

Request for Proposal (RFP)
RFP ALSDE 2026-01
Alabama State Department of Education,
Support Services/Mental Telehealth Services

Alabama State Department of Education



Request for Proposal
RFP ALSDE 2026-01

SCHOOL-BASED TELEHEALTH SERVICES GUIDELINES

Alabama State Department of Education
Support Services/Mental Telehealth Services
Inquiries related to this RFP are to be emailed to:

Cindy Gillespie
Office of Operations
Alabama State Department of Education
Email: rfpproposals@alsde.edu

Deadline: NEW ELECTRONIC PROCEDURES FOR SUBMISSION

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on October 31, 2025.
It is required that each supplier clearly note the RFP Number & Supplier Name in the subject line
and email to: rfpproposals@alsde.edu

The proposal package must contain the following and be submitted electronically.

1. The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the supplier to the information provided.
2. Must be currently registered with the Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Procurement as a State Supplier and provide supplier number. [Division of Procurement](#)
3. The supplier must complete the affidavit for business entity/employer/supplier. Verification of enrollment in E-verify shall be presented on the form found in Appendix A.

Pursuant to Alabama Administrative Code Rule 355-4-3-.03(12),
proposal openings are not open to the public.

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background

Purpose:

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) seeks proposals from vendors that will securely deliver evidence-based, ethical mental health counseling or therapy services via telehealth (mental health provided services via an encrypted telecommunications platform) for students and school district employees. Eligible applicants submitting proposals must meet the guidelines established for participating vendors in the “Mental Health Telecounseling Pilot Project” in the Education Fund appropriation in Act 2025-270. Those guidelines are outlined herein.

Background:

In Act 2025-270, the Governor of Alabama and the Alabama Legislature appropriated funds from the FY26 Education Trust Fund to the ALSDE for the “Mental Health Telecounseling Pilot Project.” ALSDE will work with a telehealth vendor of its choice that will follow guidelines set forth by the ALSDE and the Alabama Department of Mental Health. Telehealth vendors should work in partnership with the State-funded mental health services already delivered in the schools.

The “Mental Health Telecounseling Pilot Project” is designed to expand access to counseling services for **students and school district employees**. The goal is to address common challenges associated with access to traditional in-person counseling, including limited transportation, scheduling conflicts, and geographic barriers. Through telehealth appointments and virtual sessions, the pilot project offers a flexible and accessible model for delivering mental health support.

Telehealth providers will work in partnership with existing state-funded mental health services that may already be implemented within the school or district, ensuring continuity of care and alignment with current support systems.

1.2 Anticipated Time Table

October 17, 2025 Question Submission Deadline:

October 20, 2025 Question Responses Due

October 31, 2025 Proposal Submission Deadline

NOTE: All Questions must be emailed to rfpqanda@alsde.edu by the deadline noted above. All Q & A will be posted in STAARS and on the Alabama Achieves website [Alabama State Department of Education - Alabama Achieves - ALSDE](#) on the designated date noted above.

1.3 Proposal Evaluation

An Evaluation Team will review the proposals and make a recommendation. The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate the proposals for the purpose of ranking them in relative position based on how fully each proposal meets the requirements of this RFP.

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Evaluation Criteria:

Supplier qualifications and experience	35 points
Budget Proposal	30 points
Detailed description of services and delivery of training materials, presentations, and/or modules	35 points

Best and Final Offers:

The ALSDE may either accept a supplier's initial proposal by award of a contract or enter into discussions with suppliers whose proposals are deemed to be reasonably acceptable of consideration for award. After discussions conclude, a supplier may be allowed to submit a "Best and Final Offer" for consideration in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE. By submitting a proposal each supplier accepts and agrees to all conditions and requirements herein.

The ALSDE will make all decisions regarding evaluation of the proposal. The ALSDE reserves the right to judge and determine whether a request is compliant with and satisfactorily meets the requirements of the RFP. The ALSDE reserves the right to waive technical and other defects if, in its judgment, the interest of the ALSDE so requires. Any further information disclosed about the RFP during this process will be provided to all suppliers in the manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE.

Rejection of Proposal:

ALSDE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals it deems non-responsive, late in submission, or unsatisfactory in any way. ALSDE shall have no obligation to award a contract for work, goods and/or services as a result of this RFP.

