

Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

To: Interested Parties

From: David C. Johnson

CC: ITS Project Number 48135

Date: April 23, 2024

Re: Sole Source Certification Number 4615 for high-performance optical and packet backbone research network for the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL)

Contact Name: Matthew Livingston

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8244

Contact E-mail Address: matthew.livingston@its.ms.gov

Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 4615 for the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), please be advised that ITS intends to award University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development d/b/a Internet2, as the sole source provider of the high-performance optical and packet backbone research network through June 30, 2027, in an amount not to exceed \$1,356,960.00. Please be advised that ITS will determine if additional connections, enhancements, upgrades to any connections, or support are within scope during the certification period and may increase the spending authority accordingly. Should University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development d/b/a Internet2 change their name during this certification period, then ITS will determine if a recertification is necessary. For an explanation regarding Mississippi state law, policy, and procedures for sole source procurements, refer to Attachment B: 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:

Internet2, the only high-performance research and education optical network, offers unique collaboration tools, advanced network layer 1, 2, and 3 services. Internet2 is a limited member-owned advanced technology organization that offers 100Gb Ethernet technology throughout its nationwide footprint. Ongoing membership with Internet2 is critical for the Mississippi research universities to collaborate with researchers and experts from industry and academia through ultra-high-speed network connections. This provides the Mississippi research universities with the ability to transfer and obtain large volumes of data between other Internet2 members. Internet2 also provides a federated trust and identity infrastructure

required by the Mississippi research universities to obtain and retain research projects and grant opportunities. In an ongoing effort to develop a diverse network that facilitates community and engagement among its members, Internet2 provides membership options for non-research entities such as libraries, healthcare facilities, state agencies, regional universities, and other public institutions. This "community-based" membership option is known as the Community Anchor Program (CAP). Non-research CAP members must participate in Internet2 through a sponsorship agreement whereby research members (i.e. research universities) agree to sponsor non-research members (i.e. regional universities) and ensure acceptable use policies. The CAP program allows non-research entities to participate in Internet2 at reduced rates while still benefitting from many of the programs and services offered by the Internet2 network.

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

IHL, particularly the research universities within the State, utilize the Internet2 connection for data-intensive, computationally intensive, and collaborative research programs. The State and the US Federal government (through the National Science Foundation) have made substantial investments in data-intensive and computational science in Mississippi, building shared resources and a collection of researchers in computational chemistry, computational biology, biomedical simulation, biostatics, and physics. The 100-gigabit Ethernet (GE) technology Layer 2 connection provides support for software-defined networking (SDN) and implementation of a Science DMZ (demilitarized zone). The MissiON network has two cross connects related to Internet2. These cross-connects are in Jackson and Atlanta for network redundancy and essentially serve as connection points where the MissiON network connects to Internet2. Regarding CAP sponsorship in Mississippi, the MissiON network is serving as the CAP sponsor for the four regional universities. Continued participation in Internet2 is vital for Mississippi public universities to remain competitive in a dynamic environment where a growing number of public and private entities compete for lucrative and prestigious federal grant opportunities.

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:

Internet2 is the sole provider of access to the Internet2 Network in conjunction with its regional connector organizations. The Vendor's sole source certification letter is included as Attachment A.

Schedule

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date	04/23/24
Second Advertisement Date	04/30/24
Response Deadline from Objectors	05/08/24 at 3:00 P.M. Central Time
Notice of Award/No Award Posted	Not before 05/09/24

Project Details

In July 2011, the Institutions of Higher Learning, via then current sole source procedures, procured a high-performance optical network connector site in Jackson, Mississippi for educational research and networking services from Internet2. The three-year cost for the service totaled \$1,575,000.00, with the cost borne by the five research universities in the state: Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi, University of Mississippi, Medical Center, and University of Southern Mississippi.

