



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:		The Department of the Secretary of State, Office of Human Resources	
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:		Matthew Caldwell, Director of Organizational Development	
(If applicable) Department Reference #:			
Agency Department Code:	29B	Advantage CT / RQS #:	20251118000000000842
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)	\$54,000		
CONTRACT	Proposed/Original Start Date:	1/1/2026	Proposed/Most Recent End Date: 5/1/2026
AMENDMENT	New Effective Date:		New End Date (if Applicable):
GRANT	Project Start Date:		Grant Start Date:
	Project End Date:		Grant End Date:
Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State:		Skillpath Enterprise Solutions	
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:		Skillpath Leadership & Development Proposal	

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. 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 Office of the Secretary of State seeks to partner with SkillPath Enterprise Solutions to deliver a comprehensive Leadership Academy designed to enhance leadership capacity and professional growth across all divisions of the Department. This initiative will culminate in a Leadership Certificate Program recognizing participants who complete the full series of courses.

The Leadership Academy curriculum will consist of targeted, instructor-led learning experiences that develop the core competencies essential for effective leadership within state government.

Program topics include:

- Foundations of leadership and leading without formal authority
- Building emotional intelligence and professional self-awareness
- Communicating with tact, diplomacy, and professionalism
- Fostering respect, equity, and collaboration in the workplace
- Critical thinking and strategic problem-solving
- Time and task management for performance and productivity

Each course is designed to reinforce essential leadership behaviors, such as accountability, communication, and collaboration, while cultivating a work culture grounded in respect, understanding, and continuous improvement.

Need for Services

The Department of the Secretary of State faces an evolving workforce landscape, with many experienced employees approaching retirement and a growing number of new leaders assuming supervisory and management responsibilities. Additionally, several current leaders have not had access to formal leadership training opportunities.

Implementing this Leadership Academy is a proactive investment in the long-term strength and stability of the organization. The program will:

- Prepare emerging leaders to assume greater responsibilities and ensure continuity of leadership.
- Strengthen leadership effectiveness by enhancing communication, emotional intelligence, and decision-making skills.
- Promote engagement and retention by investing in employee growth and career development, reducing turnover and associated costs.
- Enhance public service delivery through skilled, confident, and empathetic leadership practices that reflect the Department's values.

This initiative directly supports the Secretary of State's commitment to building a high-performing, collaborative, and service-oriented workforce. Partnering with SkillPath Enterprise Solutions ensures access to an established provider of enterprise-level professional development, offering consistent, high-quality instruction that will have a lasting impact on leadership capability and organizational excellence.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

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.

SkillPath Enterprise Solutions is the only vendor capable of providing the specific training services required for the Department of the Secretary of State's Leadership Academy initiative. The Department has an existing contractual relationship with SkillPath and previously partnered with the vendor in April to deliver a department-wide training on emotional intelligence for all leadership staff. The proposed Leadership Academy represents the second phase of that development effort, building directly on the concepts, curriculum, and instructional framework established through the initial SkillPath training.

SkillPath is uniquely positioned to continue this work because:

- The Leadership Academy is a proprietary, integrated program offered exclusively through SkillPath Enterprise Solutions. It is the only program identified through market research that provides a comprehensive, certificate-based leadership development series tailored for enterprise-level public organizations.
- SkillPath maintains detailed participant data, feedback, and assessment results from the Department's April training, allowing for seamless progression and continuity in content delivery, evaluation, and measurable outcomes.
- Their instructional design, learning materials, and facilitator expertise are built on a consistent methodology that ensures alignment between prior and forthcoming training phases, which no other vendor can replicate without significant duplication of effort or cost.
- As an established state-approved vendor, SkillPath has a proven record of compliance with state procurement standards and a demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality, cost-effective professional development to a statewide workforce.

Market research indicates that while other training providers offer general leadership courses, SkillPath is the only provider able to deliver this customized, multi-course Leadership Academy as a single, cohesive program for all leaders within the Department simultaneously. Selecting another vendor would disrupt program continuity, increase cost, and diminish the impact of the training investment already made.

For these reasons, SkillPath Enterprise Solutions is determined to be the sole source provider capable of meeting the Department's leadership development objectives for this phase of the Leadership Academy initiative. Attached is the documentation supporting this.

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

The total cost for the Leadership Academy program through SkillPath Enterprise Solutions is \$54,000, which will provide comprehensive, instructor-led training for approximately 110 leaders across the Department of the Secretary of State. The program consists of twelve sessions as part of a structured, certificate-based Leadership Academy that builds progressively across multiple leadership competencies.

This equates to an average cost of approximately \$491 per participant, or about \$45 per session per participant. The pricing includes instructional design, professional facilitation, participant materials, assessments, and program completion tracking.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Based on market research and cost comparisons with similar enterprise-level leadership development programs, this rate is fair and reasonable. Comparable programs offered by national training vendors and higher education institutions typically range from \$600 to \$1,200 per participant for programs of similar duration and scope.

The negotiated rate also reflects SkillPath's existing contractual relationship with the Department and the State of Maine, as well as the vendor's previous successful delivery of the Department's Emotional Intelligence training earlier this year. This continuity allows for volume-based pricing and ensures consistency in curriculum design, learning methodology, and facilitation.

In addition to the immediate training benefits, this program also represents a strategic investment in long-term sustainability. During these twelve sessions, the Department's internal trainers and learning and development staff will participate alongside SkillPath facilitators to collect content, observe instructional methods, and begin developing internal capacity to deliver future leadership training independently. Through this collaboration, the Department will work with SkillPath to co-develop a customized Leadership Academy curriculum for the Secretary of State's Office, enabling future cohorts of leaders to receive the same high-quality, standardized training without the ongoing need to contract externally.

Funding for this initiative has been allocated to support workforce and leadership development consistent with the Secretary of State's strategic goal of building a high-performing, engaged, and service-oriented organization. No additional costs beyond the agreed contract amount are anticipated.

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

This program is structured to build internal capacity, as Department trainers and learning and development staff will participate alongside SkillPath facilitators to collect content, observe instructional methods, and develop the Department's own Leadership Academy curriculum.

Once the Department has internal capability to deliver this program independently, all future leadership development services will be subject to competitive procurement in accordance with Maine state procurement rules, including formal market research, solicitation of proposals, and evaluation of vendor qualifications, pricing, and program offerings. This ensures that future cohorts of leaders will continue to receive high-quality training while maintaining a fully competitive and transparent process.

The current sole-source engagement with SkillPath is a limited, one-time exception, fully justified by the need to maintain continuity, leverage prior investment, and create a sustainable, internally managed program for future leaders.

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).

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, ARPA funds (025) or (026) – If Yes, please be aware of the requirements from awarding federal agencies.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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

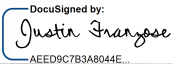
1. The signature below indicates approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department’s Commissioner (or designee):			
Typed Name:	Bruno Intero	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date 11/25/25

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:			
Typed Name:	Justin Franzose	Date:	11/25/2025