**General Questions**

1. Q: The RFP notes you are accepting electronic responses. Should these be uploaded to the state purchasing site or emailed to you?

A: Section 2.6 Proposal Submittal, page 6 - all proposal responses shall be submitted electronically via the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP).

1. Q: Is the e-procurement fee applicable?

A: See Section 2.2 E-Procurement Fee, page 5 or <http://eprocurement.nc.gov/>

1. Q: We are interested in responding to the RFP; however, it appears that you are focused on companies located in North Carolina. Can you tell me if you would consider an agency with 30 years of experience located in Roswell, GA which is a suburb of Atlanta?

A: The solicitation is open to all qualified vendors that can meet the bid specifications.

1. Q: Are there preferred platforms or tools for social media advertising and analytics?

A: The standard Meta products plus potentially TikTok and Snapchat if we start targeting pre-apprenticeships before the end of our contract.

1. Q: Is there a template or preferred format for submitting case studies or SMART analysis in Appendix 8?

A: We just want the case studies to include samples and a description of how the vendor believes the campaign they are sharing with us is like what we are working on. No template for the SMART analysis.

1. Q: Do you have specific enrollment targets for these programs?

A: We have specific enrollment targets for each program individually, yes.

1. Where will people sign up for these classes? On AB Tech’s website or elsewhere?

A: Individual college websites.

1. Q: Is the goal for this work to positively impact enrollment for the fall of 2025?

A: Yes, along with Spring 2026, Summer 2026, and Fall 2026.

1. Q: Does this work need to help make the case for additional/future funding for these programs?

A: No.

1. Q: Are there limitations for certain work being done outside of the US?

A: Refer to Section 3.5 Performance Outside of the United States, page 10. And Attachment F: Location of Workers Utilized by Vendor

1. Q: Will the vendor have access to baseline enrollment data, website analytics, CRM systems, or past campaign performance data to inform audience targeting and benchmarking?

A: This information can be provided.

1. Q: Reporting requirements: What specific analytics and reporting deliverables are expected from the vendor (e.g., SEM performance, SEO rankings, paid social KPIs, lead tracking), and will the colleges assist with any reporting infrastructure or data access?

A: Colleges will assist with all reporting metrics. We are hopeful for SEM performance and lead tracking.

1. Q: For success stories, will the schools provide student and alumni contact information, with the vendor crafting the stories?

A: The colleges have already identified student success stories that the vendor may produce.

1. Q: Broadcast Advertising Scope: If broadcast advertising is incorporated, will the vendor be responsible for media placement/buying, or only for creative production? A: Potentially, both. The colleges have their own budgets, but some spending is expected of the vendor at this time.

**Section 1.0 Purpose and Background, Page 5**

1. Q: Primary point of contact: will the vendor work with a single point of contact representing the three colleges, or will approvals, meetings, and deliverables require separate engagement with each college?

A: The main contact and contract manager will be Porscha Orndorf, refer to Section 6.0 Contract Administration, page 15.

1. Q: How would you like the agency to manage communication and collaboration across the three colleges?

A: The agency should communicate with Porscha Orndorf at A-B Tech. refer to Section 6.0 Contract Administration, page 15 for contact information. They will communicate with their grant co-leads and serve as the primary point of contact.

1. Q: Will there be a single point of contact or a committee structure?

A: Single Point of Contact, refer to Section 6.0 Contract Administration, page 15.

1. Q: Have final approvers been identified? Is there a committee with representatives for each college?

A: Porscha Orndorf at A-B Tech serves as final approver. They will communicate with the committee and serve as primary point of contact for vendor.

1. Q: Coalition Coordination Approach: Will each college maintain its own unique brand voice, or are you seeking a unified brand narrative across the three colleges for this project?

A: Both are necessary. Unified brand materials should include the option of customizing them for local use.

1. Q: Market Differentiation Strategy: How will the colleges differentiate their behavioral health educational offerings across North Carolina?

A: We offer short-term, affordable, skills-based training. We get students into the work world quicker than other educational options in the state.

