



AUGENBLICK,
PALAICH AND
ASSOCIATES

Response to the
Alabama Public Charter School Commission Request for
External Grant Evaluator for Charter School Program
Grant
RFP - APCSC 2026-02

Prepared for the
Alabama Public Charter School Commission

By

Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc.

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November 10, 2025

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Part I: Cover Letter



Dale DeCesare, Co-CEO
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November 10, 2025

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

Dear Ms. Gillespie,

On behalf of Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc. (APA Consulting), I am pleased to submit our proposal in response to RFP APCSC 2026-02 to serve as the External Evaluator for the Alabama Public Charter School Commission's Charter School Program (CSP) grant. Our proposed budget, including all project costs, is \$55,250 per year.

APA Consulting is a nationally recognized education research and evaluation firm with over 40 years of experience supporting state education agencies, charter school authorizers, and federally funded initiatives. We bring deep expertise in mixed-methods evaluation, federal grant compliance, and charter school accountability. Our team has successfully led evaluations for the U.S. Department of Education, AmeriCorps, and multiple state CSP grantees, and we are fully prepared to deliver rigorous, actionable insights that support APCSC's goals of expanding high-quality charter schools across Alabama.

We affirm the following:

- APA Consulting is a registered business entity and will comply with all requirements of the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, including enrollment in E-Verify.
- We are currently registered with the Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Procurement as a State Supplier. Our supplier number is VC000114170.
- We have no conflicts of interest and are fully independent from any charter school operators or entities receiving Education Trust Funds.
- This proposal is submitted in accordance with all terms and conditions outlined in the RFP, and I am authorized to legally bind APA Consulting to the commitments herein.

We appreciate the opportunity to partner with APCSC on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dale DeCesare". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dale" and last name "DeCesare" clearly distinguishable.

Dale DeCesare

Co-CEO

APA Consulting

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Executive Summary

APA Consulting is pleased to submit this proposal to serve as the External Evaluator for the Alabama Public Charter School Commission's (APCSC) Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant. With deep expertise in federal grant evaluation, charter school operations, evaluation design, and data analysis, APA offers a comprehensive evaluation plan that meets all requirements outlined in RFP APCSC 2026-02.

APA brings valuable experience conducting CSP evaluations, including ongoing work with the National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA) – a multi-state initiative that aims to strengthen district charter authorization. Our team is prepared to deliver rigorous, actionable insights that support APCSC's mission to expand high-quality charter schools across Alabama.

In this proposal, APA presents a theoretical plan to accomplish the goals and deliverables outlined in the RFP. APA emphasizes collaboration in its approach and intends to work closely with APCSC to refine the proposed work plan to best meet the organization's needs.

APA's proposal addresses two sets of questions to assess both the implementation and the impact of the CSP grant, as listed below.

Implementation Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent are CSP-funded activities implemented as intended, and do subgrantees meet established milestones and timeline expectations each year?
2. Is APCSC meeting expectations for CSP grant administration, including subgrant competitions, peer review processes, and ongoing monitoring?
3. Does APCSC's technical assistance and monitoring systems build subgrantee capacity to achieve performance targets?
4. What barriers and facilitators influence the quality and consistency of implementation of project activities across schools and cohorts?
5. What financial, human, and organizational resources are required to support implementation efficiently and effectively?
6. To what extent do APCSC's policies, procedures, and reporting align with state and federal CSP requirements and the Commission's strategic priorities?

Impact Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent has the CSP grant increased the number, diversity, and quality of high-performing charter schools in Alabama?
2. How do CSP-funded schools compare to statewide benchmarks in student achievement, growth, attendance, and organizational sustainability?
3. How has APCSC's capacity to oversee, support, and evaluate charter schools improved as a result of CSP-funded activities?
4. What practices, partnerships, or systems established through the CSP have enhanced APCSC's effectiveness as a statewide authorizer?

-
5. How has the CSP grant expanded equitable access to high-quality charter options for historically underserved students and communities?
 6. Which program components or strategies are most likely to sustain growth, quality, and equity in Alabama’s charter sector beyond the grant period?

To answer these questions, APA will collect and analyze a variety of data including school-level data from the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), surveys of CSP subgrant recipients, interviews and focus groups of APCSC staff and CSP subgrantees, and program-relevant document reviews, including subgrantee applications.

APA will also review CSP subgrantee applications submitted to APCSC to provide scoring recommendations and assess program reach, equity, and alignment with both APCSC and federal priorities.

In accordance with the RFP, APA will produce the following deliverables:

- Monthly progress reports and dashboards
- Annual evaluation reports
- A summative evaluation report
- A final presentation

Throughout this work, APA will maintain consistent communication with APCSC staff through monthly meetings and ongoing conversations to ensure all work aligns with the organization’s expectations.

APA looks forward to the opportunity to partner with APCSC to advance its mission of expanding and strengthening high-quality charter schools across Alabama.

