



ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RE-IMAGINE INITIATIVE
RFP #BOT2-2k21**

**Issuance Date: 5/10/2021
Proposal Due Date: 5/21/2021
@ 5 pm.**

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Alabama A&M University*



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PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL FORM

This form must be completed and returned with your proposal. Failure to submit this form may render your proposal as unresponsive.

1. Name of Firm: _____

2. Address: _____

3. Email Address: _____

4. Telephone Number: ____ () — _____

5. Fax Number: ____ () — _____

6. Point of Contact: _____ Title: _____
Printed Name

_____ Date: _____
Signature



INFORMATION FOR OFFERORS

Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University (AAMU) seeks to retain a marketing consultant, firm, or organization to assist the University in launching and assisting to accomplish the goals and objectives of the AAMU “Reimagine” Initiative. This RFP outlines the expectation and timeline for scope of work. The selected marketing consultant, firm, or organization will possess the capacity and competencies on a full range of services, including conducting successful branding initiatives similarly sized educational, public, and non-profit organizations ultimately resulting in donations from individuals, organizations, companies, foundations, philanthropists, etc.

A. BACKGROUND

AAMU is a historic, student-friendly and community-focused institution of higher learning. Reflecting on its heritage as a historical black college and university (HBCU) and a traditional 1890 land-grant institution, AAMU functions as a teaching, research and public service institution, including extension. Founded in 1875 by a former slave, Dr. William Hooper Council, AAMU is a dynamic and progressive institution with a strong commitment to academic excellence. The serene, intimate campus is situated on “The Hill,” only a short distance from downtown Huntsville, the site of the school’s founding.

With an enrollment of approximately 6,000 students and a budget of \$192M, Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University provides more than 60 undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs and concentrations, a diverse international faculty, 50 plus student organizations, and an extensive alumni network comprised of politicians, educators, entrepreneurs, doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, authors, artist, and more, many of whom are change agents on the local, national and international stage.

The University’s academic curriculum is organized into four Colleges:

1. Agricultural, Life and Natural Sciences
2. Engineering, Technology and Physical Sciences
3. Education, Humanities and Behavioral Sciences
4. Business and Public Affairs

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B. Purpose and Intent

The goal of the AAMU “Reimagine” Initiative is to move Alabama’s largest HBCU to the forefront of education for the socially and economically disadvantaged. AAMU “Reimagine” builds upon and further expands upon the University’s Strategic Plan 2015 – 2025: Into the Future, specifically Strategic Priority 5: Enhance the University’s Image and Recognition. The initiative has challenged the institution to view its future in an imaginative, yet strategic manner resulting in the development and compilation of cutting-edge futuristic projects, programs, initiatives, facilities and infrastructure enhancements that will propel the University into international recognition and elite ranking among our regional and national peers. The ultimate goal is to receive \$750,000,000 in donations to fund over 65 potential projects and/or initiatives

OBJECTIVE

Alabama A&M University seeks to position itself as a leading institution nationally. As a public, land-grant HBCU, many of our students are first-generation with more than 90% needing financial assistance. Yet, Alabama A&M is consistently underfunded by the State of Alabama, a state that is also considered the birthplace of civil rights. In spite of our challenges, however, we continue to be a top producer of minority STEM graduates nationally, one of the top forestry programs in the Southeast, and producer of business and industry leaders nationally. Our professors produce world-class research, and we have a president whose current tenure at Alabama A&M is perhaps one of the longest at public HBCUs at the time.

For this reason, the time is now that we create Alabama A&M University “Reimagine.” AAMU “Reimagine” envisions the University having the resources needed to provide state-of-the-art facilities, world class academic programs, and the implementation of major strategic initiatives and partnerships. We are currently in the process of identifying those desired resources and initiatives. The goal is to work with a reputable, national marketing and/or public relations firm to aid in strategy, placement, and pitch to attract Corporate America to invest hundreds of millions of dollars into Alabama A&M University.

Although the investment aspect of this is what is desired, this is not intended to be a public capital campaign only a branding initiative. The University realizes that we need a national, sustainable branding effort that attains the attention of Fortune 100 companies and major global media outlets, such as CNN, MSNBC, FOX,

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Huffington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The USA Today, etc. This type of effort would expose the nation to our resources, expertise, and capabilities, while also making specialized introductions between Alabama A&M's Board of Trustees, President, senior leadership, marketing/development team and Corporate America/national press. This effort should result in relationships between Alabama A&M University and those external entities that lead to significant short-term investments, while also laying the groundwork for viable long-term investments.