In May 2015, on behalf of the research facilities, IHL renewed the Agreement with Internet2 for an additional three-year period using approved sole source procedures. The cost of the renewal totaled \$1,329,000.00. In May 2018, ITS published Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source Number 4096 for the renewal of the high-performance optical and packet backbone research network. No objections were received. On behalf of the research facilities, ITS, on behalf of IHL, renewed the Agreement with Internet2 for an additional three-year agreement for \$1,200,000.00. Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source Number 4388 was published in May 2021 for the renewal of the high-performance optical and packet backbone research network, and, again, no objections were received. ITS negotiated Agreements on behalf of IHL to renew the services through June 30, 2024.

The total estimated cost of the project to date is \$5,508,260.00.

Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the high-performance optical and packet backbone research network 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 University Corporation for Advanced Internet Development d/b/a Internet2.

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 1.1 Comments will be accepted at any time prior to Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Matthew Livingston at matthew.livingston@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 Matthew Livingston 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. 4615-48135
Accepted until May 8, 2024 @ 3:00 p.m.,
ATTENTION: Matthew Livingston**

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Matthew Livingston at 601-432-8244 or via email at matthew.livingston@its.ms.gov.

Attachment A: Vendor Correspondence

Attachment B: Sole Source Procurement Overview



January 23, 2024

Dr. Alfred Rankins Jr.
Commissioner of Higher Education
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
3825 Ridgewood Road, Suite 915
Jackson, MS 39211

RE: Sole Source Certificate Letter for MS Department of Information Technology Services

Dear Dr. Rankins:

Internet2, founded in 1996, is a not-for-profit organization governed by a Board of Trustees with membership as follows (as of January 2024):

- 333 U.S. universities
- 54 leading corporations
- 58 affiliate members, including government agencies
- 46 regional and state education networks

Additionally, more than 65 national research and education networking partners representing over 100 countries provide networking capabilities and advanced applications that take advantage of the high-speed Internet2 Network. The network delivers reliable production services for high-performance needs, and creates a powerful experimental platform for the development of new applications. Internet2 also provides a test bed for research and enables research, development and experimentation for the Internet2 community.

Built by and for the research and education community, the Internet2 Network offers 400 gigabit paths on its entire footprint with 800 gigabit in metro areas. By offering uninhibited performance on a deeply programmable platform, the Internet2 Network is propelling research and education forward. Internet2 is committed to improving problem detection and resolution throughout campus, regional, and national networking infrastructures to create a predictable and well-supported environment in which campus network users have routinely successful experiences in their use of advanced applications. In addition, Internet2 offers cloud-based volumetric DDoS mitigation service. Internet2 is a member of the Mutually Agreed Norms for Routing Security (MANRS), a global initiative that provides crucial fixes to reduce the most common routing threats. Many Internet2 members also are MANRS members and Internet2 encourages members to implement the network operations actions recommended by MANRS. Internet2 has introduced the Insight Console, web-based user interface that provides Internet2 members with enhanced capabilities to self-manage Internet2 network services. The Insight Console is embedded within a broad ecosystem that includes federated identity and access


management with InCommon, telemetry, monitoring and alerting, incident management, service requests, business services, and more.

In addition to the Internet2 Network, Internet2 has a focus on trust and identity and provides access to the InCommon Federation, the US education and research identity federation, providing a common framework for trusted shared management of access to online resources. Through InCommon, Identity Providers can give their users single sign-on convenience and privacy protection, while online Service Providers control access to their protected resources. Using the infrastructure facilities of the Internet2 Network and the federated authentication and authorization services available through Internet2's InCommon, leaders have a dynamic and tailored technology toolkit to address new needs and challenges head-on.

Internet2 is the sole provider of access to the Internet2 Network in conjunction with its regional connector organizations.

Please contact me at bnixon@internet2.edu if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by

6277462726146
Belinda E. Nixon
General Counsel
Internet2

Attachment B

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).

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 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 A.

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 \$75,000 (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 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.

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.