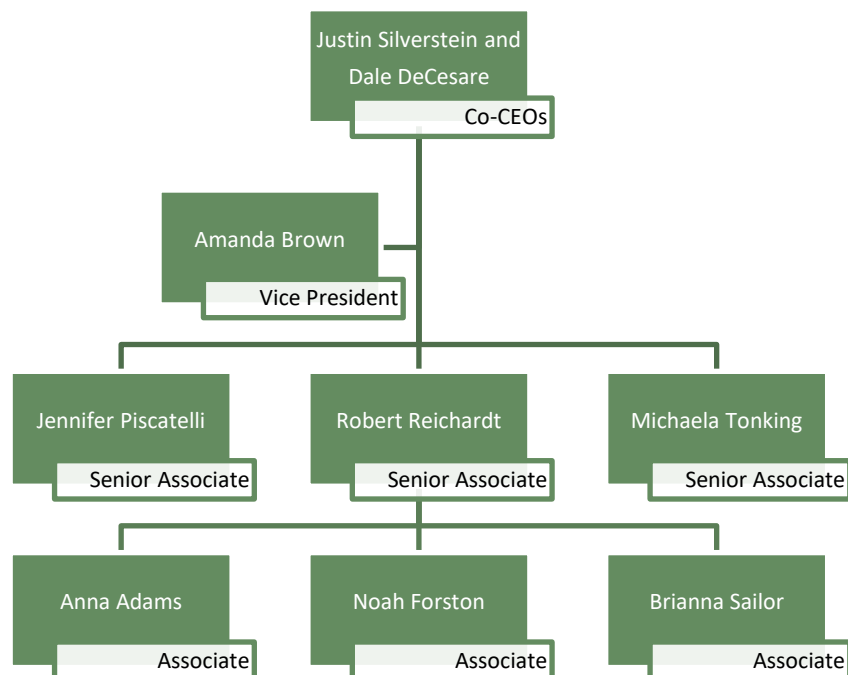
Part II: Qualifications and Experience

Bidder Information

Founded in 1983, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc. (APA) is a privately owned, federally recognized small business. The company specializes exclusively in education policy analysis, program research and evaluation, cost modeling, and return on investment analysis with a commitment to equip education policymakers and practitioners with actionable research and guidance. APA has worked in all 50 states over the past 42 years and emphasizes close collaboration and partnership with each of its clients. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, APA provides research and evaluation on a range of issue areas including education policy, charter schools, early childhood education, K-12, educator effectiveness, effective interventions, and post-secondary education with a particular focus on programs designed to serve at-risk student populations.

APA's organizational chart is provided below. APA is a very flat, collaborative organization that empowers staff to innovate and structure their work to ensure that clients' needs. APA has a hierarchy that ensures accountability for deliverables that meet client needs and are provided on time. Our staff has a wide range of expertise including research and evaluation design, survey development, data collection, qualities and quantitative analysis, meeting and group facilitation, and communicating technical material to policymakers and laymen audiences through presentations, written reports and infographics. Our staff has experience of serving on both charter and traditional public-school boards that authorized two charter schools.

Figure 1: APA Organizational Chart



Experience

APA brings relevant experience with similar federally funded projects, general grant evaluations, and CSP-grant evaluations that demonstrate APA's capacity to support APCSC in better understanding its grant implementation and impact.

APA has **20** years of experience working as an external evaluator for federal grants; **40** years of experience working with grants; **40** years of experience developing data tools, protocols, and methods for data collection; and **20** years of experience working with core elements specific to the unique context of charter schools and CSP outcomes data.

Federal Grant Evaluation

Since 2021, APA has served as the external evaluator for the Jacob K. Javits funded **I-REECCH program at the University of Denver**, an initiative focused on improving the identification of gifted and talented students in rural Colorado. Over the 5-year grant, APA utilized multiple data collection strategies – including interviews, focus groups, and surveys – to produce annual reports with formative feedback for the I-REECCH team as well as performance reports compiling summative themes and trends across years. These deliverables were also used to meet the client's APR and reporting requirements.

Over the past five years APA has also served as the external evaluator for the **National Science Foundation (NSF) Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S-STEM) program at the Community College of Aurora (CCA)**. The evaluation includes both formative and summative components aligned with NSF accountability requirements. The implementation evaluation monitored execution of student support activities, such as faculty mentoring and advising, peer mentoring, receipt of scholarship money to offset student costs, career pathway advising, four-year college transfer workshops, and career fair participation.

For an ongoing evaluation of **Washington State's Migrant Education Program (MEP)**, a federally funded state-administered initiative, APA employed multiple methods to identify strengths and weaknesses of strategies implemented to support migratory students. APA staff analyzed program documentation and student performance data to produce an evaluation report detailing findings on implementation fidelity and progress toward measurable outcomes. In addition to the evaluation report, APA conducted interviews with a range of stakeholders across Washington, including migratory students and their families as well as state and district MEP staff, to better understand the program's effectiveness in meeting student needs. Drawing on the findings from the evaluation report and accompanying needs assessment, APA is now collaborating with state MEP staff to revise the program's Service Delivery Plan, updating areas of focus and identifying opportunities for continued improvement.

General Grant Evaluation

In addition to its experience with federal grant evaluations, APA regularly conducts evaluations of education programs funded by state and local agencies as well as non-profits and private foundations. A non-exhaustive summary of recent projects is provided below.

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- During a recent evaluation of the **Communities in Schools (CIS) Program** for the Texas Education Agency, APA staff conducted site visits featuring interviews and focus groups with school staff, families, and community partners/agencies providing services. These site visits focused on the impacts of strategies employed to meet each school's goals for CIS.
 - Since 2021, APA has assisted in facilitating the Colorado Department of Education's statewide evaluation of the **Colorado READ Act**, a program that provides per-pupil funding and targeted grants to districts and schools to improve early literacy instruction. As part of this work, APA has collaborated with state education agency leaders and leaders within a team of other research organizations to design protocols, site visits, and other information gathering activities to understand program implementation and impacts in schools across the state. Findings are provided in multiple formats, including comprehensive reports, summaries, and presentations for state policymakers, such as the Colorado State Board of Education.
 - For an ongoing evaluation of the **Denver Preschool Program (DPP)**, APA has conducted surveys, focus groups, and interviews with key stakeholders to examine impacts on preschool students, families, providers, and the broader Denver community. APA provided formative and summative data to DPP to inform program improvements.
 - In 2024, APA conducted an evaluation of **YouthZone**, a nonprofit organization that works to divert youth in Colorado from the juvenile justice system. The study team analyzed qualitative data from youth pre- and post-surveys to assess the program's impact on youth development and risk reduction across five key areas. APA produced an evaluation report detailing program successes and opportunities for continued improvement.

