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## Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

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**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D. <sup>CMU</sup>  
**CC:** ITS Project Number 44670  
**Date:** February 12, 2019  
**Re:** Sole Source Certification Number 4168 for National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Vouchers for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB)  
**Contact Name:** Jill Chastant  
**Contact Phone Number:** 601-432-8214  
**Contact E-mail Address:** Jill.Chastant@its.ms.gov

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### Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 4168 for National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Career and Technical Education (CTE) vouchers for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), please be advised that ITS intends to award NCCER, as the sole source provider of the vouchers through March 31, 2022, in an amount not to exceed \$135,000.00. For an explanation regarding Mississippi state law, policy and procedures for sole source procurements, refer to Attachment C: Sole Source Procurement Overview.

### Sole Source Criteria

1. The product or services being purchased must perform a function for which no other product or source of services exist:

**MCCB research identified NCCER as an industry credential valued by a wide array of industry members in our state who represent any number of trades from advanced manufacturing to heavy and light construction. NCCER offers credentials for more than 70 craft areas that are recognized by business and industry locally, regionally, and globally. Instructors can also become Craft Instructors through NCCER which provides them the credentials to teach and certify the students who can only attain NCCER credentials under a NCCER Craft Instructor. The exams will be administered as the students matriculate through the programs with different modules of the exams being administered as the student completes the module or at the end of the semester. NCCER online exams are administered in the NCCER Online Testing System with student data being available through the NCCER**

**Testing and Registry System. The customer's sole source certification request is included as Attachment A.**

2. The purchaser must be able to show specific business objectives that can be met only through the unique product or services:

**The NCCER certification exams are the measure of technical skill attainment for the Carpentry, Construction, Electrical, Commercial/Residential Maintenance, Construction Equipment Operations, HVAC, Industrial Maintenance, Electro-Mechanical Technology, Masonry, Pipefitting, and Welding Programs. The NCCER exams have been mapped to the programs of study to ensure that it is the appropriate end-of-program exam for these programs. NCCER exams were approved by industry members and college faculty participating in the curriculum writing process as valid industry certification. The NCCER exams vouchers will be made available to the students through the colleges by MCCB. Colleges administering the NCCER exams will have access to the NCCER online testing system through this contract and will be able to log students into the system for testing. Each login will account for one testing voucher. All NCCER exams are to be administered in a proctored environment. The ability to test locally at the college in a proctored environment is vitally important to students being able to take this certification exam without additional travel requirements to alternate off-campus test sites.**

**MCCB has completed the process and attained Accredited Training Status through NCCER. MCCB worked with ITS to procure and execute a sole source contract with NCCER in 2017 to train and certify Master Trainers through the NCCER Program. During the training, 34 (27 instructors and 7 MCCB staff) individuals were certified as Master Trainers who are now certified through NCCER's Master Trainer Instructor Certification Training Program (MTICTP) and are now authorized through NCCER to train and certify Mississippi's Career Technical Education (CTE) and Workforce craft instructors. Certified craft instructors are allowed to teach the NCCER curriculum and administer the certification exams. The customer's sole source certification request is included as Attachment A.**

3. The product or services must be available only from the manufacturer and not through resellers who could submit competitive pricing for the product or services:

**NCCER is the author and provider of the Construction and Maintenance Craft Training series also known as the NCCER Learning Series. Training programs must be delivered by an NCCER Accredited Sponsor in order to receive these credentials. All accredited organizations must have a certified Master Trainer on staff who has completed the Master Trainer Instructor Certification Training Program that is hosted by NCCER. NCCER is the sole source provider and copyright owner of the NCCER Learning Series, Build Your Future (BYF) materials, Master Trainer Kits, Craft Instructor Guides, NCCER Credentials, and the recently developed Rigging Kit. No other entities are authorized to provide the Master Trainer training or materials including Craft Instructor Guides. The Vendor's Sole Source Certification is included as Attachment B.**

## Schedule

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date	02/12/19
Second Advertisement Date	02/19/19
Response Deadline From Objectors	02/27/19, at 3:00 P.M. Central Time
Notice of Award/No Award Posted	Not before 02/28/19

## Project Details

In 2016, following the adoption of the National Certifications Standards and Procedure Manual (2013), the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) adopted national certifications as the measure of technical skill attainment for Career Technical Education (CTE) Programs where such a certification existed. Coordination of the new system-wide initiative is a new role for the MCCB and it includes two key elements:

- 1) Negotiation for the lowest possible fees for student testing vouchers and testing software purchases as a community college system, and
- 2) Access to testing results for students to prepare college-level and system-level reports on the programmatic outcome measure of technical skill attainment reported to the U.S. Department of Education in compliance with the Carl Perkins Act.

