered in default.
7. Any further information or interpretation of the services requested must be submitted to Billy Merrill at billy.merrill@accs.edu submitted no later than 2:00 pm CST November 1, 2024. Answers to such requests will be placed on the ACCS website at <https://www.accs.edu/vendors/>. The title of the RFP must be referenced in the subject line. Written replies of general significance will be posted with the RFP.

No one-on-one conversation are allowed. Vendors should not contact anyone outside of the contacts listed on this RFP. Prospective vendors acknowledge that no other source is authorized to provide information concerning this request. Vendors failing to comply risk being removed from consideration.

8. It is anticipated that a short list of vendors may be invited or required to make a presentation to ACCS. Presentations will give vendors the opportunity to review proposal highlights, introduce their team and articulate why they are best able to meet the needs of the System. Presentations will be included in the final evaluation of the vendor's response to this solicitation.

SECTION VI: PROPOSER'S RESPONSIBILITY

A proposer, by submitting a Proposal, represents and understands that:

1. The proposer is familiar with the conditions under which the services defined in this RFP must be performed. The proposer possesses the capabilities, resources, and personnel necessary to provide efficient and successful service to the ACCS; and
2. The proposer shall be solely responsible for all services provided. It is the responsibility of the proposer to verify the completeness of the requirement and its suitability to provide the services described in this RFP.

SECTION VII: GENERAL TERMS

1. All responses become a matter of public record at award. The ACCS accepts no responsibility for maintaining confidentiality of any information submitted with a response whether labeled confidential or not.
2. The Alabama Community College System reserves the right to reject any or all responses and to waive informalities in the best interest of ACCS. The Alabama Community College System reserves the right to not make any awards and re-issue this RFP at any time if it serves the ACCS' best interest.
3. The successful proposer shall, at its sole expense, procure and keep in effect all necessary permits and licenses required for its performance of the requested work or service.
4. The successful proposer shall be required to complete a State of Alabama Disclosure Statement. Alabama Act# 2001-955 requires the disclosure statement to be completed and filed with all proposals, responses, contracts, or grant proposals to the State of Alabama in excess of \$5,000. Any changes to the status of the information on this form will require the submission of an updated form to the ACCS.
5. All selected vendors are required to complete the Alabama Immigration Law Compliance documents and IRS Form W-9.

6. Verification of enrollment in the E-verify program will be required prior to any award to a vendor who employs one or more employees within the State of Alabama. Failure to provide documentation within 5 calendar days of notification will result in the rejection of your response. To enroll in the E-verify program visit <https://www.e-verify.gov/mye-verify>.
7. The ACCS reserves the right, for its convenience and without cause or penalty, to terminate any contract for services at any time with 30 days written notice. This provision may not be changed by subsequent contract.
8. Notwithstanding any other provision in this RFP, the proposing vendors acknowledge and agree that the terms and commitments contained herein shall not constitute a debt of the State of Alabama in violation of Section 213 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, as amended by Amendment No. 26.
9. The vendor shall observe, perform and comply with or require compliance with all federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, rules and regulations and all amendments thereto which in any manner may affect the operation and vendor's activities undertaken pursuant to this agreement. The vendor shall also comply with all state and local building, fire, health, zoning laws, codes and/or regulations that affect or that are applicable to the vendor's activities and operations.
10. Alabama law (section 41-4-142, code of Alabama 1975) provides that every proposal submitted and contract executed shall contain a certification that the vendor, contractor, and all of its affiliates that make sales for delivery into Alabama or leases for use in Alabama are registered, collecting, and remitting Alabama state and local sales, use, and/or lease tax on all taxable sales and leases into Alabama. By submitting a proposal in response to this Request for Proposal, the bidder is hereby certifying that they are in full compliance with Act No. 2006- 557, they are not barred from bidding or entering into a contract pursuant to 41-4-142, and acknowledges that the Alabama Community College System may declare the contract void if the certification is false.
11. Any contract resulting from an award in connection with this RFP shall include the following terms:
 - a. This agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Alabama without giving effect to any choice or conflict of laws, provisions, or rules (whether of the State of Alabama or any other jurisdiction) that would cause the application of the laws of any jurisdiction other than the State of Alabama.
 - b. It is further agreed that the terms and commitments contained herein shall not constitute a debt of the State of Alabama in violation of Section 213 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, as amended by Amendment Number 26.
 - c. If any provision of this agreement shall contravene any statute or constitutional provision, either now in effect or which may be enacted during the term of this

agreement, then the conflicting provision of this agreement shall be deemed null and void.

- d. Contractor understands, acknowledges, and agrees that its sole and exclusive remedy for any claim which may arise from or relate to this agreement is to file a claim with the Board of Adjustment of the State of Alabama.
- e. By signing this agreement, the parties affirm, for the duration of this agreement, that they will not violate federal immigration law or knowingly employ, hire, for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama. Furthermore, a contracting party found to be in violation of this provision shall be deemed in breach of this agreement and shall be responsible for all damages resulting there from.
- f. This agreement constitutes the sole and entire agreement of the parties to this agreement with respect to the subject matter contained herein, and supersedes all prior and contemporaneous understandings, negotiations, and agreements, both oral and written, with respect to such subject matter.
- g. In compliance with Act 2016-272, the parties hereby certifies that they not currently engaged in, and will not engage in, the boycott of a person or an entity based in or doing business with a jurisdiction with which this state can enjoy open trade.
- h. This agreement may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed and original, but all of which together shall be deemed to be one and the same agreement.
- i. The Contractor shall provide all materials, supplies, workspace, personnel, and equipment that it deems necessary to perform the services provided for herein.
- j. The relationship between the parties is that of independent contractors. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as creating any agency, partnership, joint venture, or other form of joint enterprise, employment, or fiduciary relationship between the parties, and neither party shall have authority to contract for or bind the other party in any manner whatsoever.
- k. In accordance with Alabama Act 2023-409, the contractor does hereby verify that, without violating controlling law or regulation, it does not and will not, during the term of the contract, engage in economic boycotts.