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To: All Interested Vendors

October 20, 2011

The Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education is seeking proposals for anonymous reporting systems. The intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is for the Alabama Community College System to identify a qualified vendor to provide services that meet the System's increasingly demanding needs. The enclosed RFP is self-explanatory and divided into categories to make its use easier.

Please feel free to submit a proposal to the Department and note all of the date requirements. You may contact me for any questions regarding our requirements.

Mrs. Alvena Williams  
Director of Internal Audit  
P.O. Box 302130  
Montgomery, AL 36130-2130  
[Alvena.Williams@dpe.edu](mailto:Alvena.Williams@dpe.edu)

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alvena D. Williams".

Alvena D. Williams  
Director of Internal Audit

**education works.**

Governor Robert Bentley President  
Randy McKinney District 1  
Betty Peters District 2  
Stephanie Bell District 3  
Yvette M. Richardson District 4  
Ella B. Bell District 5  
Charles E. Elliott District 6  
Gary Warren District 7  
Mary Scott Hunter District 8

*The Alabama Community College System*

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

**Anonymous Community College Reporting System**

**ISSUED ON:**

**October 20, 2011**

**Requested by:**

*Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education  
135 S. Union  
P.O. Box 302130  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2130*

**THE ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
Anonymous Community College Reporting System**

**SECTION I - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

**1.1 OBJECTIVE**

The Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education (Department) is seeking proposals for anonymous reporting systems. The intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is for the Alabama Community College System to identify a qualified vendor to provide services that meet the System’s increasingly demanding needs. The proposed solution should be able to support confidential reporting in a variety of key areas that could include Financial, Human Resources, Contracts & Grants, Information Technology, Athletics, and Risk & Safety. Though Sarbanes-Oxley does not mandate the Alabama Community College System, it is still critical to evaluate confidential reporting systems from the perspective of Sarbanes-Oxley and ‘best business practices’ approaches.

**1.2 PROJECT TIMELINE**

Task	Target Dates
Deadline for Vendor Questions	October 31, 2011
Proposal Deadline	<b>November 8, 2011</b>
Potential Meetings with Short List of Providers	November 9, 2011
Project Award (Projected)	November 18, 2011
Implementation	January 3, 2012
Intake Method Implemented and Tested	January 17, 2012
Staff Training	January 2012
Communication Developed and Distributed	January 2012
System Live	February 1, 2012

**1.3 THE ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM PROFILE**

The Alabama Legislature created the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) in May 1963 under the management and control of the State Board of Education. In May 1982, the Alabama Legislature created the Department of Postsecondary Education. The State Board of Education was given the authority to appoint a chancellor to supervise the work of the department and to serve as chief executive office of the Board in carrying out the Board’s responsibility to operate and manage the ACCS.

The ACCS is composed of twenty-one (21) community colleges, four (4) technical colleges, Athens State University, Alabama Industrial Development Training Institute, Alabama Technology Network, Marion Military Institute, and the Department. The System encompasses the colleges’ main campuses, branch campuses, and off-campus sites.

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In 2010, the ACCS served 95,000 people as a part of the System's operations. The different courses offered included college credit courses, non-credit training, adult education/GED, and Focused Industry Training and LIFE Tech programs. The ACCS employs over 9,000 faculty and staff.

**SECTION II - INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSAL**

**2.1 SCOPE OF PROPOSAL – Anonymous Community College Reporting System**

Section III outlines the Scope of the project.

- All proposals must be **sealed** and **clearly marked**: **“SEALED BID” on the outside of the submission.**
- **No email or faxed documents will be accepted.**
- Vendor must be registered with the office of the Alabama Secretary of State.
- The successful respondent must comply with the business license requirements of *Title 40 of Chapter 12 of the Code of Alabama.*

**2.2 SELECTION PROCESS**

The Department will evaluate the proposal from each qualified vendor and select one or more finalists. Upon completion of the proposal evaluations, notification to all bidders will be made in writing. Finalists may be given the opportunity to provide a presentation regarding their proposal.

**Two (2) copies** of the proposal must be received by the Department no later than 12:00 P.M. CST on **November 8, 2011.**

Any proposals submitted in response to this request must remain open for three months from the date of this RFP. All documentation, materials, and correspondence must be directed to:

Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education  
ATTN: Mrs. Alvena Williams  
Director of Internal Audit  
135 S. Union  
P.O. Box 302130  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2130  
[Alvena.Williams@dpe.edu](mailto:Alvena.Williams@dpe.edu)

**By:** **November 8, 2011** 12:00 P.M. CST

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### 2.3 QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATION

Should you have any questions or need clarification on this RFP, submit those in writing via email. Please address requests to Mrs. Alvena Williams at [alvena.williams@dpe.edu](mailto:alvena.williams@dpe.edu). Questions and responses will be provided to all vendors.

