



PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION FORM (PJF)

This form must accompany all contract requests and sole source requisitions (RQS) over \$10,000 submitted to the Office of State 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 Procurement Services intranet site (Forms page) for additional instructions.

PART I: OVERVIEW			
Department Office/Division/Program:	DHHS / OFI / HOPE Program		
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:	Jennifer Levesque / Nicole Mitchell		
(If applicable) Department Reference #:	OFI-24-003A		
Agency Department Code:	10A	Advantage CT / RQS #:	CT-10A-20231012000000001093
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)	Amend: \$312,500.00 Revised: \$2,812,500.00		
CONTRACT	Proposed/Original Start Date:	1/1/2024	Proposed/Most Recent End Date: 12/31/2025
AMENDMENT	New Effective Date:	1/1/2026	New End Date (if Applicable): 03/31/2026
GRANT	Project Start Date:		Grant Start Date:
	Project End Date:		Grant End Date:
Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State:	Jobs for Maine's Graduates Augusta, ME		
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:	Student navigator services for HOPE/PaS programs		

PART II: JUSTIFICATION FOR VENDOR SELECTION			
Check the box below for the justification(s) that applies to this request. (Check all that apply.)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Competitive Process	<input type="checkbox"/>	G. Grant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B. Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	H. State Statute/Agency Directed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C. Single Source/Unique Vendor	<input type="checkbox"/>	I. Federal Agency Directed
<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Proprietary/Copyright/Patents	<input type="checkbox"/>	J. Willing and Qualified
<input type="checkbox"/>	E. Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	K. Client Choice
<input type="checkbox"/>	F. Higher Education Cooperative Project	<input type="checkbox"/>	L. Other Authorization

Please respond to ALL of the questions in the following sections.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

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

The purpose of this amendment is to extend services for 3 months while the Department finalizes an RFP for the service.

The Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE), under 22 MRSA 1054-C, and Parents as Scholars (PaS), under 22 MSRA §3790, must provide campus-based student support and navigation to program participants to promote program completion and student success.

OFI's HOPE and PaS programs are workforce development programs that offer participants a package of supports that integrate financial assistance for costs related to education with individualized guidance provided by student navigators. Providing these supports, the HOPE and PaS programs aim to increase the persistence and attainment rate of Maine parents and specified relatives who are in their postsecondary training and education endeavors.

Low-income parenting students have unique needs compared to other students enrolled in postsecondary education. They have less time overall to spend on their academic obligations and are more like to work at least part-time. They are more likely to withdraw due to financial crisis or dependent care obligations. Retention rates and grades improve when low-income parenting students are provided wrap-around services that include both financial supports and individualized guidance and navigation. (<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/04/07/why-expanded-student-supports-can-improve-community-college-outcomes-and-boost-skill-attainment/>). Offering student navigators is essential to operation of HOPE and Pas programs.

Student navigators will perform critical functions as an extension of the HOPE and Pas programs. Statewide navigator services will be offered to all HOPE and PaS participants at no cost to HOPE or PaS participants. Navigators will provide student-centered services, will take a relationship-based approach, and will offer individualized supports to focus on dropout/stop-out prevention.

2. Provide a brief justification for the selected vendor to supplement the response in Part II. Reference the solicitation (RFP/RFA/RFQ) number if applicable.

The Department published the Student Navigators RFP on July 18, 2021. There were no responses to the RFP.

JMG is the only educational non-profit organization that provides a continuum of support to students from middle school, throughout high school and onto postsecondary education and career pathways. JMG staff have first-hand knowledge of challenges faced by low-income students. JMG has the infrastructure, experience and vision alignment to extend the reach and deepen the impact of the HOPE and PaS programs for students.

When JMG extended its model to postsecondary education, the organization focused efforts on persistence toward a degree and/or credential of value. Parenting students with low incomes often

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

migrate from one pathway to another: from college, to short-term occupational training, to jobs, based on a variety of life circumstances and challenges. (*Parent Learners: Insights for Innovation* - Horn, Salisbury, Ashburn, Schiener, & Pizer, 2018, p 3.) The ability to keep parenting students engaged and to make certain they persist, is critical during these transitions. JMG is well-suited to handle the needs of HOPE and PaS students as they change education plans and transfer between programs of study. JMG can follow students throughout the course of their education, regardless of the student's choice of higher education institution or program of study.