The NCCER exam vouchers that comprise this request will be the measure of technical skill attainment for post-secondary CTE students completing the Carpentry, Construction, Electrical, Commercial/Residential Maintenance, Construction Equipment Operations, HVAC, Industrial Maintenance, Electro-Mechanical Technology, Masonry, Pipefitting, and Welding. During the curriculum writing meeting, the NCCER exams were determined by subject matter experts to be appropriate and industry-recognized certification exams. In addition, the exam objectives were mapped to the programs of study to ensure that all exam objectives were covered in the program of study.

In August 2017, ITS advertised Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source No. 4026 for MCCB for NCCER training to certify Master Trainers as part of the requirements for obtaining Accredited Training Sponsor status. No objections were received from Interested Parties and an award was made for \$28,700.00.

## Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Career and Technical Education (CTE) vouchers should not be certified as a sole source should provide information in the following format for the state to use in determining whether or not to proceed with awarding the Sole Source contract to NCCER.

### 1.1 Interested Party Information

1.1.1 Contact Name, Phone Number and email address

1.1.2 Company Website URL, if applicable

### 1.2 Objection to Sole Source Certification

1.2.1 Interested parties must present specific objections to the Sole Source certification using the criteria listed above.

- 1.2.2 A statement regarding the Interested Party's capabilities as related to this Sole Source Certification Request.
- 1.3 Comments will be accepted at any time prior to Wednesday, February 27, 2019, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Jill Chastant at [Jill.Chastant@its.ms.gov](mailto:Jill.Chastant@its.ms.gov) or at the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, 3771 Eastwood Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39211. Responses may be delivered by hand, via regular mail, overnight delivery, e-mail or by fax. Fax number is (601) 713-6380. ITS WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DELAYS IN THE DELIVERY OF RESPONSES. It is solely the responsibility of the Interested Parties that responses reach ITS on time. Interested Parties may contact Jill Chastant to verify the receipt of their Responses. Responses received after the deadline will be rejected.
- 1.4 Interested Party responses should include the following information:

**SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO  
Sole Source Certification No. 4168-44780  
Accepted until February 27, 2019 @ 3:00 p.m.,  
ATTENTION: Jill Chastant**

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Jill Chastant at 601-432-8214 or via email at [Jill.Chastant@its.ms.gov](mailto:Jill.Chastant@its.ms.gov).

- Attachment A: Customer Sole Source Certification Request  
Attachment B: Vendor Correspondence  
Attachment C: Sole Source Procurement Overview