The deadline for vendor questions is **October 31, 2011**.

**The Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals in response to this RFP or to discontinue our desire to acquire a solution, without recourse by the bidder.**

### 2.4 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION

This document represents an inquiry only and implies no obligation on the part of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education to enter into any subsequent agreements or understandings. All costs incurred by the bidder in preparation of a response, quotation or proposal shall be borne by the bidder. Any work performed or materials procured by the bidder in anticipation or preparation for the work to be completed under the specifications herein shall be at the bidders sole risk. The Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education will not be liable for any risk, loss, or expenditures made by the bidder unless such expenditures are made pursuant to a contract or purchase order issued by a purchasing agent of the Department. No contract shall be construed to exist, or formed, unless all necessary parties sign a written contract.

## SECTION III – SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

### 3.1 SOLUTION REQUIREMENTS

The following is a list of minimum system requirements that vendors should support in order to be considered for this project:

#### REPORT INTAKE AND CASE MANAGEMENT

- Vendor should have an independent and secure complaint intake solution that operates 24 hours a day and 7 days a week year round.
- Vendor should support multiple intake methods, including a non-outsourced call center with a dedicated phone number, and further accept complaints using fax, web interface, email, and regular mail.
- Solution should have the ability to receive confidential, anonymous complaints in multiple languages through all report intake methods.
- Solution should allow person making the complaint or report (*reporter*) to attach electronic documents to their reports in order to support and strengthen claims. Please provide a list of document formats that may be accepted.

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- Vendor's call center should be staffed with professionally trained and experienced interviewers who are qualified, appropriately educated individuals that help reporters feel comfortable with reporting; and asks questions to generate information to investigate.
- System should provide anonymous real-time communication between reporter and multiple ACCS personnel.
- Solution should be customizable so that report recipients can prioritize and manage complaints to identify serious and urgent issues.
- Solution should support privacy requirements for HIPAA, FERPA, GLBA, and other regulatory sensitivities that may arise.
- Solutions should have protocols for distribution of each type of complaint to appropriate individuals within the ACCS based on the nature of the complaint.
- Solution should provide management report details such as submission date, report category, status, number of follow-ups, number of days open, date closed, resolution, etc.
- Solution should automatically generate case number with no overrides and re-classification when necessary.

**REPORT CLASSIFICATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND OVERSIGHT**

- Solution should enable ACCS to document every report and add information when needed.
- Solution database should record the final disposition of the investigation, nature of discipline, or corrective action taken because of the report.
- Solution should be able to support report follow-up questions and communication to gain as much complete information as possible between ACCS and the reporter, while maintaining the reporter's anonymity throughout the entire process.
- Reporter should be given a means that allows them to either call back later, or provide responses to follow-up questions from investigators.
- Transcript of follow-up questions and real-time communication should be saved to the report record for document retention purposes.
- Solution should be able to direct reports to appropriate parties, depending on the nature of the complaint and by location.
- Report distribution should be manageable (able to be updated) in real-time by the administrator(s) of the ACCS via a web-based management tool with appropriate security, data integrity and protection features.
- Reports should have the capability of access via the web interface.
- Solution should support the creation of ad hoc reports with specific criteria and sort features directly and in real-time.
- Solution must be able to download reports to desktop tools such as Excel.

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**REVIEW BY MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION OF REPORTED ISSUES**

- Complaints involving Executive or Senior management should be distributed automatically to the Director of Internal Audit or Audit Committee without filtering by management or other internal personnel.
- Solution should generate audit trail for communications and all activities to and from reporters and recipients.
- Solution should have industry benchmarking capabilities, including the ability to compare report levels against other higher education institutions.
- Solution should have the ability to perform trend analysis on incoming reports in real-time.
- Solution should support exception alerts and reporting for:
  - Specific reports that exceed a materiality level set by the ACCS.
  - Perform analysis for ACCS by violation category of any trends.
  - Alerting ACCS of violations that have exceeded the ACCS defined parameters.