For each of these projects, the evaluation team met regularly with the client to ensure they were apprised of all evaluation activities and to allow for input and collaboration into the design and implementation of those activities.

CSP Grant and Charter School Experience

APA has a depth of experience working on projects aimed at expanding and improving the quality of charter schools including two evaluations of recent CSP grants as well as other initiatives.

In 2021, APA served as an evaluator for the **Tri-State Alliance CSP Grant**, a project focused on cross-state collaboration to share and develop tools to support district charter authorizers in California, Colorado, and Texas. APA utilized a mixed-method approach including a document review, survey analysis, and qualitative interviews to assess whether the project met its objectives.

More recently, APA has been conducting an ongoing evaluation of the CSP grant for the **National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA)**, an expansion of the Tri-State Alliance that aims to develop organizational capacity and support for district charter authorizers in ten states. The APA study team conducted interviews with subgrantees across ten NN4DA state partners and analyzed project documentation to identify successes and challenges for states working to build statewide charter support networks to provide technical assistance to district charter authorizers.

In both projects, APA provided the client with summative data on their progress towards expanding knowledge around charter authorization and expanding state capacity to support high-quality authorization.

In addition to its experience evaluating CSP grant implementation, APA brings a range of additional knowledge of charter schools from projects including:

- A study conducted on behalf of the **National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS)** from 2023-2024 involving interviews with charter leaders across all 50 states on the success and barriers with state charter school policies.
- Conducted a three-stage review process of chart school applications for **St. Tammany Parish Public School**, assessing applicant's academic, financial, and operational capacity through document reviews, interviews, and site visits, as the independent evaluator of charter school applications for the **St. Tammany Parish School Board**.

Part III: Scope of Work and Responsibilities

Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) will conduct a rigorous, mixed-methods evaluation of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission's (APCSC) Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant. The purpose of this evaluation is to document the implementation, effectiveness, and outcomes of APCSC's CSP-funded activities; support continuous improvement in authorizing and grant management; and ensure compliance with U.S. Department of Education reporting requirements.

APA's approach integrates formative evaluation to monitor progress and inform program improvement, and summative evaluation to assess long-term outcomes and impacts at the close of the grant cycle. This dual structure ensures accountability, transparency, and ongoing learning. The evaluation framework has been divided across implementation and impact sections to give a clear framework of the proposed work.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will assess implementation fidelity, program effectiveness, and outcomes of CSP-funded activities in alignment with the U.S. Department of Education's CSP priorities and APCSC's goals as a state authorizer. Using a mixed-methods design, the evaluation will determine how APCSC's administration of CSP funds contributes to the growth, quality, and equity of Alabama's charter school sector.

Implementation Evaluation Questions

These questions focus on how APCSC and its subgrantees implement the CSP grant activities, manage funds, and build capacity to support high-quality charter schools. They align primarily with Sections 2.1.A–F of the RFP.

Fidelity

1. To what extent are CSP-funded activities implemented as intended, and do subgrantees meet established milestones and timeline expectations each year?
2. Is APCSC meeting expectations for CSP grant administration, including subgrant competitions, peer review processes, and ongoing monitoring?

Quality and Support

3. Does APCSC's technical assistance and monitoring systems build subgrantee capacity to achieve performance targets?
4. What barriers and facilitators influence the quality and consistency of implementation of project activities across schools and cohorts?

Resources and Alignment

-
5. What financial, human, and organizational resources are required to support implementation efficiently and effectively?
 6. To what extent do APCSC's policies, procedures, and reporting align with state and federal CSP requirements and the Commission's strategic priorities?

Impact Evaluation Questions

These questions assess the short- and long-term outcomes of CSP-funded activities, including effects on school performance, equity, and APCSC's organizational capacity. They align primarily with Sections 2.1.G–I of the RFP.

System- and School-Level Outcomes

1. To what extent has the CSP grant increased the number, diversity, and quality of high-performing charter schools in Alabama?
2. How do CSP-funded schools compare to statewide benchmarks in student achievement, growth, attendance, and organizational sustainability?

Capacity and Organizational Impact

3. How has APCSC's capacity to oversee, support, and evaluate charter schools improved as a result of CSP-funded activities?
4. What practices, partnerships, or systems established through the CSP have enhanced APCSC's effectiveness as a statewide authorizer?

Equity and Sustainability

5. How has the CSP grant expanded equitable access to high-quality charter options for historically underserved students and communities?
6. Which program components or strategies are most likely to sustain growth, quality, and equity in Alabama's charter sector beyond the grant period?

Theory of Change

APA's evaluation will be grounded in the Alabama Public Charter School Commission's (APCSC) theory of change. We believe the theory of change is that if APCSC effectively administers CSP funds through rigorous selection, monitoring, and technical assistance to charter operators, then Alabama will expand the number of sustainable, high-performing charter schools. This, in turn, will improve educational quality and equity statewide while strengthening APCSC's long-term capacity for data-driven authorization and continuous improvement, **as illustrated in Figure 2 below**.

APA recognizes that this represents our current interpretation of APCSC's intended change pathway. If our understanding differs from APCSC's formal theory of change or program logic, APA will work collaboratively with Commission leadership at project launch to clarify and refine the theory of change.

We will then adapt the evaluation design, logic model, and data collection plan accordingly to ensure that all evaluation activities are aligned with APCSC’s goals, strategies, and implementation context.