Qualified bidders aggrieved in connection with the solicitation of a contract may protest to the Chief Procurement Officer. *See generally* State of Alabama Department of Finance Administrative Code Regulations at [Administrative Code Regulations](#).

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Confidentiality:

All information contained in the RFP is considered to be the exclusive property of the ALSDE. Recipients of this RFP are not to disclose any information contained within the RFP unless such information is publicly available. This RFP is provided for the sole purpose of allowing suppliers to respond to these specifications.

Selection Process:

The ALSDE will select the supplier that provides the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal that best fits the needs of the ALSDE. Final selection of the successful supplier will not be based solely on cost. The supplier product will be evaluated primarily on the scope of the activities linked to associated costs as detailed in the RFP. RFPs will be reviewed to ascertain that minimum requirements have been met. The ALSDE reserves the right to conduct discussions with potential suppliers in order to clarify information contained in their proposals, but the ALSDE has no obligation to do so. This may include requesting a presentation of top finalists for final scoring. The supplier will provide notice to the ALSDE of any partnership with another firm to provide parts of the solution; however, the supplier must provide management of the partner and is responsible for all project performance. Any subcontractor or partner will be subject to the same vetting process as the supplier, and the supplier is responsible for ensuring that each subcontractor acknowledges and is contractually bound by the staffing plan and other commitments listed in this RFP.

Unless provided by law, nothing in this RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of the ALSDE or any respondents. The ALSDE reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue the RFP in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall the ALSDE be liable to respondents for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process, including, but not limited to, any and all costs of preparing a response to this RFP or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFP. No respondent shall be entitled to repayment from the ALSDE for any costs, expenses, or fees related to the RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of the ALSDE. Respondents may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any time, as more information becomes known. If, within the confines of this RFP, the contents of the RFP, including any intellectual property the supplier provides to the ALSDE as part of the RFP, is subject to Open Records Act laws and thus is subsequently in the public domain.

Intent to Award

Division of Procurement will send out an intent to award to participating suppliers, defining the protest period. The CPO (Chief Procurement Officer) is the awarding authority and as such is a signatory on the agreement/contract.

Disclaimer Notice:

The ALSDE shall not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals or negotiations of a contract incurred by any party.

Availability of Funds:

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligations of the ALSDE to proceed are conditioned upon the continued availability of funds that may be expended for these purposes.

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1.4 Conditions and Terms

Contract Terms:

The ALSDE intends to execute an initial contract with Contractor for a period of up to two (2) years, with contract renewals equaling no longer than three (3) additional years, pending written agreement of the supplier and ALSDE dependent upon required state approvals, availability of funds, performance evaluations of the project, at the full discretion of the ALSDE. The contract will commence pending CPO signature, Legislative Review Committee approval, and the Governor's signature. Each contract renewal will be presented to the Legislative Oversight Committee for approval.

The supplier shall be fully prepared to commence work after full execution of the contract by parties and the receipt of required governmental approvals.

Proposals must reference each element in the RFP by number on the cover of each copy and be arranged in the same sequence. All fees and costs are to be stated in United States currency. Suppliers must reply to each element of the RFP.

Section 2.00 Scope

2.1 Scope of Supplier's Work and Responsibilities

The areas of focus must include the following:

A. Technology Requirements

1. The supplier must be able to administer services via an interactive audio or audio/video telecommunications system that permits two-way communication between the practitioner and the recipient's location.
2. Telehealth vendors and practitioners must ensure that the telecommunication technology and equipment it uses will allow the practitioner to appropriately evaluate, diagnose, and/or treat the recipient in a HIPAA-compliant manner.
3. The supplier must conduct all telehealth sessions via a HIPAA-compliant software platform that encrypts all data transmitted, including video, audio, and messaging, to protect the recipient's privacy and security. The software platforms must employ acceptable authentication and identification procedures for both the practitioner and the recipient. These procedures shall include robust access controls, such as multi-factor authentication and role-based access, to limit who can access patient information and keep sessions private.
4. A telehealth vendor that uses another software vendor for its HIPAA-compliant software platform *must* have a signed Business Associate Agreement with the software vendor. Services administered without a Business Associate Agreement are not HIPAA-compliant.