SUMMARY OF INITIATIVES

The University has identified over 65 potential projects/initiatives totaling more than \$750,000,000. Those potential projects/initiatives include Centers of Excellence, Lecture Series, Academic Programs and Research Initiatives, Student Engagement and Development Initiatives, etc.

C. QUESTIONS, INQUIRIES, OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

If the marketing consultant, firm or organization is capable of working with Alabama A&M University to meet the desired goal, objectives and overall expectations of the AAMU "Reimagine," we encourage you to submit a proposal that outlines who you are, your capabilities, proposed plan for development, launch and implementation, timeline, what you are able to offer in terms of firm deliverables, along with any other pertinent information. Proposals are due to Malinda Swoope, Ph.D., Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Planning and Initiatives at malinda.swoope@aamu.edu by May 21, 2021 at 11:59 p.m. CST.

Questions should be submitted electronically to: Malinda Swoope, Ph.D. at malinda.swoope@aamu.edu, or via phone at 256-372-5230 (office), or 256-929-3720 (cell).

Subject Line: AAMU RE-IMAGINE

Deadline for Questions: May 18th, 2021 @ 5 p.m.

Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the University. Consultants are to rely on written statements issued by the RFP Coordinator. Communication directed to parties other than the RFP Coordinator may result in disqualification of the consultant. ***Proposals may not be transmitted using facsimile transmission.***

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Proposals deemed late will not be accepted and will be automatically disqualified from further consideration.

D. SOLICITATION SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE

RFP Released	May 10th, 2021
Deadline for Questions	May 18th, 2021 @ 5 pm.
Proposals Due	May 21st, 2021 by 5 pm.
Evaluate Proposals	May 24th, 2021 – May 28th, 2021
Approve Search Firm	May 28th, 2021
Negotiate and Award Contract	May 28th 1, 2021 – May 31st, 2021
Begin Work with Committee	June 1st, 2021



PART I--SCOPE OF WORK

I.A: SCOPE OF SERVICES

I.A.1 SELECTED FIRM DUTIES

- The selected firm of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to work closely with the Board of Trustees and/or its appointed team to develop a detailed “re-imagined” branding profile for Alabama A&M University.
- Perform and provide reporting of measurables for tracking progress and success rate of marketing initiatives,
- Ensure all files of all prospects are complete with regards to newly established relationships between Alabama A&M University and external entities which may lead to significant short and long investments.
- Provide guidance to the University in the implementation of strategic marketing and branding initiatives to strengthen and support the “RE-Imagine” Project.
- Support the process of final negotiations with national and international Corporate Donors and Philanthropists when warranted.
- Should additional work be required, which is beyond the scope of this RFP but is related to the overall contract, the vendor will be requested to submit a written proposal and upon approval, a purchase order will be issued to authorize the work



PART II--PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

II.A: PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

II.A.1 GENERAL

This section specifies the general requirements for the preparation and submittal of proposals in response to this Request for Proposals. Proposals shall be submitted under the specified guidelines herein.

RFP Submission Requirements

Proposal should be no more than ten (10) pages in length, not including references, E-verify, or Attachments, and cover the following:

1. A brief history and summary of your firm and its expertise;
2. The make-up and background the team proposed for this project;
3. Recruitment approach, including how you will accomplish the scope of work, delineation of responsibilities between your firm and the Board/Committee, and networks you intend to access;
4. Deliverables to measure success throughout the timeline;
5. Budget including a narrative of what is included in the cost;
6. Two (2) references
 - a.) A successful marketing consultancy that resulted in an increase in an organizations' corporate and philanthropic investments and increase marketing exposure nationally and internationally. Provide contact information for both the executive and the board or staff contact with whom you worked most closely, and
7. E-Verify indicating that the responding firm does not employ any person not legally eligible to work in the United States.



REVISIONS TO THE RFP

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, addenda will be mailed to those who either received the RFP or who responded with a Letter of Intent to Propose.

In the event it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, addenda will be published on the University's website at www.aamu.edu.

If you downloaded this RFP from the University's website, you are responsible for sending your name, address, e-mail address and telephone number to the RFP Coordinator in order for your organization to receive any RFP amendments or bidder questions/agency answers.

The University also reserves the right to cancel or to reissue the RFP in whole or in part, prior to execution of a contract.