3771 Eastwood Drive  
Jackson, Mississippi 39211  
Phone 601-432-8000 Fax 601-713-6380

## Sole Source Certification Request

<b>Project Title:</b> <b>NCCER Testing Vouchers</b>		<b>Stimulus (ARRA) Funds? Yes No X</b>	
<b>Customer Contact Information</b>			
<b>Agency/Public University:</b> Mississippi Community College Board <b>Address:</b> E&R Center, Room 519 Jackson, MS 39211		<b>Contact Person:</b> Kimberly Jones <b>Phone:</b> 601-432-6131 <b>Fax:</b> <b>Email Address:</b> <a href="mailto:kjones@mccb.edu">kjones@mccb.edu</a>	
<b>MAGIC Customer Number</b> (only required from state agencies): 7000000104		<b>Division/Dept:</b> Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment <b>Handmail:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Project Summary Narrative Description of Project</b> (include details of original acquisition if applicable):  In 2016, following the adoption of the National Certifications Standards and Procedure Manual (2013), the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) adopted national certifications as the measure of technical skill attainment for Career Technical Education (CTE) Programs where such a certification existed. Coordination of the new system-wide initiative is a new role for the MCCB and it includes two key elements:  1) Negotiation for the lowest possible fees for student testing vouchers and testing software purchases as a community college system, and  2) Access to testing results for students to prepare college-level and system-level reports on the programmatic outcome measure of technical skill attainment reported to the U.S. Department of Education in compliance with the Carl Perkins Act.  The NCCER exam vouchers that comprise this request will be the measure of technical skill attainment for post-secondary CTE students completing the Carpentry, Construction, Electrical, Commercial/Residential Maintenance, Construction Equipment Operations, HVAC, Industrial Maintenance, Electro-Mechanical Technology, Masonry, Pipefitting, and Welding. During the curriculum writing meeting, the NCCER exams were determined by subject matter experts to be appropriate and industry-recognized certification exams. In addition, the exam objectives were mapped to the programs of study to ensure that all exam objectives were covered in the program of study.			
<b>ITS Acquisition Approval (CP-1) should be effective through this date</b> (Please allow time for all vendor invoices to be paid): 06/30/2021			
<b>Cost Estimates</b> <i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Initial Costs</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<b>Time Constraints</b> Item Needed by: 10/01/2018 Funds Expire:
2019	\$45,000.00		<b>Anticipated Lifecycle of Products/System</b> (i.e. estimated years of effective use): 3 years  <b>Discuss Funding</b> (e.g. how much of needed funding is definite; total project budget; any matching or other non-state funds) 100% funding is secured. Initial contract will be paid with funds provided through a grant.
2020		\$45,000.00	
2021		\$45,000.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$45,000.00</b>	<b>\$90,000.00</b>	
<b>Acquisition Details</b>			
<b>Items Requested</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Building Location(s)</b>
NCCER CTE certification exams	20,000	CTE exams	Community Colleges
<b>Describe platform &amp; infrastructure</b> (connectivity; software/hardware platforms; utilization of State Data Center resources: mainframe, eGovernment portal, payment engine, document management, hosting).			
<b>Progress to Date:</b> What has been done related to this project, including any communication with ITS staff (data/voice/procurement/other)? A quote and sole source letter have been obtained from the vendor. MCCB has secured quotes from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) for student rates. MCCB has completed the process and attained Accredited Training Status through NCCER. MCCB worked with ITS to procure a sole source contract with NCCER in 2017 to train and certify Master Trainers through the NCCER Program. During the training, 34 (27 instructors and 7 MCCB staff) individuals were certified as Master Trainers who are now certified through NCCER's Master Trainer Instructor Certification Training Program (MTICTP) and are now authorized through NCCER to train and certify Mississippi's Career Technical Education (CTE) and Workforce craft instructors. Certified craft instructors are allowed to teach the NCCER curriculum and administer the certification exams.			
<b>Sole Source Certification</b> Note: Certification must be renewed for each revision or continuation of previous Sole Source Approvals.			
<b>Specific business requirements to be met by the requested products or services:</b> The NCCER certification exams are the measure of technical skill attainment for the Carpentry, Construction, Electrical, Commercial/Residential Maintenance, Construction Equipment Operations, HVAC, Industrial Maintenance, Electro-Mechanical Technology, Masonry, Pipefitting, and Welding Programs. The NCCER exams have been mapped to the programs of study to ensure that it is the appropriate end-of-program exam for these programs. NCCER exams were approved by industry members and college faculty participating in the curriculum writing process as valid industry certification. The NCCER exams vouchers will be made available to the students through the colleges by MCCB. Colleges administering the NCCER exams will have access to the NCCER online testing system through this contract and will be able to log students into the system for testing.			

