



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES  
**OFFICE OF STATE PROCUREMENT SERVICES**  
 STATE OF MAINE

**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:		Maine Judicial Branch, Administrative Office of the Courts	
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:		Caroline Jova, Family Division Manager	
(If applicable) Department Reference #:			
Agency Department Code:	40A	Advantage CT / RQS #:	20251210*1358
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)		\$ 117,500	
CONTRACT	Proposed/Original Start Date:	<b>4/2/2026</b>	Proposed/Most Recent End Date: <b>4/3/2026</b>
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:		National Institute for Trial Advocacy	
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:		Online trial skills training for child welfare stakeholders	

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 Justice for Children Task Force would like to host a virtual litigation skills-based training focusing on direct and cross examination of witnesses, as well as introduction of evidence and impeachment of witnesses for child protection practitioners to hone their litigation skills. To maximize interaction for this skills-based training, the subgroup would like the training to consist of four four-hour, online trial skills programs. Two of these sessions would focus on direct and cross examination and two sessions would focus on exhibits and impeachment. The training would be capped at 144 participants, with up to 72 participants in each individual session in breakout rooms with a 6:1 student to faculty ratio.

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 National Institute for Trial Advocacy (NITA) is the national gold standard for implementation of a litigation skills-based training curriculum. NITA is a 501(1)(c)(3) that operates as a service organization made up of a volunteer network of lawyers, judges, and esteemed advocates across the globe. Since 1971, NITA has provided training in the legal advocacy skills that allow the advancement of people, the legal profession, and the pursuit of justice. NITA's mission is to improve the quality of advocacy in the nation's courtrooms. NITA has been providing online training for over 10 years.

While NITA programs include faculty lecture and demonstration, NITA's programs are distinguished by a learning-by-doing teaching philosophy. The average student/NITA faculty ration is 6:1. NITA guarantees quality guidance, instruction, and individualized critique. In addition, NITA faculty members demonstrate specific advocacy skills and techniques throughout each training. Faculty are respected judges, practicing attorneys, and professors who understand the need for applying skills and persuading fact finders in real life setting. All NITA faculty have a Juris Doctor (JD) from a school accredited by the American Bar Association and admission in one or more state bars.

The four four-hour, online trial skills programs requested by the Continuing Education Subgroup of the Justice for Children Task Force will necessitate 24 NITA faculty plus administrative staff to implement. Prior to the training, each participant receives an extensive NITA-proprietary case file, as well as on-demand video links to review for the training. Participants are expected to an extensive amount of work prior to the training session to best utilize the learning-by-doing teaching philosophy. During the NITA training, participants practice skills and receive feedback from the faculty on ways to improve the performance. This form of individualized critique gives the participant valuable feedback on technique, style, and strategy in a comfortable setting.

NITA allows the opportunity for the MJB to customize each training to be offered. Specifically, MJB staff will review and approve all training materials, training program schedules, and select the appropriate NITA faculty from a diverse group of over 1,000 individuals. NITA, in collaboration with the MJB, will create and implement post-session evaluations to assess performance and practice changes.

Based on research into litigation skills-based training, NITA is uniquely positioned to offer this skills-based training--there is no other local or national organization that can offer the same kind of curriculum, materials, and faculty resources to participants for these many participants in a two-day period. In 2021, NITA was approved to provide skills-based training to child welfare practitioners pursuant to a sole source justification.

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

NITA proposes to provide 16 hours of training that involves 24 NITA faculty plus administrative staff to plan and implement. The cost also includes all materials needed for all 144 attendees for pre-session preparation

**PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

and materials to be used during the sessions. All aspects of the curriculum are customized to the MJB’s specific requests and desires.

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

The Maine Judicial Branch intends to again offer an in-person conference in 2027. That conference would not follow an interactive format focused on trial skills, but rather provide training on other topics that are important to child welfare practitioners. The conference venue and speakers will be selected through the RFP process.

**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

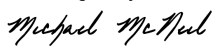
1. The signature below indicates approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting Department’s Commissioner (or designee):			
Typed Name:	Connor Smith	Date:	12/11/2025

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:	DocuSigned by: 		
Typed Name:	7008796FB36A449... Michael McNeil	Date:	12/23/2025

NOI 1220251108 12/23-12/30