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Instructions for Use Memorandum

To: Customers Requesting IaaS, PaaS, SaaS, and Cloud-related Professional Services

From: Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D.

Initial
CPD

Date: March 7, 2025

Re: Instructions for Use: Cloud Solutions Preferred Vendor Pilot

1. Introduction

1.1 The National Association of State Procurement Officials, NASPO, is a non-profit association dedicated to strengthening the procurement community through education, research, and communication. NASPO is comprised of the directors of the central purchasing offices of the 50 states, District of Columbia and territories of the United States.

The NASPO ValuePoint Cooperative Purchasing Organization is a non-profit 501(c)(3) limited liability company doing business as NASPO ValuePoint. The NASPO ValuePoint facilitates administration of the cooperative group, contracting consortium of state chief procurement officials for the benefit of state departments, institutions, agencies, and political subdivisions and other eligible entities (i.e., colleges, school districts, counties, cities, some nonprofit organizations, etc.) for all states and the District of Columbia.

1.2 In February 2025, ITS, on behalf of the State of Mississippi, signed a Participating Addendum (PA) with Strategic Communications, LLC, a NASPO ValuePoint contractor for Statewide Cloud Solutions to support the State of Mississippi's agencies and institutions as a Cloud Solutions Preferred Vendor (CSPV).

1.3 Every NASPO ValuePoint contract is the result of a formal competitive solicitation conducted by trained, professional procurement officials of a lead state's central procurement office under direction of a lead state's State Procurement Official in accordance with that state's procurement statutes, regulations, and policies. Further, ITS, on behalf of the State of Mississippi, conducted a competitive procurement across all vendors awarded by and in good standing with NASPO ValuePoint under the Cloud Solutions portfolio. When appropriate, and outlined herein, a third level of competition will be required to ensure each procurement project is benefitting from the widest range of technology leaders at the best available pricing.

1.4 Mississippi's NASPO ValuePoint Cloud Solutions Participating Addendum (NASPO Cloud PA) offers customers the best value by providing streamlined

access to multiple contractors that provide technical services and solutions that run in cloud environments and meet the NIST Essential Characteristics of cloud computing.

- 1.5 Offerings are available from direct original equipment manufacturer (OEM) providers, aggregators, business partners and resellers to provide a full range of cloud-based solutions and services.
- 1.6 The awarded CSPV and their technology partners must meet the security requirements for CSA STAR, ISO/IEC 27017, and NIST SP 800-53.
- 1.7 This is a pilot project, and feedback from Mississippi customer entities is strongly encouraged.

2. Scope of the CSPV Pilot

2.1 Cloud Service Models

- 2.1.1 Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)
- 2.1.2 Platform as a Service (PaaS)
- 2.1.3 Software as a Service (SaaS)

2.2 Deployment Models

- 2.2.1 Private Cloud
- 2.2.2 Public Cloud
- 2.2.3 Hybrid Cloud
- 2.2.4 Government Cloud

2.3 Professional Services related to the successful implementation, configuration, and specialized support of cloud services.

2.4 Below are important links you may need when using this CSPV Pilot.

EPL Main Page	ITS > Procurement > Express Products List
CSPV Pilot Page	ITS > Procurement > Express Products List > CSPV EPO
Procurement Handbook	ITS > Procurement > ITS Procurement Handbook

2.5 ITS houses the following information on the CSPV Pilot web page (see table of links):

- 2.5.1 Contact information for the CSPV
- 2.5.2 This “Instructions for Use” memorandum, Solicitation Templates, and Additional Solicitation Considerations

3. Leveraging State Technology Resources

- 3.1 ITS statute, House Bill 1450, Section 3. Section 25-53-5, Mississippi Code of 1972 Amended, article (t) requires that ITS, manage one or more State Data Centers to provide information technology services on a cost-sharing basis to all State agencies. This is done in an effort to promote consolidation and cooperation in the acquisition of technology infrastructure for State government and that ITS acquires and operates the information technology necessary to provide services to the State agencies in a manner that maximizes efficiency and economy. Budgetary constraints require us to assess how we do business and to consider Mississippi State government as one enterprise, and where possible, build a technology infrastructure once, to be used by many.
- 3.2 Customers are encouraged to explore existing State resources, including those available at the State Data Center, in an effort to effectively share resources and leverage the State’s investments in technology.
 - 4.2.1 Customers may use off-site backup but are encouraged to consider the benefits of the ITS Data Center that offers storage and is staffed 24 x 7 x 365 days a year.
- 3.3 Prior to purchasing high-end storage items, customers are highly encouraged to consider off-site backup solutions as well as storage opportunities offered by ITS.
- 3.4 ITS reserves the right to limit the use of this CSPV Pilot to our customers, particularly agencies, due to legislation or to ensure more effective use of the State Data Center.

4. CSPV Pilot Effective Dates

This CSPV Pilot will be valid from the signature date of this memo through September 19, 2026.

5. Who May Use

- 5.1 This CSPV Pilot may be used by Mississippi agencies, universities, community/junior colleges and governing authorities (cities, counties, school districts, etc.), collectively referred to as Customer.
- 5.2 Any entity using this CSPV Pilot must abide by the instructions in this memorandum even if that entity is not under ITS purview.
- 5.3 Local governmental entities are able to use the CSPV Pilot in lieu of conducting their own procurements, based on MS Code 31-7-13(m)(xi) that allows ‘governing authorities’ to do so as an exception to the bidding requirements found in Public Purchasing Code.

6. Dollar Limitations of Use

- 6.1 Customer must determine the total lifecycle cost of the Cloud Technology Project (Project) during the planning process. Any additional purchases items and/or

services must be calculated as part of the total lifecycle of the Project when determining Dollar Limitations or ITS approval thresholds.

