
Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

To: Interested Parties

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

CC: ITS Project Number 42402

Date: November 17, 2015

Re: Sole Source Certification Number 3841 for software support and maintenance for Astra Schedule for the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL)

Contact Name: Jill Chastant

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8214

Contact E-mail Address: Jill.Chastant@its.ms.gov

Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 3841 for software support and maintenance for the Astra Schedule for the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), please be advised that ITS intends to award the software support and maintenance to Ad Astra Information Systems LLC, as the sole source provider of Astra Schedule through December 31, 2018, in an amount not to exceed \$450,690.00. For an explanation regarding Mississippi state law, policy and procedures for sole source procurements, refer to Attachment C: 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:

Astra Schedule is an enterprise class scheduling platform that integrates with campus student information systems. Platinum Analytics is the patented course-demand analysis tool that assesses student course needs to clear bottlenecks and advance completions. Each of these are proprietary to Ad Astra. IHL is fully invested in Astra Schedule and consistency of data is vital in data collection. The customer's sole source certification request is included as Attachment A.

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

Astra Schedule allows room scheduling for academic and event activities. It refines both the number of available seats for a course and the times of course offerings, delivering recommendations to expand academic space capacity and isolates cost

savings opportunities in reduction of unneeded sections. The customer's sole source certification request is included as Attachment A.

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:

Ad Astra software is patented and proprietary. Ad Astra Information Systems is the sole manufacturer and distributor of Astra Schedule. The vendor's sole source certification letter is included as Attachment B.

Schedule

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date	11/17/15
Second Advertisement Date	11/24/15
Response Deadline From Objectors	12/03/15, at 3:00 P.M. Central Time
Notice of Award/No Award Posted	Not before 12/04/15

Project Details

In 2007, Mississippi State University (MSU) looked at software for scheduling. Ad Astra was a partner with Sunguard (Banner financial system) and was the only partner for this type of software. MSU purchased it as a sole source. The University of Mississippi (UM) and the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) subsequently acquired the software.

As a result of a Space Inventory, Utilization and Management Analysis Efficiency Report at the IHL Board's request and given the fact that the three largest research institutions had invested in Ad Astra, IHL made a business decision to remain with the system for the remaining institutions to ensure consistency of data management. On May 26, 2011, the ITS Board approved the sole source procurement of Ad Astra and IHL entered into a License and Service Agreement with Ad Astra.

As MSU, UM and USM account for approximately 70% of the Mississippi IHL student body, IHL purchased and installed Astra Schedule and Platinum Analysis software for the remaining universities: Alcorn State University (ASU), Delta State University (DSU), Jackson State University (JSU), Mississippi University for Women (MUW) and Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU). Total spend to date is \$1,047,650.00.

Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the software support and maintenance of Astra Schedule 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 Ad Astra Information Systems LLC.

- 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 Thursday, December 3, 2015, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Jill Chastant at Jill.Chastant@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 Jill Chastant 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. 3841-42402
Accepted until December 3, 2015 @ 3:00 p.m.,
ATTENTION: Jill Chastant**

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Jill Chastant at 601-432-8214 or via email at Jill.Chastant@its.ms.gov.

Attachment A: Customer Sole Source Certification Request
Attachment B: Vendor Correspondence
Attachment C: Sole Source Procurement Overview



3771 Eastwood Drive
Jackson, Mississippi 39211
Phone 601-432-8000 Fax 601-713-6380

Sole Source Certification Request

Project Title: Ad Astra Information Systems LLC			Stimulus (ARRA) Funds? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Customer Contact Information				
Agency/Public University: Institutions of Higher Learning Address: 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson MS 39211			Contact Person: Phil Cumberland Phone: 601-432-6315 Fax: 601-432-6990 Email Address: pcumberland@mississippi.edu	
MAGIC Customer Number (only required from state agencies): 5000000004			Division/Dept: On behalf of the universities Handmail: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Project Summary Narrative Description of Project (include details of original acquisition if applicable): In May 2011, IHL entered into a License and Service Agreement with Ad Astra as a result of a Space Inventory, Utilization and Management Analysis Efficiency Report at the IHL Board's request. Since the three largest research institutions had invested in Ad Astra, IHL made a business decision to remain with the system for the remaining institutions to ensure consistency of data management. Mississippi State University (MSU), the University of Mississippi (UM) and the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) acquired the software. As MSU, UM and USM account for approximately 70% of the MS IHL student body, IHL purchased and installed Astra Schedule and Platinum Analysis software for the remaining universities: Jackson State University (JSU), Delta State University (DSU), Alcorn State University (ASU), Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) and Mississippi State University for Women (MUW).				
ITS Acquisition Approval (CP-1) should be effective through this date (Please allow time for all vendor invoices to be paid):				
Cost Estimates	Initial Costs	Ongoing Costs	Time Constraints	Anticipated Lifecycle of Products/System (i.e. estimated years of effective use): 3 years
<i>Fiscal Year</i>			Item Needed by: 12/31/15 Funds Expire:	
FY16	\$148,230.00		Discuss Funding (e.g. how much of needed funding is definite; total project budget; any matching or other non-state funds) This Contract is an agreement between Ad Astra and the eight public universities with IHL Board Executive Office as Licensee. IHL's position is strictly to implement cost savings on the universities behalf by combining all the licenses into one agreement.	
FY17		\$150,230.00		
FY18		\$152,230.00		
Total		\$450,690.00		
Acquisition Details				
Items Requested	Quantity	Description		Building Location(s)
Astra Schedule VII Annual Support	8	Room scheduling suite combines academic and event activities into one system		ASU, DSU, JSU, MSU, MUW, MVSU, UM, USM
Platinum Analytics Annual Support	8	Provides information in the creation of student friendly and efficient course schedules		ASU, DSU, JSU, MSU, MUW, MVSU, UM, USM
Describe platform & infrastructure (connectivity; software/hardware platforms; utilization of State Data Center resources: mainframe, eGovernment portal, payment engine, document management, hosting). Software support and maintenance.				
Progress to Date: What has been done related to this project, including any communication with ITS staff (data/voice/procurement/other)? A quote has been obtained from the vendor.				
Sole Source Certification Note: Certification must be renewed for each revision or continuation of previous Sole Source Approvals.				
Specific business requirements to be met by the requested products or services: Astra Schedule allows room scheduling for academic and event activities. It refines both the number of available seats for a course and the times of course offerings, delivering recommendations to expand academic space capacity and isolates cost savings opportunities in reduction of unneeded sections.				
Explain why these products or services are the only ones that can meet your needs (include unique features/special functionality): Astra Schedule is an enterprise class scheduling platform that integrates with campus student information systems. Platinum Analytics is the patented course-demand analysis tool that assesses student course needs to clear bottlenecks and advance completions. Each of these are proprietary to Ad Astra. IHL is fully invested in Ad Astra and consistency of data is vital in data collection.				
Explain why the source is the only entity that can provide the products or services (Include other products/vendors researched or evaluated): Ad Astra software is patented and proprietary. Ad Astra Information Systems is the sole manufacturer and distributor of the Ad Astra software.				
Explain why the amount to be expended for the services is reasonable:				