Attachment A

<p>Each login will account for one testing voucher. All NCCER exams are to be administered in a proctored environment. The ability to test locally at the college in a proctored environment is vitally important to students being able to take this certification exam without additional travel requirements to alternate off-campus test sites.</p>	
<p>MCCB has completed the process and attained Accredited Training Status through NCCER. MCCB worked with ITS to procure and execute a sole source contract with NCCER in 2017 to train and certify Master Trainers through the NCCER Program. During the training, 34 (27 instructors and 7 MCCB staff) individuals were certified as Master Trainers who are now certified through NCCER's Master Trainer Instructor Certification Training Program (MTICTP) and are now authorized through NCCER to train and certify Mississippi's Career Technical Education (CTE) and Workforce craft instructors. Certified craft instructors are allowed to teach the NCCER curriculum and administer the certification exams.</p>	
<p><b>Explain why these products or services are the only ones that can meet your needs (include unique features/special functionality):</b>                  MCCB research identifies NCCER as an industry credential valued by a wide array of industry members in our state who represent any number of trades from advanced manufacturing to heavy and light construction. NCCER offers credentials for more than 70 craft areas that are recognized by business and industry locally, regionally, and globally. Instructors can also become Craft Instructors through NCCER which provides them the credentials to teach and certify the students who can only attain NCCER credentials under a NCCER Craft Instructor. The exams will be administered as the students matriculate through the programs with different modules of the exams being administered as the student complete the module or at the end of the semester. NCCER online exams are administered in the NCCER Online Testing System with student data being available through the NCCER Testing and Registry System.</p>	
<p><b>Explain why the source is the only entity that can provide the products or services (Include other products/vendors researched or evaluated):</b>                  NCCER is the author and provider of the Construction and Maintenance Craft Training series also known as the NCCER Learning Series. Training programs must be delivered by an NCCER Accredited Sponsor in order to receive these credentials. All accredited organizations must have a certified Master Trainer on staff who has completed the Master Trainer Instructor Certification Training Program that is hosted by NCCER. NCCER is the sole source provider and copyright owner of the NCCER Learning Series, Build Your Future (BYF) materials, Master Trainer Kits, Craft Instructor Guides, NCCER Credentials, and the recently developed Rigging Kit. No other entities are authorized to provide the Master Trainer training or materials including Craft Instructor Guides.</p>	
<p>Vendor's Certification of Sole Source attached: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No      Vendor's proposal submitted: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	
<p>MAGIC Vendor Code(s) Vendor must be in MAGIC before a CP-I can be issued.</p>	
<p>Place Order To                  Vendor Name: NCCER                  Vendor Address: 13614 Progress Boulevard                  Alachua, FL 32615</p>	<p>Remit To                  Vendor Name: NCCER                  Vendor Address: 13614 Progress Boulevard                  Alachua, FL 32615</p>

By my signature, I certify that, to the best of my professional knowledge: the requested product or services are a sole source as outlined in the ITS Procurement Handbook, Rule 207.2:013-030 Procurement Types: Sole Source, and as outlined in Mississippi Code annotated Section 31-7-13. In addition, I acknowledge that there is a charge for ITS procurement services associated with this request which will be billed to the requestor by ITS and that my agency/public university is responsible for these charges/costs.

MS Community College Board / Executive Director  
 Name (Agency Head or Public University CIO) Title      Signature      Date



THE STANDARD FOR DEVELOPING CRAFT PROFESSIONALS

January 22, 2019

Kimberly Jones  
Assistant Director of Assessment  
Mississippi Community College Board  
3825 Ridgewood Road  
Jackson, MS 39211

Dear Ms. Jones:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that NCCER is the author and provider of the Construction and Maintenance Craft Training series also known as the *NCCER Learning Series*® which is printed and published by Pearson.

NCCER is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) education organization established in 1996 by the world's largest and most progressive construction companies and national construction associations. It was founded to address the severe workforce shortage facing the industry and to develop a standardized training process and curricula. Today, NCCER is supported by hundreds of leading construction and maintenance companies, manufacturers, and national associations. The *NCCER Learning Series*® is also used in several thousand schools across the country.

NCCER also maintains a National Registry that provides transcripts, certificates, and wallet cards to individuals who have successfully completed levels of the *NCCER Learning Series*®. Training programs must be delivered by an NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor in order to receive these credentials. All accredited organizations must have a certified Master Trainer on staff who has completed the Master Trainer Instructor Certification Training Program that is hosted by NCCER.