1. Q: Decision-Making Process for Deliverables: How many rounds of revisions will be needed on creative deliverables, and who will have final sign-off authority?

A: We can accept 1-2 rounds of revisions as a comfortable margin. A-B Tech has final sign-off authority.

**Section 1.1 Contract Term, page 5**

1. Q: Contract Term Flexibility: If internal deliverables (such as landing page development or asset creation) are delayed by the colleges, will project timelines and vendor compensation schedules be adjusted accordingly?

A: Contract Term is not flexible due to the grant project. However, timelines and compensation schedules within the contract term are flexible.

 **Section 4.1 Pricing, Page 11**

1. Q: Do you have a budget range, or should we work within when developing our marketing plan?

A: We cannot share this information at this time.

1. Q: What is the expected budget range or ceiling for full scope of services?

A: We cannot share this information at this time.

1. Q: Is there a target budget that should inform our proposed process?

A: We cannot share this information at this time.

1. Q: Are you able to share a not-to-exceed budget for the work (including media hard costs?)

A: We cannot share this information at this time.

1. Q: Do you have an anticipated budget for paid media activities for the duration of this contract?

A: We cannot share this information at this time.

1. Q: What is the budget set aside for this project?

A: Cannot answer this question at this time.

1. Q: If media management and reporting is part of the scope, please provide a media budget range with which to estimate costs for management.

A: The vendor should include an estimate of media budget in their proposal.

1. Q: Is there a budget established for the marketing of these programs?

A: We cannot share this information at this time.

1. A: Can you provide a rough budget range or ceiling for the broadcast and digital advertising components to appropriately scope our creative and media recommendations?

A: We cannot share this information at this time.

1. A: Budget Parameters for Media Buys: Can you provide a rough budget range or ceiling for the broadcast and digital advertising components to appropriately scope our creative and media recommendations?

A: We cannot provide this information; the vendor should include an estimate in their proposal. Keep in mind that some ad spend can be handled by each school.

**Section 4.2 Invoices, Page 11**

1. Q: Are monthly invoices acceptable or just quarterly invoices?

A: We can work with monthly invoices.

1. Q: Can the invoices be emailed or must they be mailed?

A: Reference Section 4.2 Invoices, Page 11. We will accept either, however the preferred method is email sent to purchasing@abtech.edu.

**Section 4.5 Vendor Experience, Pages 11-12**

1. Q: We noticed both bios & resumes are listed. We typically provide bios, does that work?

A: Reference Section 4.5 Vendor Experience, pages 11-12

**Section 4.8 Personnel, Page 12**

1. Q: Subcontracting Policies: Are there any restrictions on the use of subcontractors for services?

A: Reference Section 4.8 Personnel, page 12

**Section 5.0 Specifications and Scope of Work, page 13**

**Section 5.1 General, page 13**

1. Q: Have you defined the target audience for these messages and marketing campaigns?

A: Yes. Target audiences are potential students, but this does not have an age demographic attached. The average student in our Social & Human Services programs is 30-40 years old, not of traditional college age. We will also want to target folks seeking earn-and-learn apprenticeship opportunities, and potentially high school students looking for pre-apprenticeships. We should be able to define them using current program data and the potential audiences for the certificate and AAS.

1. Q: Can you elaborate on the collaboration between the three community colleges: Specifically, what are the expectations for including branding and messaging for all three colleges?

A: We expect some unified branding and customizable products for each school to use and brand locally.

1. Q: What does success look like for this engagement?

A: Success looks like programs that are full of students enrolled and ready to go when they launch. We are launching new programs, so we expect to fill the courses at about 75% rather than 100%. Enrollment numbers are the final metric, but since we are looking at some programs launching after the end of the contract, we can also use lead generation for measuring success.

1. Q: Geotargeting Parameters: Can you provide more detail on the geographic targeting strategy? (i.e., specific DMAs, counties, or zip codes to prioritize)

A: We have specific counties we cover. A-B Tech covers Buncombe and Madison; Forsyth Tech covers Forsyth and Surry counties; and Stanly covers Stanly County.

