



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
 STATE OF MAINE

PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION FORM (PJF)

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 intranet site (Forms page) for additional instructions.

PART I: OVERVIEW			
Department Office/Division/Program:		Education/Office of Federal Programs	
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:		Janette Kirk, Chief of Federal Programs	
(If applicable) Department Reference #:			
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)	\$ 9,938,303	Advantage CT / RQS #:	20201218*1904
CONTRACT	Proposed Start Date:		Proposed End Date:
AMENDMENT	Original Start Date:	2/21/2021	Effective Date:
	Previous End Date:	6/30/2022	New End Date:
GRANT	Project Start Date:		Grant Start Date:
	Project End Date:		Grant End Date:
Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State:		NWEA 121 NW Everett Street, Portland, OR 97209	
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:		NWEA has developed Pre-K–12 assessments and professional learning offerings to support student learning.	

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 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 direct response to the national emergency as declared by the President of the United States under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and our communities and subsequent civil state of emergency by Governor Janet Mills within the state of Maine, Maine remained steadfast in a student-centered approach to meet human needs. As the financial toll of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt across the state and, as schools strive to implement a variety of instructional options, it is clear Maine must make tough decisions regarding the utilization of precious state and federal dollars.

As a result, of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the impact to student learning, educators statewide continue to ascertain levels of student performance including the identification of current student strengths and areas of challenge to pivot, revise and implement varied instructional strategies to meet student's needs on an individualized basis. Increased technical assistance and support regarding the interpretation of the results to make such immediate adjustments is also required to continue.

Maine shifted to the implementation of the NWEA assessment statewide, providing immediate and actionable data. All 278 of public Maine's School Administrative Units (SAUs) are now implementing the NWEA assessment a minimum of twice per year. Reverting back to a statewide summative assessment in grades 3-8, 2nd & 3rd year of high school with a single administration during the spring of 2023 will not provide the immediate and actionable data educators require and are now accustomed to inform such immediate instructional decision making, and will further exacerbate disruption, provide inconsistency and an additional burden educators, students, SAUs in the midst of an already overburdened and significantly challenged education system.

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

Maine has experienced four (4) assessments over the course of the past eight (8) years (NECAP, Smarter Balanced, eMPowerME/SAT, and NWEA). In order to support instruction and curricular level decision-making, educators, school and SAU leadership require consistency within an ever-evolving education system to provide continuity of data. Maine's Model of School Support (accountability system) required under the Every Students Succeeds Act of 2015, requires consistent data measures and therefore a consistent assessment to identify schools eligible for comprehensive, targeted and additional targeted supports to address experienced challenges. The deviation from an assessment solution currently in place, not only provides a significant disruption and burden to SAUs, school and educators, but again, impacts the availability and consistency of state assessment data, poses challenges to conduct trends analysis and supports and will impede the development and availability of longitudinal data. Additionally, state assessments are traditionally administered in the spring – there would be insufficient time to onboard all 278 public school units and stand up yet another new assessment and platform with the necessary and required professional learning. To deviate would result in new schools being identified for support under Maine's accountability model (Maine's Model of School Support) using assessment data from an unfamiliar assessment which would subsequently impact the credibility of the Department, and the model, while also doing harm to schools in their respective communities.

Prior to the emergency contract, approximately one hundred and twenty (120) Maine school districts utilized NWEA as a local interim assessment in Maine school districts and/or schools with over 78,509 students participating in administration. A large proportion of Maine SAUs were familiar with the NWEA assessment

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

administration which included a shorter administration time supporting minimal disruption to classroom instruction, and increased opportunities for interim administration, usually three (3) times during the school year.

