

USM SSP 26_030 Notice of Proposed Sole Source Purchase of Collegiate Sports Connect.

http://www.ms.gov/dfa/contract_bid_search/Bid

RFx: 3150006905

Comments/objections will be received as required per Section 31-7-13 (C) of the Mississippi Code until 8:00 a.m. (Central Time) on July 17, 2026.

Any person or entity that objects and proposes that the commodity listed is not sole source and can be provided by another person or entity shall submit a written notice to:

Jacob Cochran

Director of Procurement & Contracts 118 College Dr. Box 5003 Hattiesburg, MS 39406

bids@usm.edu

Phone: 601-266-4131

Subject Line must read "Sole Source Objection USM SSP 26_030"

The notice shall contain a detailed explanation of why the commodity is not a sole source procurement. Appropriate documentation shall also be submitted if applicable.

If after a review of the submitted notice and documents, USM determines that the commodity in the proposed sole source request can be provided by another person or entity, then USM will withdraw the sole source request publication from the procurement portal website and submit the procurement of the commodity to an advertised competitive bid or selection process.

If USM determines after review that there is only one (1) source for the required commodity, then USM will appeal to the Public Procurement Review Board. USM will have the burden of proving that the commodity is only provided by one (1) source.

Run Dates: 7/2, 7/9

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The University of Southern Mississippi anticipates purchasing the item(s) listed below as a sole source purchase. Anyone objecting to this purchase shall follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Description of the commodity that USM is seeking to procure:

- The University of Southern Mississippi is seeking to procure a subscription to **Collegiate Sports Connect**, a proprietary cloud-based talent acquisition and professional networking platform designed exclusively for intercollegiate athletics. The platform provides access to a comprehensive database of athletics administrators and coaches, job posting and candidate management tools, industry-specific recruitment resources, professional development content, and a nationwide network of collegiate athletics professionals. The subscription will support the University's efforts to identify, recruit, and retain highly qualified administrative personnel while improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the athletics hiring process.

2. What efforts were made by the Agency to determine that the proposed provider is the only entity that can provide the commodity needed?

The University of Southern Mississippi conducted market research to identify potential vendors capable of providing a comprehensive talent acquisition platform specifically designed for intercollegiate athletics administration. This review included evaluating traditional employment platforms, executive search resources, and general recruiting software.

Through this evaluation, the University determined that Collegiate Sports Connect is the only provider offering a proprietary platform developed exclusively for collegiate athletics administration. Unlike general recruiting services, Collegiate Sports Connect combines a

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comprehensive database of athletics professionals, industry-specific candidate sourcing, recruitment management tools, job posting capabilities, professional development resources, and direct integration within the collegiate athletics community.

The platform was developed in partnership with leading organizations within the intercollegiate athletics industry and serves as a centralized marketplace specifically for NCAA athletics administrators and coaches. No other vendor was identified that provides the same combination of proprietary data, athletics-specific functionality, and targeted access to qualified administrative talent. As a result, the University determined that Collegiate Sports Connect is the only source capable of meeting its specific business requirements.

3. What efforts were made to ensure the best possible price for the commodity was obtained?

The University of Southern Mississippi worked directly with Collegiate Sports Connect to negotiate pricing that would provide the greatest long-term value to the institution. Rather than purchasing annual subscriptions at the standard yearly rate, the University negotiated a three-year agreement that significantly reduced the overall cost of the subscription over the contract term. This multi-year pricing structure provides substantial savings compared to renewing the service annually while also protecting the University from future price increases during the contract period.

The negotiated agreement represents the best value available for the required services by reducing the total cost of ownership, providing predictable budgeting over multiple fiscal years, and ensuring uninterrupted access to the platform at a discounted rate.

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4. Why is the commodity the only one that can meet the needs to the Agency?

Collegiate Sports Connect is the only commodity that meets the University's business requirements because it is a proprietary platform developed exclusively for recruiting and hiring within intercollegiate athletics. Unlike general recruiting platforms or employment websites, Collegiate Sports Connect provides direct access to a nationwide network of athletics administrators and coaches, a proprietary database of qualified candidates, athletics-specific job posting and applicant management tools, and industry-focused professional resources.

The University's business need is to efficiently identify, recruit, and retain highly qualified administrative talent with experience in NCAA athletics. Collegiate Sports Connect is uniquely positioned to meet this need because its platform is purpose-built for the collegiate athletics industry and is widely utilized by NCAA institutions and athletics professionals. No other commercially available platform combines the same proprietary candidate network, industry-specific recruiting functionality, and athletics-focused resources in a single solution.

As a result, Collegiate Sports Connect is the only commodity capable of fully meeting the University's operational and strategic hiring needs for athletics administration.

5. Why is the amount expended for the commodity reasonable?

The amount expended is reasonable based on the specialized nature of the platform and the value it provides in recruiting qualified collegiate athletics administrators. The University negotiated a discounted multi-year agreement, resulting in a lower overall cost than annual renewals while providing predictable pricing and long-term savings. Considering its proprietary functionality and the negotiated pricing, the expenditure represents a fair and reasonable value.

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Advertisement Schedule	Date
1st scheduled	7/2/26
2nd scheduled	7/9/26

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Jacob Cochran

Director of Procurement & Contracts

Jacob.Cochran@usm.edu

Subject Line must read "Sole Source Objection 25_XXX"

The notice shall contain a detailed explanation of why the commodity is not a sole source procurement. Appropriate documentation shall also be submitted if applicable.

If after a review of the submitted notice and documents, USM determines that the commodity in the proposed sole source request can be provided by another person or entity, then USM will withdraw the sole source request publication from the procurement portal website and submit the procurement of the commodity to an advertised competitive bid or selection process.

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