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5. Both the telehealth vendor and, if applicable, the software platform vendor must conduct routine security audits and risk assessments to identify and address potential vulnerabilities. Vendors also must have a clear process and policy for notifying those affected by any data breaches.
6. All technology, software, and/or platforms used by a telehealth vendor to communicate with the recipient of services or maintain receipt data must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

B. Documentation and Storage Security for Protected Health Information

1. A telehealth vendor that uses an external Electronic Health Record company for documenting and storing Protected Health Information (PHI) *must* have a signed Business Associate Agreement with its Electronic Health Record company. Services administered without a Business Associate Agreement are not HIPAA-compliant
2. Telehealth vendors should have a clear policy in place regarding the documentation and security of PHI that their practitioners must follow. This policy must address implementation plans/protocols, including but not limited to internal staff training, documentation in the recipient's health record, and the vendor's prevention, notification, and response protocols for data breaches.
3. The supplier may not share a recipient's PHI with participating schools or any other individual or entity unless it obtains written consent from the recipient or, if the recipient is under the age of 16 (Alabama's age of medical consent), the recipient's parent(s) or legal guardian.

C. Medical Consent and Telehealth Education

1. The supplier's practitioners must obtain prior written consent from the recipient before rendering services. All recipients served must sign a consent form, and a copy must be placed in the recipient's health record. The consent form must include a description of the risks, benefits, and consequences of telehealth. The consent form may be signed electronically.
2. Telehealth services provided to recipients under the age of 16 (Alabama's age of medical consent) must have a consent form also signed by their parent(s) or legal guardian.
3. The legal counsels of the telehealth vendor and participating school shall develop a proper consent form which includes but is not limited to consent to perform services, and HIPAA authorization allowing the recipient to authorize who can access the recipient's PHI. Further, a participating school that is going to collect unidentified, aggregated data from the telehealth services must disclose that fact to the recipient on the consent form as well.
4. PHI cannot and shall not be shared unless the recipient (or their parents/legal guardians if under the age of 16) gives his/her consent.
5. At the onset of telehealth services, the supplier's practitioners must inform recipients (or their parents/legal guardians if under the age of 16) how telehealth services will fit into their overall treatment and any limitations of telehealth services. Practitioners must educate recipients (or their parents/legal guardians if under the age of 16) on the extent of the service and measures recipients can take to maintain their own safety and confidentiality.

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2.2 Scope of Alabama State Department of Education's Work and Responsibilities

The ALSDE and the Department of Mental Health will collaborate with selected Supplies(s) to provide oversight and collaboration as provided by law.

Section 3.00 General Requirements

3.1 Requirements of Proposal

The supplier must provide the following mandatory information. **Failure to provide this information may be cause for the proposal to be rejected.** Qualifications, experience, and cost will be evaluated for contract award. The proposal may be submitted under the same cover with Supplier Requirements and Cost Proposal in two distinct sections. E-verify information is required to be submitted for all employees to include contractors of the suppliers if necessary and applicable.

Part I

Signed Cover Letter:

The cover letter shall serve as the first page of the supplier's proposal. The supplier shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the proposal in response to the RFP. The cover letter must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the supplier. It will state that the supplier is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted proposal. The letter accompanying the proposal must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and e-mail addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

Part II

Supplier Qualification and Experience:

Supplier shall provide satisfactory evidence of the supplier'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 supplier's background and relevant experience as related to the required activities in the RFP.

Telehealth counseling services rendered must be provided by a practitioner who is licensed to engage in his or her mental healthcare profession in the state the recipient is providing services (Alabama). All practitioners providing telehealth services must hold one of the following licensures in the State of Alabama:

- **Licensed Psychologist (PhD or PsyD)**, licensed by the Alabama Board of Examiners in Psychology
- **Licensed Psychiatrist (MD)**, licensed by the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners & Medical Licensure Commission.
- **Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)**, licensed by the Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling.
- **Associate Licensed Counselor (ALC)**, licensed by the Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling. All ALCs must be under the clinical supervision of a Supervising Counselor, approved by the Board, who is an LPC.

