

## Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

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**To:** Interested Parties

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

**CC:** ITS Project Number 49594

**Date:** September 29, 2026

**Re:** Sole Source Certification Number 5007 to provide upgrades, training, maintenance, and support for the Aware case management system for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS)

**Contact Name:** Brazel Crocker

**Contact Phone Number:** 601-432-8177

**Contact E-mail Address:** [brazel.crocker@its.ms.gov](mailto:brazel.crocker@its.ms.gov)

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### Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 5007 for the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS), please be advised that ITS intends to award Alliance Enterprises, Inc. as the sole source provider of upgrades, training, maintenance, and support for the Aware case management system through December 31, 2029, in an amount not to exceed \$3,954,589.80. Please be advised that ITS will determine if additional products or services are within scope during the certification period and may increase the spending authority accordingly. Should Alliance Enterprises, Inc. 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 exists:

**The AACE (Aware) case management system from Alliance Enterprises is the only product that meets MDRS's operational, regulatory, and reporting needs. AACE is the agency's enterprise case management platform used to manage client services, eligibility, authorizations, vendor payments, and outcomes across MDRS programs. The system is specifically designed for Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and is aligned with federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and WIOA Title IV reporting requirements. MDRS has used AACE as its system of record for more than two decades, with extensive configurations, integrations, and business rules**

**embedded into the platform. Replacing or duplicating this functionality with another system would result in significant operational disruption, data loss risk, retraining costs, and compliance concerns.**

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

**AACE meets MDRS's specific business requirements by providing: end-to-end case management for Vocational Rehabilitation and related MDRS programs; built-in support for RSA, WIOA Title IV, and other required state and federal reporting; secure management client records, eligibility determinations, service plans, authorizations, and outcomes; integration with existing MDRS workflows, historical data, and reporting structures developed over more than 20 years; support for vendor management, invoicing, and payment tracking; role-based access controls and audit capabilities required for compliance and oversight; and ongoing enhancements, maintenance, and technical support tailored to VR agency operations.**

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:

**Alliance Enterprises is the sole developer, owner, and authorized provider of the AACE (Aware) software. The system is proprietary, and Alliance is the only entity with access to the source code, technical documentation, and underlying architecture necessary to provide maintenance, enhancements, upgrades, and support. No other vendor is authorized or technically capable of modifying or supporting AACE without risking system integrity, security, and compliance. As a result, Alliance Enterprises is the only possible entity that can provide continued support and services for MDRS's existing AACE case management system. The Vendor's sole source certification letter is included as Attachment A.**

4. Explanation of why the amount to be expended for the services is reasonable.

**Alliance Enterprises, Inc. has proposed a fixed-bid, deliverable based contract. Alliance Enterprises, Inc. will assume the risk if the work takes longer than anticipated. The ongoing maintenance and periodic upgrades of Aware present a significantly more cost-effective solution. The continuous investment in a system that has proven its reliability and adaptability over the years is prudent, and the familiarity that MDRS staff has developed with Aware also translates into reduced training costs and a smoother transition during software updates.**

5. Explanation of what the agency did to obtain the best possible price for these services.

**The very nature of a fully customized application, tailored to the specific requirements of MDRS makes it challenging to estimate costs accurately. Seeking quotes from potential software development organizations necessitates detailed specifications, and even then, the intangible value embedded in the current system remains difficult to translate into a precise dollar amount. Moreover, the risk of overlooking essential customization aspects during the quoting process introduces a level of uncertainty that is incompatible with the proven reliability of Aware. Alliance Enterprises, Inc. has developed designs for future product improvements to align with new Federal regulations. Therefore, the State will not incur costs for a new consultant to listen to all user group meetings and study the designs. This will save the State 20-30 hours of billable hours. Alliance Enterprises, Inc. is the developer of the system and has all technical documentation and subject**

matter experts. This knowledge will save the State a minimum of 50 billable hours due to not having a new consultant learn the Aware system, including the data model. Alliance Enterprises, Inc. consultants work remotely on multiple projects at one time and MDRS will only pay for actual time worked and the consultant won't bill for "down time" between meetings with the State. Alliance Enterprises, Inc. provides a variety of job functions to fulfill this project including Account Manager, Project Manager, Sr. Business Systems Analyst, and Sr. Technical Architect. The State does not incur the costs to ramp up each of these individuals or pay their rate while not fully engaged in the project. The new functionality that MDRS would like to purchase has already been written and integrates with the current software.