Public Records

As an entity of the State of Alabama, AAMU is subject to the requirements of Alabama Open Meetings Act, Code of Alabama 36-25A-1 *et seq.* and the Alabama Public Records Act, Code of Alabama 41-13-1 *et seq.* under which responses to this RFP and portions of presidential applicant files may be considered public records. If any portion of a response to this RFP is considered confidential or part of a trade secret, that portion shall be *clearly identified at the time of submittal*.

Laws

The terms and provisions of this proposal and any agreement arising therefrom, shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Alabama. The selected firm and its employee shall be considered independent contractors with no authority to bind the Board beyond the specific scope of work herein. In compliance with Alabama law, the selected firm agrees to refrain from employing any person who does not have the legal right to work in the United States



PART III--EVALUATION CRITERIA, CONTRACT AWARD, AND CONTRACT EXECUTION

III.A: CRITERIA FOR AWARD

The University will receive RFPs from firms having specific experience, resources and qualification in the proposed scope of work.

RFPs for consideration for this project must contain evidence of the firm's experience and abilities in the specified area and other disciplines directly related to the proposed services. Other information required by the University to be submitted in response to this RFP is included elsewhere in this solicitation.

A selection committee will review and evaluate all replies and detailed RFPs, may conduct oral presentations or a combination of both, unless otherwise indicated in this solicitation. The selection committee will have only the response to this solicitation to review for selection of finalists and, therefore, it is important that Offerors emphasize specific information considered pertinent to the services to be provided. Evaluation of the responses will be based on the following criteria:

Evaluation

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated ability to provide the depth and breadth of experience, knowledge, and skills required of the project
- An understanding of AAMU's mission, values, programs and strategic objectives
- Completeness of response
- Proposed costs and timeline
- References

The selected firm will mutually discuss and refine the scope of work and negotiate final conditions, compensation, and schedule for a subsequent contract to be executed.

The Board reserves the right to reject any submittals if the evidence or references provided do not satisfy the Board that those submittals do not evidence the qualifications sought. It shall not be the responsibility of the Board to request

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additional information to satisfy requirements. The Board further reserves the right to reject all submittals responsive to this RFP and issue another RFP.

III.B: CONTRACT AWARD

III.B.1 AWARD SELECTION

- a. The University anticipates awarding one (1) Contract.
- b. Offerors will be rank ordered. Selection shall be made of one (1) Offeror deemed to be the best for the project on the basis of the evaluation factors.
- c. A selection panel will review the proposals. As the panel may require a personal interview with up to *three (3) of the highest ranked* Offerors, the *date and time specified on Page 1* of this RFP shall be reserved for possible interviews.
- d. The interview will provide an opportunity for the Offeror to clarify their proposal in response to questions from the Selection Committee. This is a fact-finding and explanation session only and does not include negotiation.
- e. As the interviews are *optional* for the University, Offerors should treat their proposals as a final product.
- f. Negotiations shall commence with the selected Offeror in order to achieve a binding price and agreement on contract terms. If negotiations with the top-ranked Offeror are not successful, discussions will commence with the next highest ranked Offeror, and negotiations will continue in this manner until an agreement is reached.
- g. The award document will be a Contract incorporating by reference the Request for Proposals, Terms and Conditions, Contract Provisions, Scope of Work and/or Technical Specifications, and the Contractor's proposal as negotiated.



- h. Until the final award by Alabama A&M University, said University reserves the right to reject any and/or all RFPs, to waive technicalities, to re-advertise, or to proceed otherwise when the best interest of said University will be realized hereby.

III.B.2 NOTICE OF AWARD

The successful Offeror will be notified in writing of the University's Notice of Intent to Award.



PART IV—GENERAL INFORMATION, INSTRUCTIONS, AND CONDITIONS FOR OFFERORS

IV.A: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE RFP

IV.A.1 PROPOSAL PREPARATION COSTS

This RFP does not commit the University to an award, nor to pay any costs associated with the preparation and/or submission of any proposal. The University shall not reimburse any costs incurred by Offerors in responding to this RFP or in competing for Contract award.

IV.A.2 MODIFICATION OF PROPOSAL CLOSING DATE

The University reserves the right to modify the proposal closing date and/or time. If Offerors have already submitted their proposals to the University when the proposal closing date and/or time are modified, the University will afford those Offerors the opportunity to revise or withdraw their proposals.