Figure 2: Logic Model: APCSC CSP Evaluation

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Long-Term Outcomes
- Federal CSP grant funds (\$29.9 million over 5 years) - APCSC leadership and staff - Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) support - External evaluation partner - Charter school applicants and operators - Peer review and grant review panels - State and local data systems (ALSDE accountability datasets) - Partner organizations and technical assistance providers	- Administer CSP subgrant competitions for new and replicating high-quality charter schools - Establish transparent applications, review, and award processes - Monitor subgrantee implementation and compliance with federal and state regulations - Provide technical assistance to subgrantees on governance, finance, and student services - Collect and analyze program performance data for state and federal reporting - Coordinate with the external evaluator on formative and summative evaluation activities - Disseminate best practices to authorizers and schools - Engage stakeholders to strengthen the charter sector ecosystem across Alabama	- Annual CSP subgrant competitions implemented with peer review feedback reports - Subgrantee award notices and contracts executed - Quarterly and annual monitoring reports summarizing compliance and performance status - Technical assistance sessions and training materials for subgrantees and authorizers - State and federal performance data submitted on time - Evaluation reports produced and shared with stakeholders - Public dissemination of lessons learned and resources through websites and convenings	- Transparent and efficient subgrant management processes within APCSC - CSP-funded schools implementing models with fidelity and meeting performance milestones - Increased statewide capacity for quality authorization and charter oversight - Strengthened data systems and continuous improvement processes within APCSC - Expanded number and diversity of high-performing charter schools serving Alabama students - Improved academic outcomes and equitable access to high-quality educational options - Sustainable systems for oversight, evaluation, and technical assistance beyond the CSP grant period

Evaluation Design

APA will employ a mixed-methods evaluation design that integrates quantitative analyses of APCSC and ALSDE administrative data with qualitative insights from key stakeholders. This approach ensures both breadth and depth of understanding, measuring implementation fidelity and program outcomes while also uncovering contextual factors that influence success. The impact evaluation will employ the highest level of rigor that data and implementation conditions allow. Because random assignment is not feasible, APA will use quasi-experimental methods, such as comparison with state standards or propensity score matching (PSM) analyses, to create comparable groups of CSP and non-CSP charter schools using publicly available ALSDE data. All methods will align with the U.S. Department of Education’s Charter Schools Program (CSP) evaluation standards and will meet federal expectations for validity, reliability, and utility.

The evaluation includes two components, an Implementation Evaluation and an Impact Evaluation, which will be conducted concurrently and integrated through iterative learning cycles.

Implementation Evaluation Design

The implementation evaluation will take a formative, mixed-method process approach designed to assess fidelity, quality, reach, and contextual variation across subgrantees and program years. It will provide actionable feedback to guide APCSC's grant management and technical assistance functions.

Key Dimensions and Data Sources

- **Fidelity:** Extent to which CSP-funded activities are implemented as intended and aligned to APCSC's performance framework.
Data sources: subgrantee applications, budgets, progress reports, and compliance benchmarks.
- **Quality and Reach:** Quality of implementation and breadth of participation among subgrantees.
Data sources: surveys of subgrantees and focus groups with school leaders.
- **Context and Capacity:** Factors that facilitate or hinder effective implementation (e.g., funding timelines, local conditions, staffing).
Data sources: interviews with APCSC leadership, peer reviewers, and charter school operators; and document reviews.

Analytic Methods

APA will use thematic coding and cross-site comparative analysis to identify common facilitators, barriers, and lessons learned. Descriptive statistics will be applied to quantify implementation fidelity and dosage metrics (e.g., completion rates, participation levels, timeliness).

Impact Evaluation Design

The impact evaluation will use a quasi-experimental design to assess the short- and long-term effects of CSP funding on school performance, student outcomes, and APCSC's authorizing capacity. Where feasible, APA will apply propensity score matching (PSM) techniques to compare CSP-funded schools with similar non-grantee charter schools.

Quantitative Data Sources and Analytic Plan

- **Program and Administrative Data:** APCSC subgrant records (award amounts, cohorts, milestones) and ALSDE public datasets on enrollment, proficiency, growth, attendance, and accountability ratings.
- **Comparative Data:** Outcomes for non-CSP charter schools and statewide averages, used to establish benchmarks for performance and sustainability.
- **Equity Data:** Disaggregation by student demographics, grade span, geography, and school type to evaluate equitable access and impact.

Analytic Methods:

APA will conduct descriptive, trend, and inferential analyses, including baseline equivalence checks, comparison to statewide benchmarks, and, where data allow, a program impact estimation of non-grantee schools, using regression or matching techniques (e.g., Propensity Score Matching).

All analyses will use school- and program-level data available through APCSC and ALSDE public reporting systems, ensuring transparency, replicability, and compliance with data-sharing policies.

Integration and Triangulation of Findings

APA will triangulate findings across data sources to ensure validity and produce a unified understanding of program performance. Implementation indicators (e.g., fidelity and quality) will be cross-referenced with outcome data to assess whether variation in implementation corresponds with variation in school outcomes. Joint displays and mixed-methods matrices will be used to synthesize results and highlight actionable insights for APCSC.

Data Collection

APA Consulting will collect and analyze a range of qualitative and quantitative data to support both formative and summative evaluation activities. Each data source is selected to align with APCSC's reporting requirements, CSP grant priorities, and the evaluation questions outlined in the implementation and evaluation question sections.

School Performance

APA will analyze publicly available school-level data from the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), including:

- Student enrollment and demographics
- State assessment scores (math and reading)
- Academic growth measure
- Attendance and discipline rates

These data will be used to track performance trends among CSP subgrantees and compare outcomes to statewide averages and non-CSP schools. This analysis will be reliant on the availability of school performance data among CSP recipients. Considering these will be new schools, APA recognizes that such data may not be immediately available and may take time to collect. We will also conduct equity analyses to examine gaps by student subgroup and geography including urbanicity.

Surveys

APA will administer annual surveys to all CSP subgrant recipients. These surveys will gather information on implementation progress, use of grant funds, satisfaction with APCSC support, and perceived impact

on school operations and student outcomes. Survey results will be disaggregated by school type (new, expanding, replicating) and year of award to identify trends and inform continuous improvement.

APA will develop surveys informed by the logic model and in conversation with APCSC staff; drafts will be provided prior to administration to allow sufficient time for APCSC review and response. Surveys will be administered via Qualtrics.