Upon implementation of the emergency contract for the NWEA assessment, all two hundred and seventy-eight (278) public school units have participated in the spring 2021 administration, fall 2021 administration, and will participate in the upcoming spring 2022 administration in May across grades 3 -8 and third (3rd) year of high school. The assessment was available to SAUs to utilize at the second (2nd) year of high school level, per SAU request. SAU survey data indicated over 75% of Maine SAUs did see inherent value in the availability of an additional third data point and were planning to or had already scheduled a winter 2022 administration. This increased data point, provides three (3) consistent interim measures outlining student and achievement, growth and suggested next steps for learning concepts that are students specific throughout the school year. NWEA continues to provide assessment options and additional tools that can be administered across grades K -12. The availability of assessment tools in grades other than those required to meet federal requirements (grades 3 – 8 and during the high school grade span) provides much needed additional longitudinal data within schools and districts and educational cohorts of students to inform grade level, grade span, school and district level curriculum and instruction decision-making. During the administrations between the spring of 2021 and spring of 2022, students in grades 3-8, and 2nd and 3rd year of high school or approximately 104,000 students will have participated in the state assessment.

Moving forward, Maine is continuing with the NWEA contract, however, will administer a more formalized through-year approach solution. This approach continues implementing all that educators and district leadership are familiar with and value including but not limited to: assessment structure, frequency of implementation, adaptivity of the assessment, immediate access to data and reports, and reduced testing time - the ability to administer in a single school period (within 45 minutes). The through-year approach brings Maine into further align with Federal requirements under section 1111(b)(2) related to state assessment requirements. The provision of through year interim assessments in combination with an alignment to summative assessment data ensures the readily available data used to inform instructional decision making continues to be available at multiple points throughout the school year, provides projected performance data to support educators in anticipating student performance later in the school year, and summative data providing end of grade information. Administering this through year approach statewide that SAUs are already familiar eases the burden on schools and SAUs regarding student rostering, assigning of accommodations, required professional learning regarding platform navigation, and ongoing supports related to data-analysis. SAUs are already familiar with the RIT scale used within the assessment and the utilization of the reports to interpret the data to not only inform instruction, but also communicate student progress with family members.

NWEA is a research-based, not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by creating assessment solutions that measure growth and achievement and provide insights to help tailor instruction. For 40 years, NWEA has developed Pre-K–12 assessments and professional learning offerings to help support students in their optimal learning paths. NWEA is utilized by educators in more than 9,500 schools, districts, and education agencies in 145 countries.

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

Other summative assessments administered during one single administration during the school year, that do not provide an opportunity to inform classroom and instructional decision-making have a similar associated cost to the NWEA Through-Year assessment in which the Department would like to engage and move forward.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Given the continued need for this data to be in the hands of educators statewide to inform on-going classroom based instructional decision making, there is insufficient time for a complicated or logistically challenging and laborious on-boarding process – the on-boarding, implementation and administration of such an assessment must be expedient and smooth. Therefore, using a tool that is already known, familiar and utilized by all Maine schools and SAUs requires minimal technical assistance, augmented professional learning, ensuring a much more efficient, smoother and streamlined onboarding process. The costs outlined below were derived from a proposal outlining costs associated with embedded professional learning, standard-setting & benchmarking processes and protocols, licensing fees, psychometric review etc. These costs were deemed reasonable for the scope of the assessment and the number of students participating.

Year 1 associated costs of approximately \$5,101,473.00

Year 2 associated costs of approximately \$4,836,830 and

Year 3 optional renewal costs of approximately \$4,817,997 are lower than initial year costs due to standard setting/benchmarking being conducted and remain lower than other known summative assessments.

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

The Department continues to examine innovative approaches to assessment ensuring transference of learning and authentic opportunities. As these conversations continue, as does the opportunity of future competition of goods and services.

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

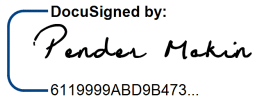
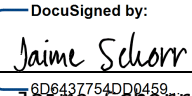
Does this request utilize ARPA/MJRP funds?

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

No – If No, proceed to Part V.

PART V: APPROVALS

The signatures below indicate approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department's Commissioner (or designee):	 6119999ABD9B473...		
Typed Name:	Pender Makin, Commissioner	Date:	6/16/2022
Signature of DAFS Procurement Official:	 6D8437754DD0459...		
Typed Name:	Jaime Schorr	Date:	6/28/2022

Certificate Of Completion

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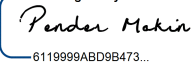
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