1. Q: Can you provide specific demographic and psychographic profiles for the intended audience across the three colleges?

A: We can provide this information.

**Section 5.2 Scope of Work and Specifications, Pages 14-15**

1. Q: Does the program need its own logo and brand developed? (This would be co-branded on materials for the schools.)

A: Not necessarily. The schools’ logos should be able to be used in conjunction with any materials, but we can also use the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) logo as an umbrella here.

1. Q: It appears that each college will maintain its own page(s) on its website related to the program. Is this correct?

A: Yes.

1. Q: Has Asheville Tech partnered with another advertising agency in the past? What was the relationship?

A: We are a full-service department (with agency experience) and usually don’t require agency support. However, we have partnered with agencies on state grants and collaborations with other community colleges. We also have a media buyer and web firm on contract.

1. Q: Does Asheville Tech have past reports and analytics from similar marketing efforts that they share with the Vendor?

A: We do, but not relevant to this work.

1. Q: Success Metrics: What are the key performance indicators (KPIs) that will define success for this project (e.g., lead generation, enrollment numbers, impressions, conversions)?

A: Enrollment numbers are the final metric, but since we are looking at some programs launching after the end of the contract, we can also use lead generation for measuring success.

**Phase 1 Research and Message Development, Page 14**

1. Q: Is the SEO more general in nature (i.e., evaluating recommended keywords and tactics vs. analyzing an existing website?)

A: We monitor/evaluate SEO but are happy to get keyword suggestions.

1. Q: It appears that the colleges will provide primary research to the chosen vendor. Is any additional primary or secondary research needed?

A: We have done a tremendous amount of primary research. We need help telling the story of the work we have done. There may be market research we have missed, but I don’t think it will be primary research.

1. Q: Can you confirm that no original market research is required for the scope? (i.e., the vendor will not conduct focus groups or online surveys in order to develop messaging?

A: Can confirm this.

1. Q: Have the colleges already conducted qualitative and quantitative research? Or will they be facilitating access to audiences for the selected vendor to conduct the research?

A: We have the necessary data.

1. Q: If the research has been completed is the ideal student personas and or Student or Student or Student Enrollment Maps for Immersion?

A: We can provide demographic information.

1. Q: Can you give some examples of the research and data that currently exists?

A: Focus group data for DSP and public safety projects currently exist. Because the grant co-leads are developing curriculum to fit the needs of our target population, we are conducting focus groups with representatives from the groups to gather information about what training is needed. We assume the target audience will resemble the focus group makeup.

1. Q: Do the colleges want the vendor-partner to plan for any additional research and discovery?

A: No.

1. Q: When will focus group, interview, and research data gathered by the colleges be provided to the selected vendor for use in Phase 1 message development?

A: We already have this data.

**Phase 2 Develop Collateral and Booth Assets and landing page development Booth display, page 14**

1. Q: For the booth, do you anticipate the vendor just designing the booth or designing the booth and producing the booth?

A: Design and produce, please. We would be looking at a 6–8-foot tabletop display.

1. Q: Will one booth design work for all three schools (all 3 logos included) or will 3 designs be needed, i.e. each college gets their own?

A: Yes. One booth for the project/s. We can add individual logos for things. Depending on which booth we are designing, we may be highlighting one school over the others. But this depends on the project we are promoting at the time.

1. Q: If the vendor is producing the booth, is only one needed, or does each school need one?

A: For any booth we ask for, we will only need one, as far as I know at this point. If, at some point, we are simultaneously doing multiple conferences, then we may want duplicates printed, but they would be duplicates of the same design.

1. Q: Is the expectation for a standard 10’x10” booth or something different?

A: Standard is our expectation. Think of a 6–8-foot tabletop display.

1. Q: Do you have expectations for what print collateral will be needed or should the vendor make recommendations?

A: Vendor can make recommendations. We are sure we’ll need a tablecloth, flyers, etc. Schools also will produce Program Sheets and other content for fall registration that you may be able to use.

1. Q: Is one set of print collaterals with all three-school logos sufficient, or would each school require its own set of materials?