Interviews and Focus Groups

The study team will conduct interviews and focus groups with APCSC staff and CSP subgrantees to gather qualitative insights into implementation challenges, successes, and capacity-building efforts. These sessions will be conducted once a semester and will inform both formative reporting and the final summative analysis. Interviews will be conducted virtually.

APA will develop interview protocols informed by survey findings and in conversation with APCSC staff. Draft protocols will be shared with APCSC staff prior to conducting interviews to allow time for review and feedback.

Document Review

APA will review relevant program documents, including, as applicable:

- Process guides or technical assistance manuals
- CSP subgrantee budgets
- Monthly compliance benchmarks submitted by subgrantees
- Monitoring and oversight documentation.
- CSP subgrant applications

This review will support evaluation of implementation fidelity, resource use, and APCSC's authorizing practices.

Subgrant Applications and Award Data

Each year, APA will review CSP subgrant applications submitted to APCSC. The study team will document applicant characteristics, including school type (new, expanding, replicating), geographic location, target student populations, and proposed use of funds, as well as scoring outcomes and award decisions.

This data will be used to analyze and assess the reach, equity, and diversity of the subgrant program over the five years. By analyzing patterns of applicants and award distribution, APA will help APCSC understand how well its subgrant process supports a broad range of charter schools and aligns with federal CSP priorities. Further, APA will analyze patterns of successful CSP subgrant recipients in alignment with their applications, informing APCSC of indicators of successful charters based on application details.

These insights will also inform evaluation of APCSC’s subgrant selection process, including consistency in scoring, clarity of guidance, and alignment with the logic model.

Evaluation Questions and Data Collection Alignment

The evaluation is structured to ensure that each research question is supported by clearly defined data sources and collection methods. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the alignment between the evaluation’s implementation and impact questions and the corresponding instruments that will be used to collect evidence. This alignment ensures comprehensive coverage of the Charter Schools Program (CSP) activities, outcomes, and contextual factors while maintaining methodological consistency across data sources.

For the **implementation evaluation**, Table 1 links each research question to the instruments and data sources that will be used to assess fidelity, quality, resources, and alignment. These tools will capture both the breadth of program activities across subgrantees and the depth of stakeholder experiences related to grant administration, technical assistance, and capacity building.

Table 1 Implementation Evaluation Questions & Data Collection Alignment

Research Component	Questions	Survey	Interview & Focus Groups	Document Review	Subgrant Application	Academic Performance
Fidelity	1. To what extent are CSP-funded activities implemented as intended, and do subgrantees meet established milestones and timeline expectations each year?	x	x	x	x	x
	2. Is APCSC meeting expectations for CSP grant administration, including subgrant competitions, peer review processes, and ongoing monitoring?	x	x	x	x	
Quality & Support	3. Does APCSC's technical assistance and monitoring systems build subgrantee capacity to achieve performance targets?		x			x
	4. What barriers and facilitators influence the quality and consistency of implementation of project activities across schools and cohorts?	x	x			
Resources & Alignment	5. What financial, human, and organizational resources are required to support implementation efficiently and effectively?	x	x			
	6. To what extent do APCSC's policies, procedures, and reporting align with state and federal CSP requirements and the Commission's strategic priorities?		x	x	x	

For the **impact evaluation**, Table 2 aligns outcome-focused questions with the data sources that will measure program results at the school, system, and organizational levels. The table shows how quantitative analyses of academic and performance data will be complemented by qualitative insights from interviews, surveys, and document reviews. This integrated design allows the evaluation to examine causal relationships between implementation fidelity and observed outcomes, while also identifying contextual factors that contribute to sustainability, equity, and long-term sector growth.

Table 2 Impact Evaluation Questions and Data Collection Alignment

Research Component	Questions	Survey	Interview & Focus Groups	Document Review	Subgrant Application	Academic Performance
System- & School-Level Outcomes	1. To what extent has the CSP grant increased the number, diversity, and quality of high-performing charter schools in Alabama?	x	x	x		x
	2. How do CSP-funded schools compare to statewide benchmarks in student achievement, growth, attendance, and organizational sustainability?					x
Capacity & Organizational Impact	3. How has APCSC's capacity to oversee, support, and evaluate charter schools improved as a result of CSP-funded activities?	x	x	x		
	4. What practices, partnerships, or systems established through the CSP have enhanced APCSC's effectiveness as a statewide authorizer	x	x	x	x	
Equity & Sustainability	5. How has the CSP grant expanded equitable access to high-quality charter options for historically underserved students and communities?	x	x		x	x
	6. Which program components or strategies are most likely to sustain growth, quality, and equity in Alabama's charter sector beyond the grant period?	x	x	x	x	x

Reporting

APA will deliver clear, actionable reports. All products will include executive summaries, data visualizations, and recommendations for improvement.

Table 3 Deliverables Timeline

Deliverable	Description	Frequency/Timeline
Monthly Progress Reports and Dashboards	Summary of activities, key findings, challenges, and next steps. Dashboards will be developed utilizing Tableau software.	Monthly
Annual Evaluation Reports	Comprehensive formative report summarizing implementation progress, emerging outcomes, and recommendations	Annually (Years 1-4)
Summative Evaluation Report	Final five-year evaluation synthesizing findings, outcomes, lessons learned, and sustainability recommendations	Fall 2030
Final Presentation	Public presentation of findings and dissemination materials (virtual or in-person as directed)	Upon submission of final report

Review of CSP Subgrant Applications

Based on Section 2.1B of the RFP and APCSC's responses to vendor questions, APA understands that the evaluator is expected to review applications submitted by charter school operators seeking subgrant funding through the CSP grant. Specifically, we interpret this task to involve reviewing applications for compliance with federal and state guidelines and providing scoring recommendations to APCSC, not participating in final selection decisions.

