



# Fact Sheet

[cops.usdoj.gov](https://cops.usdoj.gov)

## Sole Source Justification

### What is “sole source” justification?

Sole source procurement or procurement by noncompetitive proposals is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source. Sole source procurements must adhere to the standards set forth in 2 C.F.R. § 200.320(c) in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, as adopted by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2 C.F.R. § 2800.101.

### When is sole source approval required by the COPS Office?

A recipient must request written approval from the COPS Office for sole source procurements in excess of \$250,000 prior to purchasing equipment, technology, or services; obligating funding for a contract; or entering into a contract with award funds. For the purchase of equipment, technology, or services under a COPS Office award, recipients must use their own documented procurement procedures that reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, as long as those requirements conform to the federal procurement

---

**An award recipient must request written approval from the COPS Office for sole source procurements in excess of \$250,000 prior to purchasing equipment, technology, or services; obligating funding for a contract; or entering into a contract with award funds.**

---

standards set forth in 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 through 2 C.F.R. § 200.326. A sole source justification should be submitted to the COPS Office if a recipient determines that the award

of a contract through a competitive process is infeasible. Recipients may conduct noncompetitive proposals (or “sole source” procurement) by procurement through solicitation from only one source when one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- The aggregate dollar amount of the acquisition of property or services does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold.
- The item or service is available from only one source.
- The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation.
- The COPS Office authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from the recipient.
- Competition is determined inadequate after solicitation of a number of sources.

Sole source procurement should be used only when competitive solicitation procedures like sealed bids or competitive proposals are not applicable to the requirements or are impractical.

### What documentation must be submitted to the COPS Office for approval of a sole source procurement?

Requests for sole source procurements of equipment, technology, or services in excess of \$250,000 must be submitted to the COPS Office in writing certifying that the award of the contract through full and open competition is infeasible. An organization may not expend award funds or drawdown reimbursements for sole source justification requests until after the sole source request has been approved by the COPS Office in writing.

The outline that follows may be helpful in preparing your agency's sole source procurement request (which should include your sole source justification) and ensuring that all of the necessary information is included.

The sole source procurement request must be signed and submitted on the recipient's organization letterhead and must include the organization's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and the award number for which approval is being sought.

The request should also include the following information.

- **Section I.** A brief description of the project, the amount to be designated for the sole source procurement, and the purpose of the contract
- **Section II.** (a) An explanation as to why it is necessary to contract in a noncompetitive manner and (b) which one (or more) of the circumstances identified here applies to the procurement transaction (include supporting information as identified under the applicable section(s)).
  1. The item or service is available from only one source.  
Please include the following:
    - Uniqueness of items or services to be procured from the proposed contractor or vendor (compatibility, patent issues, etc.)
    - How the organization determined that the item or service is available from only one source (market survey results, independent agency research, patented or proprietary system, etc.)
    - Explanation of need for contractor's expertise linked to the current project (knowledge of project management, responsiveness, experience of contractor personnel, prior work on earlier phases of project, etc.)
    - Any additional information that would support the case
  2. The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation.  
Please include the following:
    - When the contractual coverage is required by your department and why
    - Impact on project if deadlines or dates are not met

- How long it would take an alternate contractor to reach the same required level of competence (equate to dollar amounts if desired)
- Any additional information that would support the case

3. Competition is determined to be inadequate after solicitation of a number of sources.

Please include the following:

- Results of a market survey to determine competition availability; if no survey is conducted, please explain why not
- Any additional information that would support the case

- **Section III.** A budget breakdown for the subaward or procurement contract (see the Award Owner's Manual for budget requirements)
- **Section IV.** A declaration that this action or choice is in the best interest of the organization

Failure to provide all of the necessary information will delay the processing of your request. Your organization will be contacted if any of the identified information is missing or if additional supporting information is required. If the COPS Office determines that the request does not meet the standards set forth here, the request will be denied.

Please be advised that conflicts of interest are prohibited under the federal procurement standards set forth in 2 C.F.R. § 200.318(c). In addition, program funds should not be awarded to any party that is debarred or suspended from participation in federal assistance programs.

If you have any questions regarding the federal requirements that guide procurement procedures, please contact your Grant Program Specialist or Program Manager at 800-421-6770.

### Contact the COPS Office

For more information about COPS Office programs and resources, please call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770 or visit the COPS Office website at <https://cops.usdoj.gov>.