## Schedule

| Task                             | Date                               |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| First Advertisement Date         | 09/29/26                           |
| Second Advertisement Date        | 10/06/26                           |
| Response Deadline From Objectors | 10/13/26 at 3:00 P.M. Central Time |
| Notice of Award/No Award Posted  | Not before 10/14/26                |

## Project Details

In August 1998, the ITS Board granted sole source approval to the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) to enter into a multi-state consortium with the states of Alabama, New Mexico, and Idaho for services and software to implement and customize a public domain, web-enabled version of Alliance Enterprises, Inc's Aware vocational rehabilitation case management system. These modifications and services were applied to MDRS's Automated Accessible Casework Environment (AACE) system.

In September 2003, the ITS Board granted sole source approval to MDRS to acquire consulting services from Alliance Enterprises, Inc. for the expansion in functionality of the Independent Living Module for the Office of Special Disability Programs (OSDP). In October 2003, the ITS Board granted an expansion and extension of the existing services agreement with Alliance Enterprises, Inc. as the sole source provider of maintenance and support services for the AACE system. In August 2015, with the new law changes around sole source acquisitions, ITS advertised Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source No. 3806 for manufacturer maintenance for the AACE system and integration to the Division of Medicaid's Long-Term Services and Support (LTSS) system. No objections were received from Interested Parties; therefore, ITS certified the request as a sole source. Since December 2018, ITS has continued to issue sole source advertisements for software, maintenance, support, enhancements, upgrades, and training for the AACE system, and has received no objections.

Through this request, MDRS wishes to procure upgrades, support, and maintenance for the existing AACE system. To date, the total purchase authority given to MDRS by ITS for this system is \$11,329,887.00.

## Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the upgrades, training, maintenance, and support for the Aware case management system 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 Alliance Enterprises, Inc.

### 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 Tuesday, October 14, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Brazel Crocker at [brazel.crocker@its.ms.gov](mailto:brazel.crocker@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 Brazel Crocker 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. 5007  
Accepted until October 14, 2026 @ 3:00 p.m.,  
ATTENTION: Brazel Crocker**

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Brazel Crocker at 601-432-8177 or via email at [brazel.crocker@its.ms.gov](mailto:brazel.crocker@its.ms.gov).

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



February 6, 2026  
Attn: Cassandra Wilson, Information Manager II  
1281 Highway 51 North  
Madison, MS 39110

RE: Sole Source Justification for Aware Software Application

To Whom It May Concern,

Alliance Enterprises, Inc. (Alliance) is a privately held company established in 1981 with a mission to develop and support socially relevant computing solutions. Alliance's flagship software offering is the Aware VR application, an enterprise level case management and financial management solution specifically created for vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies.

Additionally, the company provides rapid response emergency technicians, SOC 2 compliant securities, and professional services which simultaneously make Aware Software both exceptional in the industry and the best use of available funding. Alliance updates Aware to ensure that our partners maintain compliance with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)-911 reporting changes and meet the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Aware is an existing, proprietary, commercial off-the-shelf software application. Within the scope of the software, the solution fully complies with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Alliance is the only vendor authorized to provide Support, Training, and Updates (including corrections or patches) or Upgrades (which include feature enhancements and new features). In addition, Alliance is the only vendor who has direct access to all source code and technical documentation.

Alliance retains sole rights and access to the Aware application's proprietary source code and is therefore the only vendor authorized to provide services and support for the DOE Division of Blind Services and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Aware Applications.

Sincerely,

*Karen Dunn*

Karen Dunn, CEO

Alliance Enterprises, Inc.

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Alliance Enterprises  
allianceenterprises.com

2590 Willamette Drive, Suite 101  
Lacey, WA 98516

T: 360-456-7000  
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## 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](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 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.