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Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services

Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D., Executive Director

Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

To: Interested Parties

From: Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D.

CC: ITS Project Number 48622

Date: January 14, 2025

Re: Sole Source Certification Number 4658 to provide a mainframe error message tool for the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS)

Contact Name: Christopher Gooday

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8037

Contact E-mail Address: Christopher.Gooday@its.ms.gov

Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 4658 for the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (ITS) please be advised that ITS intends to award Chicago-Soft, LTD as the sole source provider of a mainframe error message tool through March 31, 2026, in an amount not to exceed $15,970.00 If ITS opts to renew the mainframe error message tool, this sole source certification shall be valid until March 31, 2028. Please be advised that ITS will determine if additional enhancements, maintenance, or support are within scope during the certification period and may increase the spending authority accordingly. Should Chicago-Soft LTD 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:

    MVS/QuickRef is a unique proprietary product with its one-key delivery system and unprecedented database content for mainframe error messages. By placing the cursor on an error message and pressing a program function (PF) key, MVS/QuickRef provides detailed information and potential solutions to hundreds of product messages, including products from IBM as well as 72 other independent software vendors. The on-screen location of the cursor is sensed to determine which item name in the database to lookup. The MVS/QuickRef Database contains information on unique IBM products, unique product releases, and unique

independent software vendor products. Local user data can also be saved and accessed. The MVS/QuickRef reference information database can also be edited, thereby tailoring messages and solutions to better address customer requests and troubleshoot errors. Similar web-based tools do not interface with many of the Independent Software Vendor (ISV) products.

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

   MVS/QuickRef is software compatible with and installed on the State's legacy mainframe to address any software error messages, whether IBM, third party, or user written. Its ease of use and the ability to instantly lookup solutions to error messages helps ITS quickly assist customers.

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:

   MVS/QuickRef is a proprietary product owned by Chicago-Soft, LTD (CSL). As a result, CSL is the only firm with access to the source code and the only vendor able to provide maintenance and technical support services. CSL is the sole source provider of this software and the associated technical support, with no authorized resellers or designated distributors to service North America (USA, Canada, Mexico). MVS/QuickRef is only available through CSL. The Vendor's sole source certification letter is included as Attachment A.

Schedule

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date	01/14/25
Second Advertisement Date	01/21/25
Response Deadline From Objectors	01/29/25 at 3:00 P.M. Central Time
Notice of Award/No Award Posted	Not before 01/30/25

Project Details

The MVS/QuickRef Software package was purchased as a Sole Source in February 2013, for a three-year period at a total cost of $42,500.00. Since 2016, ITS has continuously issued Notice of Intents to Certify Sole Source receiving no objections. The product is currently in use at the State Data Center and the existing licensing term ends March 31, 2025. ITS has spent to date approximately $177,926.00.

Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the mainframe error message tool 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 Chicago-Soft, LTD.

   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, January 29, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Christopher Gooday at Christopher.Gooday@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 Christopher Gooday 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. 4658-48622
Accepted until January 29, 2025 @ 3:00 p.m.,
ATTENTION: Christopher Gooday

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Christopher Gooday at 601-432-8037 or via email at Christopher.Gooday@its.ms.gov.

Attachment A: Vendor Correspondence
Attachment B: Sole Source Procurement Overview

Attachment A

Sole Source Letter

November 4, 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

MVS/QuickRef is a proprietary product owned by Chicago-Soft, LTD (CSL). As a result, CSL is the only firm with access to the source code and the only vendor able to provide maintenance and technical support services. CSL is the **sole source provider** of this software and the associated technical support, with no authorized resellers or designated distributors to service North America (USA, Canada, Mexico). MVS/QuickRef is only available through CSL.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Walla

Jeremy Walla

President

Chicago-Soft, LTD

2456 Christian St. U1, White River Junction, VT 05001 Tel: 802-281-6766

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'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 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.