IV.A.3 ADDENDA

The University may issue addenda to the RFP. Addenda, if any, will be issued at least five (5) calendar days prior to the proposal closing date. Any addendum issued less than five (5) days prior to the closing date will, if necessary, contain a provision modifying the proposal closing date to a date that will provide Offerors adequate time to respond to the addendum.

IV.A.4 CANCELLATION/WITHDRAWAL OF RFP

The University reserves the right to cancel or withdraw in whole or in part this RFP at its sole discretion. Offerors will be notified in the event the RFP is cancelled via the University website.



IV.A.5 WAIVER OF INFORMALITIES

The University reserves the right to waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals.

IV.A.6 DISPOSITION OF PROPOSALS

Offerors' proposals will not be returned. The University will retain the original proposal for the contract file and destroy the remaining copies.

IV.B: GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR OFFERORS

IV.B.1 AVAILABILITY OF SOLICITATION DOCUMENTS

The electronic versions of our solicitation documents are intended to provide convenience to you. Be advised that it is the responsibility of the prospective Offerors to monitor the University website for any addenda, notices or postings. Failure to submit signed addenda may be grounds to declare your offer non-responsive. The RFP can be downloaded from the website and submitted the same as if a hard copy of the solicitation had been requested from the University.

IV.B.2 WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- a. The University will assume no responsibility for any understanding or representations concerning conditions made by any of its officers or agents prior to the execution of the Contract, unless included in this RFP, the specifications, or related documents or addenda thereto.
- b. Oral explanations or instructions given before the award of the Contract will not be binding.

IV.B.3 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

If an Offeror has questions about the specifications or other solicitation documents, the Offeror should contact the University RFP Coordinator @ malinda.swoope@aamu.edu, or via phone at 256-372-5230 (office), or 256-929-3720 (cell).

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Any revisions to the solicitation will be made only by addendum issued by the University.

IV.B.4 WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSAL PRIOR TO CLOSING DATE

The Offeror may request withdrawal of its proposal under the following circumstances:

- a. Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice from the Offeror to the University's Director of Purchasing or the RFP Coordinator, prior to the RFP closing date and time. The withdrawal shall be made by the person signing the proposal or by an individual(s) who is authorized by the Offeror. The Offeror must provide written evidence of the individual's authority to withdraw the proposal if the individual withdrawing the proposal is other than the person signing the proposal. Proposals may be withdrawn no later than two (2) business days prior to the closing date.
- b. Requests for withdrawal of proposals after opening of such proposal but prior to award shall be transmitted to the University's Purchasing Director, in writing, accompanied by full documentations supporting the request. If the request is based on a claim of error, documentation must show the basis of the error.
- c. Proposals may be withdrawn for good cause after the closing date and prior to award. No Offeror who is permitted to withdraw a proposal shall, for compensation, supply any material or labor to or perform any subcontract or other work agreement for the person or firm to whom the Contract is awarded or otherwise benefit, directly or indirectly, from the performance of the project for which the withdrawn proposal was submitted.

IV.B.5 LATE PROPOSALS

Proposals received after the proposal closing date and time shall not be considered. Late proposals will be returned to the Offeror UNOPENED, if the solicitation number, closing date and Offeror's return address is shown on the package.



IV.B.6 WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSALS AFTER PROPOSAL OPENING

- a. An Offeror may withdraw his proposal from consideration if the cost proposal was substantially lower than the other proposals due solely to a mistake therein, provided the proposal was submitted in good faith, and the mistake was a clerical mistake as opposed to a judgment mistake, and was actually due to an unintentional arithmetic error or an unintentional omission of a quantity of work, labor or material made directly in the compilation of a proposal, which unintentional arithmetic error or unintentional omission can be clearly shown by objective evidence drawn from inspection of original work papers, documents and materials used in the preparation of the proposal sought to be withdrawn.
- b. The Offeror shall give notice in writing of his claim of right to withdraw his proposal along with his original work papers, documents, and materials used in the preparation of the proposal to the University Purchasing Director, within two (2) days of the conclusion of the proposal opening procedure.
- c. If the University denies the withdrawal of a proposal within ten (10) calendar days after receiving notice from the Offeror under the provisions of this section, the University shall notify the Offeror in writing stating the reasons for its decision and award the Contract to such Offeror at the proposed price, provided such Offeror is a responsible and responsive Offeror.

