

Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

To: Interested Parties

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

CC: ITS Project Number 46988

Date: September 11, 2026

Re: Sole Source Certification Number 5021 to provide Foster Parent Online Interactive Training for the Mississippi Department of Child Protective Services (CPS)

Contact Name: Atrael Porter

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8077

Contact E-mail Address: Atrael.Porter@its.ms.gov

Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 5021 for the Mississippi Department of Child Protective Services (CPS), please be advised that ITS intends to award Northwest Media, Inc., as the sole source provider of Foster Parent Online Interactive Training through November 15, 2031, in an amount not to exceed \$433,185.18. 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 Northwest Media, 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:

Northwest Media, Inc.'s, fosterparentcollege.com, is the only commercially available training platform that meets all required evidence-based criteria while also providing clinically validated curriculums specifically designed for foster resources. FosterParentCollege.com (FPC) is a proprietary online platform for foster, adoptive, and kinship parents and child welfare professionals that combines an interactive multimedia learning environment with research-based pre-service and in-service training. Other vendors offer general parenting courses, but none provides foster resource training that meets the depth, rigor, and trauma-informed standards required for licensure. Foster Parent College's curriculum is uniquely built around trauma-informed and person-centered methodologies and developed by industry experts.

Foster Parent College is fully integrated into CPS’s licensure and documentation workflows, it provides statewide, on-demand access with proven reliability for Mississippi families. Foster Parent College has demonstrated a proven capacity to support CPS’s statewide training volume and meets all required security and compliance standards for state-level child welfare operations. The FPC model is cost-efficient, aligned with agency budget constraints, and is the only provider capable of meeting service continuity requirements without causing a disruption in operations and compliance.

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

The business requirements to be met by the web-based platform are the continued provision of evidence-based, clinically validated courses, curriculum, and certificates for CPS Foster Resources. The content has been developed by licensed clinical psychologists, trauma specialists, and child development experts. The training has also been validated through recognized scientific methods, and specifically designed for foster care, adoption, and kinship populations. The platform is compatible with current CPS systems and processes, integrates with existing licensure workflows, tracks user progress, provides automated certificates of completion, and supports report documentation for federal audit reviews.

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:

Northwest Media, Inc. operates FosterParentCollege.com (FPC) and is the only provider of FPC. NWM does not use or authorize resellers or distributors. FPC subscriptions, licenses, course access, platform services, and support are commercially available only through NWM. Foster Parent College (FPC) is the only vendor offering clinically validated foster-care-specific training that meets state competency standards.

Schedule

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date	09/08/26
Notice of Intent Posted	09/11/26
Second Advertisement Date	09/15/26
Response Deadline From Objectors	09/25/26 at 3:00 P.M. Central Time
Notice of Award/No Award Posted	Not before 09/28/26

Project Details

The Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services was created as the state’s lead child welfare agency by the 2016 Mississippi Legislature, separating it from the Mississippi Department of Human Services. In May 2016, Governor Phil Bryant signed Senate Bill 2179, establishing CPS as an independent agency with its commissioner serving as a member of the Governor’s cabinet. The mission of CPS is to protect children, support families, and encourage lasting family connections. To help MDCPS in fulfilling its mission, CPS has utilized the services of Northwest Media, Inc.

Since November 2022, Northwest Media, Inc. has provided a flexible, engaging, and comprehensive online learning solution to thousands of users enhancing their ability to provide safe, nurturing environments for children in care. From November 2023 to August 2024, FosterParentCollege.com

received 2,898 enrollments. During this period, 8,570 credit hours were completed. During the current term, November 2025 through August 2026, 1,358 users have completed 13,906 credit hours within the system. Although member registration shows newly enrolled members from 2026, the user base dates as far back as September 2015, demonstrating the long-term efficacy of and dedication to the system. This initiative not only empowers foster parents but also improves outcomes for children and youth in foster care. To date, CPS has spent \$180,413.80 on FPC.

Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the Foster Parent Online Interactive Training 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 Northwest Media, 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 Friday, September 25, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Atrael Porter at Atrael.Porter@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 Atrael Porter 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. 5021-46988
Accepted until September 25, 2026 @ 3:00 p.m.,
ATTENTION: Atrael Porter**

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Atrael Porter at 601-432-8044 or via email at Atrael.Porter@its.ms.gov.

Attachment A: Sole Source Letter

Attachment B: Sole Source Procurement Overview



326 West 12th
Eugene, OR 97401

August 31, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Sole Source Confirmation - FosterParentCollege.com®

This letter confirms that Northwest Media, Inc. (NWM) operates FosterParentCollege.com® (FPC) and is the only provider of FPC. NWM does not use or authorize resellers or distributors. FPC subscriptions, licenses, course access, platform services, and support are commercially available only through NWM.

FPC was originally developed with funding from the federal Small Business Innovation Research Program. NWM subsequently commercialized the resulting technology and continues to maintain, enhance, and support the proprietary FPC platform and course library. This SBIR history is provided as background to the development of the product; the sole-source basis for this procurement is NWM's exclusive ability to provide FPC and its proprietary services.

FPC is a proprietary online training platform for foster, adoptive, and kinship parents and child welfare professionals. It combines an interactive multimedia learning environment with research-based pre-service and in-service training. Course development is guided by nationally recognized content experts in social work, pediatrics, psychology, and education. Courses incorporate video, short instructional segments, interactive exercises, handouts, and assessments. The controlled learning sequence requires participants to complete required content and activities before advancing, supporting engagement and comprehension before a completion certificate is issued.

The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) lists FPC in its Resource Parent Programs topic area with a Scientific Rating of 3 - Promising Research Evidence - and a Child Welfare System Relevance Level of High. The CEBC program overview identifies FPC as providing interactive multimedia pre-service and in-service training.

NWM is the only source from which the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS) can obtain or renew access to the FPC platform, proprietary FPC course library, agency configurations, training records, reporting tools, and related support. FPC's proprietary agency-management system allows authorized staff to register users, assign training, access training records and completion certificates, distribute agency-developed materials, design tailored multi-course curricula, and generate and export usage reports. Trainee accounts provide course assignments and, where applicable, note-taking and discussion functionality.

FPC supports blended pre-service training through its proprietary Series Training Program, which allows agencies to organize preset or customized online course sequences and combine them with agency-led in-person or virtual meetings. Depending on the account configuration, agencies may also incorporate graded tests, agency-specific materials, and customized training requirements. While other general online training products may exist, they cannot provide the FPC-branded proprietary content, CEBC-rated FPC program, existing agency records and configurations, integrated management and reporting tools, or NWM support. For a procurement specifically requiring continued use of FPC, NWM is the sole source capable of fulfilling MDCPS's requirement.

Sincerely,

Lee White

Northwest Media, Inc.
Lee White
Founder, Co-Director

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.