

Mississippi State University
Notice of Proposed Sole Source Purchase
234-111

Mississippi State University anticipates purchasing the item(s) listed below as a sole source purchase. Anyone objecting to this purchase shall follow the procedures outlined below.

1. Commodity or commodities to be purchased (make, model, description):

software subscription for the Program Evaluation and Reporting System (PEARS) web-based data management platform for tracking, managing, evaluating, and reporting statewide activities for the Mississippi State University Extension Office of Nutrition Education Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). This subscription agreement provides access and support for PEARS SNAP-Ed features.

2. Explanation of the need to be fulfilled by this item(s), how is it unique from all other options, and why it is the only one that can meet the specific needs of the department:

PEARS is a web-based data management system. It is offered as Software as a Service (SaaS) tool built specifically around the evaluation and reporting needs of SNAP-Ed programs. PEARS tracks details about educator activities such as:

Direct and indirect education interventions

Policies, systems and environmental (PSE) change efforts

Partnerships and coalitions

Social marketing campaigns

Success stories

Administrators can monitor progress and quickly pull data to assess impact and promote a culture of continual improvement. Additional tools streamline annual funding agency reports required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), including at-a-glance visual dashboards and indicator metric tables. This includes the new SNAP-Ed national annual plan and report system, N-PEARS, also developed and maintained by Canopy. PEARS is the only system that will directly integrate with N-PEARS to streamline aggregating data into the required annual report.

3. Name of company/individual selling the item and why that source is the only possible source that can provide the required item(s):

PEARS was originally built at Kansas State University and is now maintained and updated by Canopy, a Public Benefit Company (www.canopyteam.org). The team at Canopy hosts and maintains PEARs, makes regular updates in coordination with a SNAP-Ed advisory committee, and provides ongoing technical support and training.

4. Estimated cost of item(s) and an explanation why the amount to be expended is considered reasonable:

The first- and second-year software subscription is \$34,000 per year. Year 1 (10/13/2024 – 10/12/2025) will be invoiced upon signing the Master Subscription Agreement and Year 2 (10/13/2025 – 10/12/2026) will be invoiced 9/13/2025. The subscription agreement renews annually beginning on October 13, 2026, unless cancelled. Renewals will be invoiced one month prior to renewal date and will include a 2.5% annual increase for ongoing system enhancements. The fees associated with the subscription agreement include the following PEARs services:

Initial organization-specific setup of PEARs, including a one-time import of state-specific settings, and training for general and administrative users via webinar.

Access to platform and online documentation using the latest version of Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, or Apple Safari browsers.

Telephone and email technical support for use of PEARs during normal, weekday business hours, excluding Canopy holidays.

Use of and support for SNAP-Ed features, including surveys; program activities; success stories; indirect activities; partnerships; coalitions; policies, system and environmental strategies (pse) site activities; social marketing campaigns; custom fields; administrative management tools; and related reports and exports.

Bug fixes and ongoing updates and improvements performed in collaboration with the PEARs Advisory Committee (PAC) and in alignment with SNAP-Ed reporting requirements.

5. Explanation of the efforts taken by the department to determine this is the only source and the efforts used to obtain the best possible price:

PEARS is currently used by 43 SNAP-Ed programs and to the best of our knowledge, no other software tailored to meet the program and evaluation requirements of SNAP-Ed is currently available for purchase. In addition, the software is now being offered to SNAP-Ed programs at a reduced cost due to FNS' work with Kansas State University and Canopy on N-PEARS.

Any person or entity that objects and proposes that the commodity listed is not sole source and can be provided by another person or entity shall submit a written notice to:

Jennifer Mayfield, CPPO
Interim Deputy Director of Procurement & Contracts
jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu
Subject Line must read "Sole Source Objection"

The notice shall contain a detailed explanation of why the commodity is not a sole source procurement. Appropriate documentation shall also be submitted if applicable.

If after a review of the submitted notice and documents, MSU determines that the commodity in the proposed sole source request can be provided by another person or entity, then MSU will withdraw the sole source request publication from the procurement portal website and submit the procurement of the commodity to an advertised competitive bid or selection process.

If MSU determines after review that there is only one (1) source for the required commodity, then MSU will appeal to the Public Procurement Review Board. MSU will have the burden of proving that the commodity is only provided by one (1) source.