Additionally, the Maine State Legislature enacted Public Law 466: "An Act to Improve Student Retention in Maine's Postsecondary Institutions", which designated JMG as a formal partner of Maine's public university and community college systems. JMG's current efforts provide campus-based services statewide and allow JMG unimpeded access to Maine's public college and university campuses. Access includes extended relationships with faculty, staff and campus departments, as well as, easy access to student records.

With JMG staff integrated in both the schools and communities of their student body, and having first-hand knowledge of students' challenges, JMG has specific knowledge about appropriate resources available to meet student needs, both on campus and within the students' communities. JMG has well-developed, relevant, local networks of resources for struggling students. With JMG networks already in place, JMG can deliver services to HOPE and PaS students in the intended, rapid-response manner.

This combination of JMG's existing practices, core programmatic elements, and student services delivered in their postsecondary model, makes JMG in alignment with the fundamentals of the HOPE and PaS programs. This alignment will allow for rapid advancement of the delivery of student navigator services.

3. Explain how the negotiated costs or rates are fair and reasonable; or how the funding was allocated to grantee.

Research of similar services delivered in Maine to similar student populations reveals that the negotiated costs are fair and reasonable. Maine's TRiO Support Services programs, located at college campuses throughout the state, mirror the type of service of that JMG student navigators will provide. In 2020-21, the average cost per student served for the 2020-2021 academic year was \$1,597.96 (<https://ope.ed.gov/programs/maped/storymaps/trio/>).

The Department previously contracted with Maine Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) for HOPE student navigator services (OFI-20-003). The average annual cost per student served was \$1,324.77 for 2020-2021

A comparison of compensation for student navigators at Maine Community College System (MCCS), University of Maine System (UMS), Maine Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) and JMG found consistency in salaries. Earnings ranged from an average of \$46,000.00 at MCCS, \$40,000.00 at UMS, \$41,000.00 at MEOC, and \$45,000.00 at JMG.

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

The Department is currently developing RFP OFI20251 for this service and anticipates awarding the service with a contract start date of 04/01/2026.

PART IV: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) / MAINE JOBS & RECOVERY PLAN (MJRP)

Does this request utilize ARPA/MJRP funds?

Yes, MJRP funds (023) – If Yes, please attach the approved Business Case(s).

Yes, ARPA funds (025) or (026) – If Yes, please be aware of the requirements from awarding federal agencies.

No – If No, proceed to Part V.

PART V: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (COI); CONTRACT WITH THE STATE

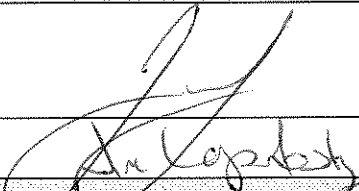
Maine law contains Conflict of Interest statutes directed to State Departments, State Officers, and Employees Generally under MRS Title 5, §18 and §18-A, in harmony with MRS Title 17, §3104.

The requesting department's signatory affirms, understands, and acknowledges Maine's Conflict of Interest statutes and, in accordance with those statutes and to the best of their knowledge, has determined that no conflict of interest exists at the time of this contract, renewal, or amendment.

PART VI: APPROVALS

Governor/Department Commissioner or Designee

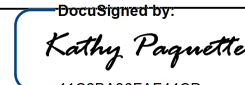
1. The signature below indicates approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department's Commissioner (or designee):		
Typed Name:		Date: 24-Nov-25

2. Additional signature required **ONLY if box E (Emergency) is selected in PART II**. The signature below indicates approval by the Department's Commissioner, or the designee specifically authorized to approve emergency procurement requests.

Signature of requesting Department's Commissioner (or designee):		
Typed Name:		Date:

****OSPS Section Only****

Signature of DAFS Procurement Official:	<small>DocuSigned by:</small> 	
Typed Name:	Kathy Paquette	Date: 1/6/2026