

**Mississippi State University**  
**Notice of Proposed Sole Source Purchase**

**256-056**

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):

Engage in environmental conservation efforts and recruit interns

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:

Our NSF EPSCoR project includes a dedicated workforce development component that provides funding for interns to work in local, federal, and regional institutions. The Student Conservation Association (SCA) offers a unique combination of experience, infrastructure, and proven success in managing such internship programs. Their longstanding expertise in environmental workforce training and placement makes them uniquely qualified to fulfill this requirement, and they are the only organization capable of meeting the project's specific needs at the scale and quality required.

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

The Student Conservation Association (SCA) is the only national organization with a specialized focus on creating and managing internship opportunities specifically within environmental conservation programs. Their established networks, programmatic capacity, and long-standing expertise make them the sole source capable of providing the required services at the scope and quality needed for our project.

SCA is the only organization that:

Operates nationwide with placements in hundreds of federal, state, and local agencies.

Provides fully managed internship programs, including:

Recruitment

Screening and placement

Payroll and HR

Housing arrangements

Travel coordination

Risk management and insurance

Program tracking and reporting

Has a long-standing national contract structure with agencies like:

National Park Service

U.S. Forest Service

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Bureau of Land Management

Has over 60 years of experience and established workforce training infrastructure.

Other organizations may offer some conservation service opportunities, but none provide the same scale, logistical support, and internship-specific program model that aligns directly with the NSF EPSCoR workforce development goals

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

The Student Conservation Association (SCA), a reputable national agency, will provide services by administering the summer internship program. The cost per intern is \$18,749 for a 12-week internship. We anticipate 11 interns over the next two years, for a total estimated cost of \$206,245.

This amount is considered reasonable because it represents the full cost per participant, including wages, housing, transportation, program administration, and support services. The pricing is consistent with SCA's established national rates for similar workforce development programs.

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:

The department reviewed multiple organizations that provide internship and workforce development opportunities in environmental conservation. After evaluating available national and regional programs, it was determined that the Student Conservation Association (SCA) is the only organization with the capacity, national reach, and established infrastructure to place interns specifically in conservation-focused roles across local, regional, and federal agencies.

SCA's long-standing partnerships with federal agencies (such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and its proven experience managing large-scale internship programs make it uniquely qualified to meet the requirements of our NSF EPSCoR workforce development component.

To ensure the best possible price, the department reviewed SCA's detailed cost breakdown, confirmed that the pricing aligns with their standardized national rates, and verified that these rates cover all essential components of the program—including wages, housing, transportation, and administrative support. The comprehensive nature of these services, combined with SCA's unique qualifications, confirms that this is the most reasonable and only viable option for fulfilling the project's needs.

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

Director and CPO, Procurement & Contracts

[jmayfield@procurement.msstate.edu](mailto: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.