If this interpretation aligns with APCSC's intent, APA will carry out the following activities during each subgrant cycle:

- **Compliance and Alignment Review:** APA will assess each subgrant application for adherence to the U.S. Department of Education's CSP guidelines and APCSC's stated priorities. This includes evaluating proposed activities, budget alignment, and the applicant's capacity to meet grant objectives.
- **Scoring Recommendations:** Using APCSC's established rubric, APA will provide scoring recommendations for each application, accompanied by brief justifications. These recommendations will support APCSC's internal review process and complement input from peer reviewers, who will also participate in the evaluation.
- **Summary Reports:** Following each review cycle, APA will prepare a summary memo identifying trends across applications, common strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for improving future applicant guidance or rubric refinement.

APA will coordinate closely with APCSC to align review timelines and deliverables with subgrant cycles. We also acknowledge that the evaluator's role in this process may evolve or be clarified further.

Project Management

APA Consulting will employ a structured, collaborative project management approach to ensure the evaluation proceeds efficiently, on schedule, and in alignment with APCSC's Charter School Program (CSP) goals. Brianna Sailor, Project Manager, will oversee all project activities, serving as the primary point of contact for APCSC and ensuring clear communication across all stakeholders. APA will coordinate planning, data collection, and reporting activities using a defined work plan and timeline that aligns with the grant's key milestones and deliverable schedule.

Each year APA staff will travel to Alabama for a project year launch to engage partners and finalize the project plan for the year. This plan will describe data collection and analysis activities, with the expected timing and due date for those activities. At the end of the project year, APA staff will return to Alabama to present results and engage in planning for the next year.

APA will maintain consistent communication and documentation throughout the project. The team will participate in monthly conference calls with APCSC leadership to review progress, identify emerging needs, and plan upcoming activities. Monthly progress reports and dashboards will summarize completed tasks, data collection status, and key findings, providing a transparent view of implementation and impact activities. A secure, shared workspace will facilitate document exchange, and draft review to ensure efficiency and accountability.

To maintain quality and consistency, APA will conduct regular internal team check-ins and use structured project tracking tools to monitor timelines, milestones, and deliverables. All work products will undergo internal quality assurance reviews before submission to APCSC. APA will ensure that evaluation activities remain responsive to APCSC's needs, findings are actionable, and all reporting obligations are met on time and with the highest standards of rigor.

Organizational Structure

APA has assembled a four-person team to carry out the project scope. The study team brings extensive experience in grant evaluation, including recent evaluations of CSP grants and other federal programs. In addition to their expertise in program evaluation, team members contribute diverse, relevant perspectives — **ranging from classroom teaching and public school board leadership to firsthand experience attending charter schools.**

Table 4 Personnel Assigned to Project

Staff	Position*	Project Function
Robert Reichardt	Senior Associate	Primary Investigator
Brianna Sailor	Associate	Project Manager
Noah Fortson	Associate	Qualitative Researcher
Anna Adams	Associate	Quantitative Researcher

*all positions are full-time

APA Staff Bios

Dr. Robert Reichardt, Ph.D., has over 25 years of experience supporting education policy development and implementation by local education agencies, state departments of education, legislatures, and non-profits. His focus is on supporting policy development through cost modeling, quantitative analysis, stakeholder engagement, and program evaluation. His work is focused on improving outcomes for all students, particularly students experiencing poverty and students of color. As part of that work, Dr. Reichardt helps organizations understand the financing, implementation costs, and incentives for programs such as concurrent enrollment, teacher professional development, and gifted education. His work identifies opportunities for cost savings, supports business planning, and generates return on investment calculations. He has also served as President of the Littleton Public Schools' Board of Education in Colorado. He holds a PhD in Policy Analysis from the RAND Graduate School.

Brianna Sailor, M.A., is an Associate at APA Consulting with experience managing and conducting mixed-methods evaluations of federal, state, and local education programs. At APA, her work focuses on rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis, project management, and stakeholder engagement to inform evidence-based decision-making. She contributes to multiple large-scale federal evaluations, including the Jacob K. Javits-funded I-REECCH program at the University of Denver, which examines strategies to improve identification of and serves to gifted and talented students in rural communities, and the National Science Foundation Scholarships in STEM (S-STEM) program at the Community College of Aurora, assessing the impact of student support and mentoring on STEM retention and persistence. Additionally, Brianna supports APA's evaluation of the Washington State Migrant Education Program, the Colorado READ Act, and the Denver Preschool Program, applying a consistent focus on implementation fidelity, equity, and measurable outcomes. Her prior roles include serving as a Policy and Research Analyst with the Governor's Office of Student Achievement in Atlanta, where she developed policy briefs and data visualization dashboards for state leadership, and as a high school math teacher through Teach For America Metro Atlanta. Brianna holds a Master of Arts in Urban Education Policy from Brown University and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from San Diego State University.

Noah Fortson, MA, is an Associate at APA who joined the firm as a graduate intern in 2023 and transitioned to a full-time role in 2024. Noah's experience spans core competencies of program

evaluation, including facilitating stakeholder interviews, conducting literature reviews, synthesizing qualitative data, and communicating findings. At APA, Noah has contributed to a variety of evaluation projects focused on key issues in education. He led stakeholder engagement and qualitative data analysis for an evaluation of the childcare system in West Lafayette, Indiana, and has supported work to sustain and strengthen the impacts of grant-funded programs in areas such as gifted education, migrant education, and early childhood literacy. More recently, Noah has helped evaluate the Charter School Program (CSP) grant for the National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA) by conducting and analyzing interviews with grant participants. Before joining APA, he taught high school A/V Production in San Antonio, Texas, where he launched and advised an award-winning student news program. He holds a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism and Government & Politics from the University of Maryland and an M.A. in Urban Education Policy from Brown University.