N/A	
Explain what your agency did to obtain the best possible price for the services: N/A	
Vendor's Certification of Sole Source attached: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Vendor's proposal submitted: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
MAGIC Vendor Code(s) Vendor must be in MAGIC before a CP-1 can be issued.	
Place Order To Vendor Name: Ad Astra Information Systems LLC Vendor Address: 6900 W 80 th St, Ste 300 Overland Park, KS 66204	Remit To Vendor Name: Ad Astra Information Systems LLC Vendor Address: 6900 W 80 th St, Ste 300 Overland Park, KS 66204

By my signature, I certify that, to the best of my professional knowledge: the requested product or services are a sole source as outlined in the ITS Procurement Handbook, Rule 207.2:013-030 Procurement Types: Sole Source, and as outlined in Mississippi Code annotated Section 31-7-13. In addition, I acknowledge that there is a charge for ITS procurement services associated with this request which will be billed to the requestor by ITS and that my agency/public university is responsible for these charges/costs.

Dr. Glenn Boyce, Commissioner
Name (Agency Head or Public University CIO)/Title

A. L. F. Byrd 11/11/15
Signature Date



Strategic Scheduling CheckUp, Schedule Refinement Services and Platinum Analytics™ Sole Source Justification

The Strategic Scheduling CheckUp and our Schedule Refinement Process deliver high impact, actionable findings. This decision-support information can be used to tailor your schedule to fit student demand, resulting in: expanded academic capacity, improved course supply and demand alignment and isolated cost saving opportunities (reduction of unneeded sections). These results are made possible by leveraging patented proprietary software and algorithms. Many of the processes leveraged for analysis during the Strategic Scheduling CheckUp have been awarded Patent No. US 8,750,781 June 10, 2014 by the US Patent Office, naming Tom Shaver, Ad Astra's Founder and CEO as inventor and the sole provider of these solutions.

Many of the processes leveraged within Platinum Analytics have been awarded Patent No. US 8,750,781 June 10, 2014 by the US Patent Office, meaning Ad Astra is the sole provider of these solutions.

Specifically, using a computer system to determine the following critical measures of schedule quality is covered by the patent:

- Historical analysis of course demand, including historical demand trends, time availability, and section-to-section scheduling conflicts
- Program (or degree rule) analysis of course demand, including quantitative demand for eligible/helpful courses and section-to-section scheduling conflicts
- Quantitative demand for eligible/helpful courses, time availability and section-to-section scheduling conflicts
- Student planner analysis of course demand, integrating planned courses into a comprehensive course demand assessment

The patent also covers a methodology of subdividing course demand by schedule time periods (e.g., morning, afternoon, evening) and the application of course demand when creating academic course schedules.

Finally, Ad Astra has developed the following proprietary metrics essential in assessing and improving the quality of academic schedules:

- Capacity analysis metrics highlighting space bottlenecks and their impact on enrollment capacity
- Peer comparisons performance in capacity metrics
- Course offering analysis metrics highlighting disconnects between offerings and students' course needs
- Peer comparisons performance in course offering metrics
- Longitudinal data tracking of the above metrics with related financial and student impact

 Tom Shaver, Chief Client Experience Officer

10/22/15

Attachment C: Sole Source Procurement Overview

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 B.

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 \$50,000 (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.

Attachment C: Sole Source Procurement Overview

Other than the delegations outlined above, all sole source technology procurements must be certified by ITS. The customer's Sole Source Certification Request for this project is included as Attachment A.

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.