IV.B.7 TRADE SECRETS OR PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Proposals are subject to provisions of State law relating to inspection of public records. Proposals will be kept confidential until a list of recommended Offerors is approved by the University. Following that approval, all documents pertaining to this submittal will be open for public inspection, except material(s) previously designated by the Offeror as proprietary or confidential. The University will not disclose or make public any pages of a Proposal on which the Offeror has stamped or imprinted the words “proprietary” or “confidential.” Such materials must be readily separable from the submittal in order to facilitate eventual public inspection

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of the nonconfidential portion. If a request is received for disclosure of data for which an Offeror has made a written request for confidentiality, the Purchasing Department shall examine the Offeror's submittal and make a written determination specifying which portions of the Proposal should be disclosed in accordance with applicable Alabama law. Unless the Offeror takes action to prevent the disclosure, the Proposal may be so disclosed. The Proposal shall be open to public inspection subject to any continuing prohibition on the disclosure of confidential data.

IV.C: GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR OFFERORS

IV.C.1 PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE PERIOD

- a. All Proposals must remain valid for a minimum period of ninety (90) days after the proposed Proposal Due Date. No Proposal may be modified or withdrawn by the Offeror during this period unless prior written permission is granted by the University.
- b. The University reserves the right to request additional information from the Offeror at any time during the selection process. The University also reserves the right to extend by thirty (30) days the Proposal of any Offeror, at no additional cost to the University, to allow for the completion of the final contract documents. If the notification of selection of an Offeror or request for time extension has not been made by the University after ninety (90) days, Offerors may, at their discretion, withdraw their Proposals or provide the University with written extensions of time.

IV.C.2 REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

- a. The University expressly reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or any part of a proposal, and to resolicit the services in question, if such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the University.



- b. Proposals which fail to meet the solicitation requirements, or which are incomplete, conditional or obscure, or which contain additions not called for, erasures, alterations or irregularities of any kind or in which errors occur, or which contain abnormally high or abnormally low prices, for any class or item of work, may be rejected as invalid at the University's discretion.
- c. The receipt of more than one proposal from the same Offeror, whether or not the same or different names appear on the signature page, shall result in none of the Offeror's proposal being considered.
- d. Reasonable proof for believing that any Offeror has an interest in more than one proposal for the work contemplated will cause the rejection of all proposals made by him directly or indirectly.
- e. Any or all proposals shall be rejected if there is reason for believing that collusion exists among the Offerors.

IV.C.3 OBLIGATION OF CONTRACTOR

By submitting a proposal, the Offeror agrees that it has satisfied itself from a personal investigation of the conditions to be met, that the obligations herein are fully understood, and no claim may be made nor will there be any right to cancellation or relief from the Contract because of any misunderstanding or lack of information.

IV.C.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The University reserves the right to ask any Offeror to clarify its offer.

IV.C.5 QUALIFICATION OF OFFERORS



The University may make such reasonable investigations as deemed proper and necessary to determine the ability of the Offeror to furnish the item(s) required in the performance of this Contract. The Offeror shall furnish to the University all such information and data for this purpose as may be requested. the University further reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by, or investigations of, such Offeror fails to satisfy the University that such Offeror is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the Contract and to provide the services and/or goods contemplated therein.

IV.C.6 DELAYS IN AWARD

Delays in award of a Contract, beyond the anticipated starting date, may result in a change in the Contract period indicated in the solicitation. If this situation occurs, the University reserves the right to award a Contract covering the period equal to or less than the initial term indicated in the solicitation.

IV.C.7 AWARD FOR ALL OR PART

Unless otherwise specified, the University may, if it is in the best interest of the University to do so, award all or part of the proposal to any Contractor whose proposal is the most responsible and responsive and whose proposal best meets the requirements and criteria set forth in the solicitation.



**ATTACHMENT A
CERTIFICATION FORM**

The undersigned certifies that to the best of his/her/their/its knowledge: (check one)

There is no officer or employee of Alabama A&M University or its Board of Trustees who has or will, or whose family member as defined by Code of Alabama 36-25-1(14)-(15) has or will have a pecuniary interest in any contract arising out of this RFP. **OR**

The names of any and all officers and employees of Alabama A&M University and its Board of Trustees who have or will have, or whose family members have or will have, a pecuniary interest in any contract arising out of this RFP are identified by name as part of this submittal.

The undersigned further certifies that their firm is not currently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment by any state or federal entity. The undersigned agrees to notify the University Board of Trustees of any change in this status until such time as the scope of work contemplated under this RFP is complete.

Firm

By

Title

Date