Anna Adams, Associate, will also provide general support on all study tasks. Adams has contributed to a range of projects since joining the firm in 2024. She brings strong analytical skills to her work, supporting state-level program evaluations, stakeholder engagement efforts, school funding implementation, return-on-investment analyses, and workforce recruitment and retention studies. Her work reflects a commitment to data-informed decision-making and equitable outcomes in education. Currently, Anna is part of a Charter School Program (CSP) evaluation for the National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA), where she conducts interviews in districts across the country with staff working to improve charter authorizing practices, as well as grant document analysis. She holds a bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in computer science from the University of South Carolina.

Timeline

The proposed evaluation timeline is designed to align with the five-year duration of the Alabama Public Charter School Commission's CSP grant, while remaining flexible to accommodate key variables such as the contract approval date, the timing of subgrant competitions, and any delays related to federal or state processes. Activities are structured to begin promptly upon contract execution and adapt to APCSC's evolving implementation schedule. Each phase of the timeline reflects a responsive approach to data collection, analysis, stakeholder engagement, and reporting, ensuring that evaluation deliverables are both timely and tailored to the needs of the Commission and its subgrantees.

Following Year 1, interviews and surveys will be conducted twice a year (in the Fall and Spring). In the Fall, analysis for the current year will be occurring while data collection begins for the following year.

Table 5: Timeline

Season	Year 1	Year 2-4	Year 5
Winter (Jan. – Mar.)	Launch and Planning - Coordinate with APCSC and ALSDE on data access and reporting expectations. - Draft evaluation plan, logic model, and data collection protocols. - Design Year 1 stakeholder surveys and interview protocols. - Establish templates for monthly dashboards and annual reports.	- Review new CSP subgrant applications, scoring based on APCSC rubric and provide recommendations. - Use descriptive analysis of subgrantee characteristics.	Final Data Collection: - Update all trend, comparative, and equity analyses with final year data from ALSDE. - Finalize performance metrics for all CSP subgrantees. - Conduct final round of stakeholder interviews and focus groups (APCSC staff, subgrantees, authorizers, community partners). - Administer final surveys to subgrantees and APCSC. - Complete final document reviews.
Spring (Mar. – May)	- Review CSP subgrant applications, provide scoring and recommendations. - Begin descriptive analysis of subgrantee characteristics. - Conduct stakeholder interviews and focus groups. - Administer baseline subgrantee and authorizer surveys. - Begin document review (subgrantee reports, reimbursements, training materials).	Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups: - APCSC staff, subgrantees, authorizers. - Topics: grant implementation, capacity building, challenges, and successes. Surveys: - Subgrantee satisfactions surveys and perceived impact (new vs. replication schools). - Authorizer feedback on grant administration and support. Trend Analysis: - Update school-level academic performance metrics using ALSDE datasets. - Track changes in proficiency, growth,	Summative Analysis and Triangulation: - Integrate five years of data across all sources. - Identify longitudinal trends in academic outcomes, implementation fidelity, equity and access, and subgrantee sustainability. - Compare CSP subgrantees with non-CSP charter schools and statewide performance over time. - Synthesize stakeholder feedback to contextualize quantitative findings.

Season	Year 1	Year 2-4	Year 5
		attendance, and performance. Comparative Analysis: - Contrast CSP subgrantees with non-CSP charter schools and statewide performance. Examine difference in academic outcomes, sustainability, and compliance. Equity Analysis: - Disaggregate data by students demographics (race, income, special education). - Analyze regional disparities.	
Summer (Jun. – Aug.)	- Conduct trend analysis using ALSDE public datasets (enrollment, proficiency, growth, attendance). - Launch comparative analysis of CSP vs. non-CSP charter schools and statewide performance. - Begin equity analysis by demographics, region, and authorizer type.	Document Review: Subgrantee progress reports, reimbursement requests, training materials, monitoring documentation.	Draft Comprehensive Summative Report including executive summary, methodology, findings by evaluation questions, lessons learned, promising practices, and recommendations for sustainability and future funding. Develop Sustainability Plan outlining strategies for continued monitoring and capacity-building recommendations. Submit Final Summative Evaluation Report and Sustainability Plan

Season	Year 1	Year 2-4	Year 5
Fall (Sep. – Dec.)	Submit Year 1 formative evaluation report.	Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups: - APCSC staff, subgrantees, authorizers. - Topics: grant implementation, capacity building, challenges, and successes. Surveys: - Subgrantee satisfactions surveys and perceived impact (new vs. replication schools). - Authorizer feedback on grant administration and support. Integration and Triangulation: - Synthesize findings across quantitative and qualitative sources. - Identify consistent trends, outliers, and contextual factors. Refine evaluation instruments and methods based on emerging insights. - Submit formative evaluation report for each year, including updated data analyses, stakeholder feedback, and recommendations for program improvement. - Update evaluation plan at the close of each project year in preparation for the following evaluation year.	Deliver Final Presentation to APCSC (virtual or in-person) highlighting key findings, impact stories, and strategic recommendations. - Facilitate Q&A and discussion with stakeholders. Closeout - Respond to APCSC feedback and finalize deliverables. - Submit final invoice and documentation. - Archive data and materials per contract requirements.

Season	Year 1	Year 2-4	Year 5
Monthly	Submit progress dashboards and attend APCSC meetings as needed.	- Submit dashboard updates with key metrics and compliance benchmarks. - Attend APCSC meetings as requested.	
Ongoing		- Provide presentations and technical assistance as needed. - Support APCSC in interpreting findings and applying lessons learned	

References

Client Name	National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
Contact Information	Drew Jacobs, Senior Director of Policy, Research, and Evaluation National Alliance for Public Charter Schools 800 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 300 Washington, D.C. 20006 drew@publiccharters.org ; 202.289.2700
Brief Description of the Work Performed	APA conducted a study on behalf of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) from 2023-2024 involving interviews with charter leaders across all 50 states on the success and barriers with state charter school policies.