A: This depends. You can also just create an electronic version we can add a school logo too if this is needed.

1. Q: Will the vendor print the collateral, too? If so, an estimate of how many pieces of each would be needed?

A: We don’t know the answer to this yet. We would prefer the vendor to order the tablecloths and other one-time, one-piece items. We can print flyers and such (consumables) in-house at our colleges.

1. Q: For promotional items, will the vendor be producing these items?

A: We won’t be purchasing promotional items because they are disallowed by state funds.

1. Q: How many events do you anticipate attending?

A: 10-20 in the 25-26 fiscal year

1. Q: Guesstimate number of attendees/pieces needed?

A: We cannot have promotional items because they are disallowed by state funds. For flyers and other items allowed by state funds, assume about 500 pieces per program. We can also do some in-house printing.

1. Q What web platforms are the three colleges using for making the landing pages?

A: There will be one landing page that leads to the college pages, which the colleges will build locally. The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) office will host the landing page, and I am unsure of their web platform.

1. Q: Because booth displays, pop-up banners, and print collateral can vary widely in final execution based on several factors, including production budget, should the proposal (and associated pricing) focus on the consultative process for selection and creative development? It would be nearly impossible to provide final production pricing estimates without additional information such as quantity.

A: Think of a 6–8-foot tabletop display. No electronics needed.

1. Q: Should we include the production of booths, banners, and other collaterals in our pricing?

A: Yes. (Note that colleges may be able to get better prices through their established vendors.)

1. Q: Where do you anticipate the booth assets and print collateral being deployed? Do you already have a list of conferences or other events where they’ll be used? Where will the booth be stored? Can you provide examples of booths that you like?

A: We do not have the full list of conferences currently. We will need one booth that can travel among the three schools/grant co-leads, though it is likely to initially “live” at A-B Tech with Porscha. I do not have example booths at this time, but I can say that we like tabletop and floor pop-ups along with tabletop display materials.

1. Will all the collateral and marketing assets live under the AB Tech brand guidelines? Or will there be a separate brand for the Behavioral Healthcare Workforce Development Grant Project?

A: The marketing templates should incorporate the project’s branding the branding of each college.

1. Q: Can you share some examples of how and where the booths would be used?

A: We are attending the i2i spring conference as a vendor. We will be using the space to gather folks and provide general information about all of our projects (HB 562's progress, apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships) and building necessary relationships to continue our projects. Think about the vendor space as an attractive space that lets people know that the community colleges are already doing the training they need their employees to have - we are already doing what they need.

1. Q: This section mentions that the colleges will provide brand for banners and brochures, is that referring to the college(s) branding? Or is that referring to the program branding?

A: Colleges will provide college branding. Program branding should be created and provided by vendors.

1. Q: Can you share some examples of the types of promotional items the team is envisioning?

A: We won’t be purchasing promotional items because they are disallowed by state funds.

1. Q: Would you like the vendor to provide costs to produce promotional items?

A: We won’t be purchasing promotional items because they are disallowed by state funds.

1. Q: Does Phase 2 include Landing Page Development, as indicated in the title of this phase?

A: Phase 2 does contain Landing Page Development.

1. Q:Landing Page Development Scope: Will the vendor be responsible for developing the copy, structure, and SEO optimization recommendations for landing pages, or only for driving traffic to pages developed by the colleges?

A: Vendor will be responsible for developing all of it.

**Phase 3 Develop marketing strategy, ad campaign, social assets, page 14**

1. Q: In terms of timing and length of the campaign, are the credential programs offered (and advertised) continuously or is there an advertising schedule that makes sense to follow to push students toward registering?

A: Each program has its own launch date, but our colleges will handle advertising the individual registration dates. Think of it as rolling.

1. Q: Will the vendor just design social media posts or also implement/manage them on each college’s accounts?

A: Design and send it to us to post.

1. Q: Regarding the videos, will the vendor provide scripts/guidance for each school to create final videos? Or will the schools provide student and alumni contact information, with the vendor crafting the stories?

