



## PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION FORM (PJF)

This form must accompany all contract requests and sole source requisitions (RQS) over \$5,000 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:	Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Business Development		
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:	Charlotte Mace, Director, Office of Business Development		
(If applicable) Department Reference #:			
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)	\$ 50,000	Advantage CT / RQS #:	CT19A20250205*1864
CONTRACT	Proposed Start Date:	3/1/2025	Proposed End Date: 2/28/2026
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:	Central Maine Growth Council Waterville, ME		
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:	Provide improved rural economic development services, investment readiness, and essential resources to rural startups.		

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 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. University 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 Central Maine Growth Council (CMGC) will aim to bridge critical gaps in rural Maine’s entrepreneurial ecosystem by enhancing investment readiness, financial literacy, and access to resources. Their proposed programs will directly support over 20 founders annually through mentorship, financial training, and connections to investors and incentives.

2. Provide a brief justification for the selected vendor to supplement the response in Part II. Reference the RFP number, if applicable.

CMGC, together with its innovative arm Dirigo Labs (DL), is at the forefront of driving rural economic development and fortifying Maine’s startup ecosystem. Through a series of strategic public-private collaborations, CMGC works to address the critical barriers that rural entrepreneurs face—limited access to capital, mentorship, technical assistance, and infrastructure. By overcoming these challenges, CMGC empowers rural founders, enabling them to create sustainable businesses and drive long-term economic growth and inclusivity across Maine.

CMGC stands out due to its distinctive combination of programming, mentorship, finance consulting, and specialized rural technical assistance, making it uniquely positioned to lead these transformative efforts. CMGC and Dirigo Labs are the only providers that can deliver these services to this central Maine region.

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

The Office of Business Development (OBD) conducted several meetings with Dirigo Labs to learn about their work specific to rural Maine, comparing their programs with existing State programs to avoid duplication. Cost estimates were based on previous cohorts that Dirigo Labs has launched at their facility, as well as the extensive experience of the regional economic development group, Central Maine Growth Council. Additionally, OBD has previously deployed funding for similar programs, including its Coworking Developing Fund grants and various Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan programs. The costs were determined to be fair and reasonable based on the overall value proposition and the specific metrics and Key Performance Indicators mutually agreed upon between DECD and CMGC.

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

If this program proves successful, it is possible (though unlikely) that another provider could compete for these services. Economic development is quite regional and given that CMGC is the primary economic development group within the greater Waterville area, another group is unlikely to be able to provide these services. Also, Dirigo Labs is a unique supporter of entrepreneurship within rural Maine. There is not another entrepreneurial ecosystem provider in this area of the State with the capabilities to support business start-ups.

**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) – If Yes, please be aware of the requirements from awarding federal agencies.

No – If No, proceed to Part V.


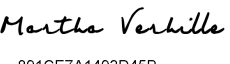
**PART V: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (COI); CONTRACT WITH THE STATE**

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 signatory understands and acknowledges Maine’s Conflict of Interest statutes.

**PART VI: APPROVALS**

The signatures below indicate approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department’s Commissioner (or designee):			
Typed Name:	Heather Johnson, Commissioner	Date:	02/05/2025
Signature of DAFS Procurement Official:	DocuSigned by:  891CE7A1493D45B...		
Typed Name:	Martha verhille	Date:	2/7/2025