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- **Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW)**, licensed by the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners.
- **Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)**, licensed by the Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners. All LMSWs must be under the clinical supervision of a LICSW approved by the State Board.
- **Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)**, licensed by the Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy.
- **Licensed Marriage and Family Therapy Associate (LMFTA)**, licensed by the Alabama Board of Examiners in Marriage and Family Therapy and is practicing marriage and family therapy under a Board approved supervisory arrangement.
- **Applied Behavior Analysts (ABA)**, licensed by the Alabama Behavior Analyst Licensing Board.

All services rendered must be in the practitioner's scope of license. The telehealth vendor and school should keep copies of the practitioner's licensure, and the licensure should be active and in good standing with the respective Alabama licensure board.

Services delivered must be evidence-based and trauma-informed. The telehealth vendor must supply to the participating school system documentation that their services are using evidence-based and trauma-informed clinical models, along with the training requirements provided for the staff.

Services and treatment should be coordinated with other school-based mental health efforts funded by the State of Alabama (ex. School Mental Health Coordinators supervised by ALSDE and Tier-3 Mental Health Services delivered by ADMH Community Mental Health Centers).

Recipients (or their parents/legal guardians if under the age of 16) shall also be informed of the practitioner's licensure and qualifications to perform the provided services.

Part III

Supplier 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 response must be prepared and organized in a clear and concise manner that is easily understandable.

Supplier Organization:

Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies to be responsive to the requirements of this RFP.

References:

The supplier shall provide a minimum of three (3) references that can support and validate services and training and/or projects and outcomes, including names or persons who may be contacted, position of person, addresses, and phone numbers where similar training and/or projects to that described in this RFP have been conducted.

Executive Summary:

An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the supplier's proposal.

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Part IV

Cost Proposal:

Supplier shall include the fee structure and pricing for the services and training sessions/program if applicable or requested. The supplier shall submit a cost proposal in addition to other required information.

Subcontractor Disclosure:

If the execution of work to be performed requires hiring Subcontractors, **you must clearly state this in the proposal and provide qualification for such individuals.** Subcontractors must be identified and the services they will provide or work they will perform must be clearly defined. The ALSDE will not refuse a proposal based upon use of a Subcontractor; however, the ALSDE reserves the right to refuse the Subcontractor a supplier selects. Supplier and associated personnel shall remain solely responsible for the performance of all work, including work that may be subcontracted.

A supplier must describe its rationale for utilizing Subcontractors including relevant past experience partnering with stated Subcontractor(s). Providing documents for E-verification of subcontractors is the sole responsibility of the Contractor and must be available upon request to ensure compliance.

Subcontractors may not be employees/agents of the ALSDE or LEA, nor any entity or agency receiving education trust funds.

Section 4.00 General Terms and Conditions

4.1 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. Suppliers agree to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Per the current FPPM (Fiscal Policy and Procedures Manual): Non-appropriation and Proration (Section 41-4-144(c)).

Fiscal Policy Procedures

When funds are not appropriated or otherwise made available to support continuation of performance in a subsequent fiscal period, the contract shall be cancelled, and, to the extent permissible by law, the supplier shall be reimbursed for the reasonable value of any non-recurring costs incurred but not amortized in the price of the supplies or services delivered under the contract. To the extent permissible by law, this cost of cancellation may be paid from any appropriations available for that purpose.

In the event that proration of appropriated funds from which the State is to pay the supplier is declared by the Governor pursuant to Section 41-4-90 of the Code of Alabama, the contractor shall have the option, in addition to the other remedies of the contract, of renegotiating the contract to extend or change payment terms or amounts, or terminating the contract. In all circumstances, it is agreed that the terms and commitments of this contract shall not constitute a debt of the State of Alabama in violation of Section 213 of the Constitution of Alabama, as amended.”

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Participating telehealth vendors and practitioners are expected to always comply with state and federal laws, including, but not limited to, Alabama's Telehealth Medical Services law (Code of Alabama, Sections 34-24-701 through 34-24-707), Alabama's Medical Age of Consent laws (Act 2025-455) as well as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Further, participating telehealth vendors and practitioners should comply with the Code of Ethics and other requirements of their respective licensure boards.

4.2 Immigration

The proposal must contain a statement that the supplier is aware of and in compliance with the requirements of the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; a statement that the supplier is enrolled in the E-Verify as required by Section 31-13-9 (b), Code of Alabama 1975, as amended:

BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT

COMPLIANCE

The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act (31-13-1 et seq, Code of Alabama, 1975 as amended by Act 2012-491) regulates illegal immigration in the state of Alabama. All contracts with the State or any political subdivision thereof must fully comply with each provision as provided by law.