A: We can provide b-roll or do a complete video. If the videos include all of the colleges, it may be easier to outsource to a vendor, but we would still be glad to provide b-roll.

1. Q: Photography and Video Production Needs: Are there expectations for the vendor to conduct additional photography or video production/editing beyond the provided assets from the colleges?

A: They could, but the college can also provide entire video production or b-roll.

1. Q: Are you looking for the Vendor to provide media buying and include the media budget as part of our proposal?

A: Please include some media buying in the proposal when it is about the unified narrative. Colleges will place ads for individual programs as needed.

1. Q: Is the intent of the campaign developed to be a universal/umbrella campaign for the Social and Human Services program at the three schools, or will there be three distinct visual campaigns required that share the message but use individual college branding?

A: There will be some distinct campaigns for different programs available – and these should be customizable for use by each college (each college has a team that can do the branding).

1. Q: Will the colleges be managing social channels and paid media day-to-day or is the vendor expected to launch an ongoing management?

A: Yes, the colleges will manage the social channels and can manage the paid media with our media buyers.

1. Q: For assets, is the team envisioning video that’s created from footage provided by the colleges? Or is the team envisioning new footage that’s shot on campuses?

A: Either is possible.

1. Q: Is the vendor selected to not only provide the marketing strategy but also launch and manage the digital strategy and lead generation campaigns? If so, what is the anticipated media budget for the project overall?

A Each college can place ads, though some should be placed by the selected vendor.

**Vendor’s Response, page 14-15**

1. Q: Is the vendor supposed to fill out the Vendor’s Response grid within the RFP document, or include the table within our proposal?

A: Please include the table within your proposal.

1. Q: Is the vendor to fill out this grid within the RFP document, or include the table within our proposal? Or will it suffice to offer a project timeline in section 5.5 Technical Approach?

A: Include the table in the proposal, please.

**Section 5.3 Tasks & Target Completion Dates, page 15**

1. Phase 1 Target Completion Dates list 6/15/2025, but there is no contract start date indicated in the RFP. What should we assume is the contract start date to determine whether the completion date is possible? The other dates are comfortable timeframes.

A: The other dates are comfortable timeframes. I cannot answer this with complete certainty. The Phase 1 Target Completion date is negotiable based on the contract start date.

**Section 6.2 Post Award Project Review Meetings, page 16**

1. Q: Opportunity for Ongoing Work: If the vendor performs successfully, would there be an opportunity to continue collaboration with the colleges beyond the 14-month contract term?

A: Not currently.

**Section 6.4 Periodic Status Reports, pages 16-17**

1. Q: Could you please clarify the scope of work for Phase 2? Throughout the deliverables for phase 2 include promotional items such as display booth and giveaways, as well as print collateral. However, in the status reports table, there is ad spend associated with October, January, and April reporting dates, with the marketing strategy, ad campaign, and social assets due in Phase 3, in June of ’26. If the campaign will be launched in late summer/fall of ’25, would the strategy and campaign assets need be due before launch?

A: Yes, we begin promoting fall classes in June prior to the fall semester and in October prior to the spring semester. You may be running separate campaigns for the program, that can run independently but the college also will develop assets as part of its registration campaigns. If the agency intends to use the college’s media buyer, we will provide a schedule with due dates for creation.

**Section 7.0 Attachment A: Pricing, page 19**

1. Q: Can you clarify this question: “Are you willing to consider an agreed upon percentage based on the completion of the phases listed above?"

A: The statement is asking if the vendor agrees to being paid based upon the completion of phases as shown in Attachment: A Pricing table.

1. Q: Can you provide more information on the following question, “Are you willing to consider an agreed upon percentage based on the completion of the phases listed above?

A: The statement is asking if the vendor agrees to being paid based upon the completion of phases as shown in Attachment: A Pricing table.

1. Q: Can you please clarify this question: “Are you willing to consider an agreed upon percentage based on the completion of the phases listed above? Located below the pricing grid

A: The statement is asking if the vendor agrees to being paid based upon the completion of phases as shown in Attachment: A Pricing table.