**3.2 RFP DELIVERABLES**

- Include a detailed Project Plan to meet the Project Timeline of ACCS (See section 1.2).
- Include a complete description of the technology used in the security of the infrastructure to receive and store reports.
- Include a description of how the ACCS is notified of information received via the confidential reporting system (single or multiple point(s) of contact depending on the nature of the call, etc.).
- Respond to minimum solution requirements. (Section 3.1)
- Include an explanation for pricing structures of services. If there is a consideration of educational discounts for The ACCS, please explain.
- List the company's legal name, full address, and telephone number.
- Include a brief history of the company.
- Have any of the company's owners, officers, directors, senior management, or board members ever been convicted of a felony or breach of ethics? How many years have the officers been with the company?
- Include the company's contact person, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address (the person authorized to respond to additional questions about the information provided, if any).
  - Name of Organization
  - Contact (Individual's Name), Title
  - Address, City, State, Zip
  - Phone No., Fax No., Email Address
- Provide a minimum of three references for similar services performed for comparable environments.

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**SECTION IV – OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

**Include answers to the following questions/requirements in the RFP.**

**Call Center**

- Provide statistics on the service level, to include call responsiveness, average-handling time, average speed of answer, report dispatch time, abandonment rate, downtime, etc.
- What are your standards and performance of those standards?
- How do interviewers recognize the language spoken and obtain appropriate interpreter?
- What is the average waiting time for an interpreter to get on the line?
- Explain escalation procedures for reporting a claim.
- Describe the training program for call center personnel.
- Does your call center provide customization for greetings, scripting, and redirection of calls to other than ACCS feedback mechanisms?

**Web Interface**

- Describe your web intake procedures for report intake and follow-up and your level of expertise.
- For other higher education institution clients, what is the percentage of reports that are taken via the phone and web?
- Describe escalation procedures for web intake.
  - Are the reports reviewed before dispatch?
  - What is the average dispatch time for web forms?
- Describe how your system allows the ACCS to enter internal reports from claims other than your call center. (i.e., somebody walks into an ACCS office with a concern)
- Describe how your system supports these internal reports, as opposed to reports that come in through the telephone, email, fax, and web interface.
- Please detail Web customization options for the Alabama Community College System.
- Please state the level of customization your system allows.
  - What level of customization is included in the implementation costs?
  - If not all-inclusive, please state costs involved for further customization.
- Describe your company's ability to support multiple languages online.
  - Are there additional costs associated with translating the web interface into other languages? Please list costs if any.

**Costs**

- Please list all applicable fees.
- Are setup fees separate? Please list fees.

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- Please provide an overview of your employee awareness program and the costs associated with supporting materials or programs (examples: posters, wallet cards, and brochure).
  - Would you handle language translation of this material? If so, please provide an approximate translation cost per language.

**Upgrades**

- How are upgrades provided?
- Is there a charge for upgrades or for upgrades of customized parts of the system?
- How often are upgrades issued?

**Distribution/Oversight**

- Does the system have customizable violation categories? Please describe.
- Does your solution provide for tracking the area of risk (i.e. Financial, Research, HR, Instructional, and Safety) as well as by specific risk category (i.e., Conflict of Interest, Theft, Violence, Threat, Data Privacy, etc.)?
- Does your solution have the ability to send email notifications on assigned cases and tasks to facilitate efficient communication within the ACCS defined workflow?
- Does your solution have the ability to establish cross-referencing between related cases in the system?
- Can various locations have their own custom violation category to reflect their differing risk factors?
- Can various departments (Finance, H/R, Athletics, Contracts & Grants, Information Technology, Risk & Safety etc.) have their own custom violation category to reflect their differing risk factors?
- Does your solution provide an oversight mechanism for interested parties (Director of Internal Audit, Audit Committee, Chancellor, State Board of Education) to access or review any school and or department reports?

**Technology/Security**

- Does your company develop and maintain the application?
- Where is your application hosted (in your data center or hosted by a third party)?
- How do you secure the information from one client to the other?
- How do you authenticate users and control the access?
- How do you manage user ID's and passwords?
- Are all activities of your employees logged so there is an audit trail of the person who entered the information?
- Do you have a security officer?
- How do you protect your external perimeter (firewall, IDS, etc)?
- Do you have any incident response processes? If yes, describe briefly.

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- Do you have a disaster recovery plan for the technology? If yes, please describe.
- What is the recovery time for your application and stored documents?
- How do you protect the confidentiality of the information (encryption, etc) during the transmission?
- What are the controls in place with regard to the physical environment of your data center?
- Do you have a disaster plan for the physical environment? Please describe.