A proposal must include a statement that the supplier has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Before a contract is signed, the supplier awarded the contract must submit a Certificate of Compliance using the form at Appendix A. E-Verify enrollment can be accomplished at the website of the United States Department of Homeland Security at [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services](https://www.dhs.gov/e-verify).

See Section 10 for additional language required by Section 10(k) of the Act to be included in the contract.

Rev.5-24-13

4.3 Conflict of Interest

The supplier attests that no employee, officer, or agent of the supplier shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest may 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 supplier, if selected as the career planning system supplier, shall neither award nor offer gratuities, favors, nor anything of monetary value from suppliers or subcontractors.

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4.4 Discrimination

Alabama Non-Discrimination Statement:

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) 694-4717.

4.5 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Systems

AI Model Development and Use Attestation:

The proposal shall include a written statement attesting to the following:

- a. Pretrained AI System: The AI System to be provided in the performance of this RFP has been pretrained.
- b. Responsibility in AI System Development: The supplier used all responsible measures necessary during the development of the AI System to be provided in the performance of this RFP.
- c. Human-in-the-Loop AI System Training: A human-in-the-loop approach was used, wherever possible, in training the AI System, ensuring human oversight and intervention were integral parts to the AI System training process.
- d. Unbiased Data Selection and Algorithm Development: The process of data selection for AI System training was conducted in an unbiased manner, wherever possible, adhering to the principles of fairness and non-discrimination.
- e. Expected Outcomes: The results produced by the AI System met the expected outcomes as identified and defined by the supplier.

The supplier further attests and agrees that any violation of this subsection will be considered a material breach of this RFP, and may result in its termination, legal action, or both, at the sole discretion of the ALSDE. If the supplier's software solution does not use, contain or incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI), the proposal shall include a written statement attesting that the software solution does not use, contain, or incorporate any AI.

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APPENDIX "A"

State of _____
County of _____

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535, as amended by ACT 2012-491)

DATE: _____

RE Contract/Grant/Incentive (describe by number or subject):

_____ by and between
_____ (Contractor/Grantee) and
_____ (State Agency, Department or Public Entity)

The undersigned hereby certifies to the State of Alabama as follows:

1. The undersigned holds the position of _____ with the Contractor/Grantee named above, and is authorized to provide representations set out in this Certificate as the official and binding act of that entity, and has knowledge of the provisions of THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535 of the Alabama Legislature, as amended by ACT 2012-491) which is described herein as "the Act."

2. Using the following definitions from Section 3 of the Act, select and initial either (a) or (b), below, to describe the Contractor/Grantee's business structure.

BUSINESS ENTITY. Any person or group of persons employing one or more persons performing or engaging in any activity, enterprise, profession, or occupation for gain, benefit, advantage, or livelihood, whether for profit or not for profit.

a. Self-employed individuals, business entities filing articles of incorporation, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, foreign corporations, foreign limited partnerships, and foreign limited liability companies authorized to transact business in this state, business trusts, and any business entity that registers with the Secretary of State.

b. Any business entity that possesses a business license, permit, certificate, approval, registration, charter, or similar form of authorization issued by the state, any business entity that is exempt by law from obtaining such a business license, and any business entity that is operating unlawfully without a business license.

EMPLOYER. Any person, firm, corporation, partnership, joint stock association, agent, manager, representative, foreman, or other person having control or custody of any employment, place of employment, or of any employee, including any person or entity employing any person for hire within the State of Alabama, including a public employer. This term shall not include the occupant of a household contracting with another person to perform casual domestic labor within the household.

____ (a) The Contractor/Grantee is a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

____ (b) The Contractor/Grantee is not a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

3. As of the date of this Certificate, the Contractor/Grantee does not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama and hereafter it will not knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama;

4. The Contractor/Grantee is enrolled in E-Verify unless it is not eligible to enroll because of the rules of that program or other factors beyond its control.

Certified this _____ day of _____ 20____.

Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient
By: _____
Its _____

The above Certification was signed in my presence by the person whose name appears above, on this _____ day of _____ 20____.

WITNESS: _____

Printed Name of Witness