NCCER is the *sole source* provider and copyright owner of the *NCCER Learning Series*®, Build Your Future (BYF) materials, Master Trainer Kits, Craft Instructor Guides, NCCER Credentials, and the recently developed Rigging Kit. No other entities are authorized to provide Master Trainer training or materials including Craft Instructor Guides.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, NCCER, or our programs, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Camille  
Accreditation & Audit Programs Manager, NCCER

cc: Cathy Tyler, Director of Credentialing & Compliance Services

## Attachment C: Sole Source Procurement Overview

The acquisition of information technology for all state agencies and institutions of higher learning (IHLs) is within the scope of the ITS law, found in Mississippi Code Section 25-53-1, et seq., and the policies and procedures established in accordance with this statute, found in the ITS Procurement Handbook posted on the ITS website ([www.its.ms.gov](http://www.its.ms.gov)).

ITS enabling legislation requires that information technology hardware, software and services be acquired in a manner that insures the maximum of competition among all manufacturers and suppliers of such equipment and services. Accordingly, ITS promotes full and open competition through the issuance of open specifications and the objective evaluation of Interested Party proposals to determine the lowest and best offering to meet an agency's or public university's business requirements. True competition protects the integrity and credibility of purchasing in the public sector and is essential in providing best value and adequate contractual protection for the purchasing entity. In certain limited situations, information technology acquisitions may be sole-sourced.

ITS utilizes the provisions of Public Purchasing Law for Sole Source and Emergency procurements of information technology. Mississippi Public Purchasing Law (Mississippi Code Section 31-7-13) specifies that noncompetitive items available from one source only be exempted from bid requirements (sole-sourced). ITS statute, in Section 25-53-5 (p), permits ITS to utilize provisions in Public Purchasing Law or regulations, when applicable.

Per Public Purchasing law, acquisitions must meet the following criteria to be authorized as sole source:

1. The product or services being purchased must perform a function for which no other product or source of services exists,
2. The purchaser must be able to show specific business objectives that can be met only through the unique product or services, AND
3. The product or services must be available only from the manufacturer and NOT through resellers who could submit competitive pricing for the product or services. The vendor's correspondence regarding this criterion for this project is included as Attachment B.

By policy as documented in the ITS Procurement Handbook, acquisitions of IT services must include the following information to be authorized as sole source:

1. An explanation about why the amount to be expended is reasonable, and
2. An explanation regarding the efforts by the purchaser to obtain the best possible price.

For state agencies, approval of all technology purchases with a lifecycle cost of \$5,000 or less, including sole source purchases, has been delegated to the agency. The ITS Procurement Limits Policies for Agencies (a section in the ITS Procurement Handbook) require a minimum of two competitive written bids or proposals for technology purchases with a lifecycle cost over \$5,000 but not over \$50,000 (not over \$25,000 for projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act). Since, for single source items, the procuring agency will be unable to obtain two written bids, ITS must certify all sole source acquisitions of information technology with a lifecycle cost greater than \$5,000.

Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) or public universities have been delegated the authority to certify sole source procurements up to \$250,000 lifecycle cost under the ITS Procurement Limits Policies for IHLs (a section in the ITS Procurement Handbook). For the certification of sole source procurements delegated to the CIOs at public universities, the public university must follow ITS' Sole Source Procedure, including advertisement of the intent to award as sole source. Institutions certifying a sole source purchase must ensure the criteria listed above are met and documented in writing by the institution and the Interested Party prior to certifying a product or service as sole source. Sole source documentation must be reviewed and approved by the IHL's CIO for any sole-source



## Attachment C: Sole Source Procurement Overview

certification above \$5,000. All sole source documentation should be retained in the public university's procurement file. Sole source requests above \$250,000 lifecycle cost require ITS approval.

Other than the delegations outlined above, all sole source technology procurements must be certified by ITS. The customer's Sole Source Certification Request for this project is included as Attachment A.

ITS thoroughly reviews Sole Source Certification Requests, determining if competing products and/or services exist. If so, ITS conducts a competitive procurement. If ITS' review confirms the sole source, then a Sole Source advertisement is issued, giving other Interested Parties an opportunity to identify competing products and/or services. Based upon the results of the Sole Source advertisement, ITS will either certify the request as a sole source or conduct a competitive procurement.