

State of Maine Procurement Justification Form

This form must accompany all contract requests and sole source requisitions (RQS) over \$5,000 submitted to the Division of Procurement Services.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please provide the requested information in the white spaces below. All responses (except signatures) must be typed; no hand-written forms will be accepted. See the guidance document posted with this form on the Division of Procurement Services website (Forms page) for additional instructions.

PART I: OVERVIEW

Department Office/Division/Program:		Department of Economic and Community Development		
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:		Martha Bentley, Manager, Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development		
(If applicable) Department Reference #:				
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)	\$ 75,000	Advantage CT / RQS #:	CT 19A 20200609*3819	
CONTRACT	Proposed Start Date:	June 5, 2020	Proposed End Date:	June 30, 2023
AMENDMENT	Original Start Date:		Effective Date:	
	Previous End Date:		New End Date:	
GRANT	Project Start Date:		Grant Start Date:	
	Project End Date:		Grant End Date:	
Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State:		Startup Space, Dunedin, Florida		
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Community Super Hub (State of Maine) on the Startup Space Platform COVID-19 specific resource information, curated daily for as long as it is needed provided for Maine businesses Resource Mapping and Listing of Entrepreneurship Support Organizations (ESO) in Maine ESO onboarding and training to connect various organizations in the ecosystem Unlimited licenses for individual users as part of Community Hub 20 hours of admin support per month to manage platform and other hub activities 		

PART II: JUSTIFICATION FOR VENDOR SELECTION

Mark an "X" before the justification(s) that applies to this request. (Check all that apply.)

	A. Competitive Process		G. Grant
	B. Amendment		H. State Statute/Agency Directed
X	C. Single Source/Unique Vendor		I. Federal Agency Directed

State of Maine Procurement Justification Form

	D. Proprietary/Copyright/Patents		J. Willing and Qualified
	E. Emergency		K. Client Choice
	F. University Cooperative Project	XX	L. Other Authorization

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Please respond to ALL of the following:

1. Provide a more detailed description and explain the need for the goods, services or grant to supplement the response in Part I.

DECD's Office of Business Development seeks to develop a stronger system of Resource Navigation for Maine's companies and entrepreneurs. We currently serve as a source of information through Business Answers, which is largely restricted to information on state permitting and the very nuts and bolts of establishing a business in Maine. We routinely hear from businesses that they are unaware of the many resources and programs available or they do not understand which ones are best suited to their individual needs. The current DECD website, although award-winning and an improvement upon previous versions, does not enable businesses to learn about or access resources in a way that is interactive or tailored to their business maturity, industry, size, or location. DECD has largely relied on lists provided through the Maine SBDC information as the resource navigation option for Maine business and our analysis leads us to conclude that we could improve on both Business Answers and the reliance on SBDC.

Based on extensive research, we have identified important design elements and have selected the Startup Space platform as a uniquely appropriate solution for this effort. We have consulted with InforME team and been told that InforME cannot perform this scope of work due to the unique nature. We are working with InforME to improve the current Business Answers web presence and the two projects will dovetail together well to accomplish the overall project goals around Navigation system improvements.

The elements of Startup Space that make the Service uniquely appropriate are:

- Platform is available in an easy-to-use desktop and mobile application;
- The State would be a "SuperHub" which provides us with six "sub-hubs" that can divide resource information however we choose to break out those six sub-hubs (geography, industry, business maturity or size, activity, etc.);
- Service provides unlimited licenses as part of a Community Hub (anyone in Maine who wants to use it can);
- Contract provides 20 hours a month of admin support to maintain data integrity, manage platform, train and troubleshoot;
- Data ownership is retained by license holder (us);
- Startup Space has contracts in other States and has experience with and meets all ADA compliance requirements.

Other elements of our Design that Startup Space meets include:

- Complements and doesn't duplicate information within the current Business Answers database;
- Recognizes different market segments of support system (for example - type of business, maturity of effort, geography, customer, business model);
- Provides more tailored information based on market segmentation;
- Dovetails with overall revamp design that allows different modalities and access points to get to same information;
- Comprehensive;
- Easy to find online and linked to by our network of resource partners;
- Uses ratings to help us assess system effectiveness and potential future enhancements, not to mention a better understanding of our business clients and service provision;
- Lives outside the State's website to be nimble and responsive to market and available technology changes in the market;

State of Maine Procurement Justification Form

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- Has a feedback loop built into contract;
- Catalogues and takes advantage of what has already been developed and builds on it;
- Because it is a globally-used platform, it already includes appropriate out of state resources if applicable, such as industry-specific accelerator programs or pitch competitions held in other geographic areas.

COVID-19 immediate need: Startup Space has developed, using its same platform backend, a searchable, translatable, curated COVID-19 resource webpage that will be available within a week to 10 days of starting this project. This page is a critical need for Maine, as we have no searchable on-line data base of information kept up to date on a daily basis of resources for Maine's businesses. Startup Space site allows us to have this daily information available in three additional languages, a feature we cannot provide currently using the PDF version of updates on our website. In addition, the link for this data base can be made available to other Maine resource providers to make access easy and widespread – in both a desktop and app version.

2. Provide a brief justification for the selected vendor to supplement the response in Part II.

For the COVID-19 searchable resource page, Start Space's option is unique and the only solution available on an immediate and cost-effective basis. The addition of the information being curated daily, pulling local, state and national resources for Maine companies, and the ability for the information to be immediately translated into three additional languages of our choice, makes Startup Space unique.

The overall elements of Startup Space that make the Service uniquely appropriate are:

- Platform is available in an easy-to-use desktop and mobile application;
- The State would be a "SuperHub" which provides us with six "sub-hubs" that can divide resource information however we choose to break out those six sub-hubs (geography, industry, business maturity or size, activity, etc.);
- Service provides unlimited licenses as part of a Community Hub (anyone in Maine who wants to use it can);
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3. Explain how the negotiated costs or rates are fair and reasonable; or how the funding was allocated to grantee.

This project is a combination of a pilot project and an immediate need project due to COVID-19. The contract is a three-year contract at \$25,000 per year. This rate is well under the rates proposed by other vendors explored for the resource navigation project and now includes additional work and technical support to curate and manage a resource for COVID-19 response for Maine's small and early stage businesses. The three-year window allows us to get through the current need for COVID-19 related resources and build on the use of the platform for that purpose to then improve the overall product for Maine companies. Other vendors explored were three times the upfront cost and did not provide the ongoing technical and content support. Startup Space is truly unique in this marketplace.

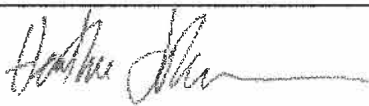
State of Maine Procurement Justification Form

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

4. Describe the plan for future competition for the goods or services.

Startup Space and its competitors in this entrepreneurial resource navigation space are in an emerging market. After this initial three-year pilot is complete, we will re-evaluate and potentially go out to bid for the service. It is also possible that we will not need to continue after the three years if the platform is adopted more universally throughout Maine.

PART IV: APPROVALS

Signature of requesting Department's Commissioner (or designee):	<i>By signing below, I signify that I approve of this procurement request.</i>		
			
Printed Name:	Heather Johnson, Commissioner	Date:	6/1/2020
Signature of DAFS Procurement Official:	DocuSigned by: <i>Justin Franzose</i>		
Printed Name:	AEED9C7B3A8044E... Justin Franzose	Date:	6/17/2020