Client Name	Jacob K. Javits Federal Grantee – University of Denver
Contact Information	Norma Hafenstein, PhD Daniel L. Ritchie Endowed Chair in Gifted Education Morgridge College of Education University of Denver norma.hafenstein@du.edu ; 303-871-2509
Brief Description of the Work Performed	APA served as the external evaluator for the federally funded Jacob K. Javits Grant at the University of Denver, an initiative focused on increasing the identification of and service to gifted and talented students in rural Colorado.

Client Name	National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA)
Contact Information	Alex Medler, Executive Director Remote alex.medler@nn4da.org ; (303) 494-1820
Brief Description of the Work Performed	APA is currently evaluating the CSP grant for the National Network for District Authorizing (NN4DA), conducting interviews and document analysis across ten states to assess efforts to strengthen district charter authorizing through statewide support networks.

Part IV: Cost Proposal

APA is a small company. We use a blended staff rate of \$125 per hour, \$1,000 per day. This rate covers the salary, benefit, and additional costs per person working on this project. APA does not have an indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government and we are not charging any additional direct or indirect costs above our blended rate. The blended rates are an average of the time allotted to key and additional staff assigned to this project. Key staff rates are shown in Budget Table 1

Budget Table 1: Staff Rates

Staff	Project Function	Hourly Rate
Robert Reichardt	Primary Investigator	\$ 200
Brianna Sailor	Project Manager	\$ 100
Noah Fortson	Quantitative Researcher	\$ 100
Anna Adams	Qualitative Researcher	\$ 100

Travel Rate

APA expects to travel to Alabama twice a year. Each two-day, two-traveler trip will be used to Alabama engage partners and present results. Our travel cost estimates are based upon current costs for flights, hotel, car rentals and per diem. Budgeted travel costs per traveler are \$1,000 for a 2-day visit.

Cost Summary

The total proposed cost for this project is \$55,250 per year for a total of \$110,500 for the initial two years of this proposal. This includes \$51,250 per year for personnel and \$4,000 per year in travel expenses. Budget Table 2 below shows proposed personnel and travel expenses by task.

Budget Table 2: Costs By Task

Implementation Evaluation			
Task	Hours	Personnel Cost	Travel Cost
Fidelity	50	\$ 6,250	
Quality and Support	40	\$ 5,000	
Resources and Alignment	40	\$ 5,000	
Impact Evaluation			
System and School level outcomes	50	\$ 6,250	
Capacity and organizational impact	40	\$ 5,000	
Equity and sustainability	30	\$ 3,750	
Project Management			
Yearly project plan development	40	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,000
Monthly reporting	40	\$ 5,000	
Annual/summative evaluation report	55	\$ 6,875	
Presentation	25	\$ 3,125	\$ 2,000
Sub-Total		\$ 51,250	\$ 4,000
TOTAL Cost	410		\$ 55,250

Part V: General Terms and Conditions

Governance

APA agrees that this proposal and any resulting contract shall be governed by the laws of the State of Alabama, with venue for any disputes in Montgomery County. We acknowledge that contract obligations are subject to the availability of funds and do not constitute a debt of the State of Alabama under Section 213 of the Alabama Constitution. In the event of proration or non-appropriation (per Sections 41-4-90 and 41-4-144(c)), we understand the contract may be renegotiated or terminated, and we will comply with all provisions outlined in the Fiscal Policy and Procedures Manual.

Immigration

We affirm full compliance with the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act (Code of Alabama §§ 31-13-1 through 31-13-35). APA is enrolled in the E-Verify Program administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and will provide the required Certificate of Compliance (Appendix A) prior to contract execution. We further certify that we do not knowingly employ unauthorized individuals and will continue to comply with all immigration-related provisions throughout the contract term.

Conflict of Interest

APA certifies that no conflict of interest exists that would impair our ability to perform the services outlined in this proposal. We will comply with all applicable state ethics laws and procurement regulations, and we affirm that no member of our team has engaged in prohibited communications with APCSC or ALSDE personnel outside of the designated procurement contacts.

Non-Discrimination

We affirm our commitment to equal opportunity and non-discrimination in accordance with federal and state laws. No person shall be denied employment, participation, or benefits on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age, genetic information, or any other protected category. This includes compliance with:

- Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ADA Amendments Act
- The Equal Pay Act of 1963
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Systems

APA Consulting may incorporate artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support specific evaluation activities under this contract.

APA Consulting provides the following attestation in accordance with Section 4.5 of the RFP:

- **Pretrained AI System:** The AI System to be provided in the performance of this RFP has been pretrained.
- **Responsibility in AI System Development:** APA will use AI systems developed with necessary responsible measures.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Expected Outcomes:** The results produced by the AI System met the expected outcomes as identified and defined by APA Consulting.

APA 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 APCSC.

Certificate of Compliance (:Appendix A)

Request for Proposal (RFP) RFP APCSC 2026-02 Alabama Public Charter School Commission

State of Colorado) County of Arapahoe)

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

DATE: 11/10/2025

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

RFP 399 RFP ALSDE 2026-02 EXTERNAL EVALUATOR CHARTER COMM by and between
Augenblick, Palaich and Assoc. (Contractor/Grantee) and
Alabama Department of Education (State Agency, Department or Public Entity)

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

1. The undersigned holds the position of Senior Associate 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.
X (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 10 day of November, 2025.

Augenblick, Palaich and Assoc.

Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient

By: 
Its Robert Reichardt, Senior Associate

The above Certification was signed in my presence by the person whose name appears above, on this 10 day of November, 2025



WITNESS: Brianna Sailor, Associate

Attachments

Two additional attachments are in separate files:

1. Disclosure Statement in file named: APA Consulting-RFP2026-02 APCSC-Disclosure Statement. Pdf
2. Project team resumes in file named: APA Consulting-RFP2026-02 APCSC-Resumes.pdf