- 6.1.1 If Customers wish to purchase additional items after the initial solicitation and purchase is complete, they may do so if all the following conditions are met:
 - 6.1.1.1 They are the same items as on the original solicitation;
 - 6.1.1.2 The pricing is the same as the pricing proposed in the original proposal; and
 - 6.1.1.3 The total lifecycle cost (the original purchase and any additional purchases) are below any Dollar Limitations or ITS approval threshold. Additional purchases that cause the total lifecycle cost to reach any threshold are not permitted without prior approval of ITS through a planned purchase.
- 6.2 The purchase limit is \$1,000,000 per Project without prior approval from ITS or for projects for professional services only the limit is \$500,000.
 - 6.2.1 For IaaS purchases, estimated monthly utility costs must be evaluated but not counted towards the delegation or ITS Board approval limits.
- 6.3 Projects costing in excess of \$1,000,000, or projects for professional services only in excess of \$500,000, are beyond the scope of this delegated process and subject to further ITS review and authorization through a planned purchase.
 - 6.3.1 Any deviation from this Instructions for Use Memorandum may result in delays in the approval of your purchase.
 - 6.3.2 ITS will also vet the items being purchased to ensure that they are within the scope of the CSPV Pilot.
- 6.4 Projects with a cumulative total in excess of \$1,000,000 or projects for professional services only costing in excess of \$500,000 are subject to ITS Board approval. A business case must be completed on all IT projects requiring ITS Board Approval prior to purchase. ITS has developed an IT Project Business Case Workbook to assist agencies in preparing the business case. Business case documentation may be found on the ITS website at:
<https://www.its.ms.gov/services/planning-agency-it-plans>

7. **Other Limitations of Use**

- 7.1 Customer must evaluate all available procurement options before leveraging this NASPO ValuePoint Cloud Solutions Cooperative Agreement and justify selection of this procurement option in their procurement file.

- 7.2 To help measure the efficacy of this pilot program as well as ensure best pricing for the State, ITS encourages Customers to compare pricing through NASPO SVAR resellers' quotes vs. CSPV.
- 7.2.1 Follow this link: [NASPO SOFTWARE VALUE ADDED RESELLER \(SVAR\) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT | Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services](#)
- 7.2.2 ITS may issue periodic surveys to monitor the pilot program and capture pricing comparison data.
- 7.3 All customers making purchases requiring brand specification must have completed the Justification for Brand Specification Request Form available on the ITS website and kept with your purchase/audit file. The ITS Procurement Handbook, Chapter 10: Rule 210.4: 019-030, provides guidance on when it is appropriate to issue brand specific specifications.
- 7.3.1 Note: It is not necessary to submit this form to ITS for purchases unless you will be submitting the project to ITS for further review.
- 7.3.2 [PROCUREMENT REQUEST FORMS | Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services](#)
- 7.4 ITS may decide whether use of this procurement option is appropriate or not for a given project.

8. **Special Instructions for Microsoft Purchases**

The Cloud Solutions Preferred Vendor Pilot express procurement option can be used to purchase Microsoft software and services.

- 8.1 Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) and Select Plus Academic Purchases
- 8.1.1 *Academic Select Plus Affiliate Registration Form* Each customer is encouraged to fill out a separate "Select Plus Affiliate Registration Form". You may request the form from the CSPV. With this form, you will be able to easily track your licenses, product keys, and software assurance benefits. By registering through the CSPV, many of the minimum requirements for a separate registration are waived, giving you the benefit of the state price
- 8.1.2 *Three-Year Commitment for EAs and Select Plus Software Assurance* In the case of an Enterprise Agreement, or when an initial three-year commitment is made for Software Assurance under Select Plus, it is not required that the customer continue to solicit competitive quotations after year one of the three-year EA or SA term.
- 8.2 Adding Additional Products During the Life of an EA
- 8.2.1 During the three-year commitment of an EA, customers who need additional in-scope products not included in the original solicitation may

add them to their existing EA without resoliciting quotes if the agency can document the benefits (ex: cost savings, software assurance coverage, MSFT discounts, etc.) and include those benefits in their project file.

- 8.2.2 When customers purchase true-up licenses or add additional products to their EA, the increase must be considered for the EPL Dollar Limit prior to purchase or reservation and may become subject to the planned purchase process (Refer to Item 6. **Dollar Limitations of Use**). It is important to forecast your use for the entire three-year period before entering into the agreement so that the dollar limitations can be applied correctly.

9. **Special Instructions for Azure and AWS Purchases**

9.1 State Government Agencies within the Enterprise State Network

- 9.1.1 State agency customers within the Enterprise State Network managed by ITS will not purchase AWS (IaaS, cloud-native PaaS, and AWS Badged Professional Services) directly or add Azure Cloud Purchases to their EA directly but instead should open a Service Request Ticket through the ITS Technical Support Service Center for assignment to an ITS Operations Project Manager. State agency customers within the Enterprise State Network managed by ITS will not solicit quotes for Azure or AWS Purchases. State agency customers should include at minimum a brief description of the environment being requested. A ticket may be entered by one of the follow methods:

9.1.1.1 Online: <https://servicedesk.dc.ms.gov/CAisd/pdmweb.exe>

9.1.1.2 E-mail: Service.Center@its.ms.gov

9.1.1.3 Phone: 601-432-8080

- 9.1.2 The ITS Operations Project Manager will work with the State agency customer and the appropriate vendor to establish account information so usage billing can be passed through correctly.

- 9.1.3 The State agency customer will be responsible for the administration and charges associated with the requested cloud environment.

- 9.1.4 Sections 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 of this Memorandum are not applicable for Azure and AWS Cloud purchasing only.

9.2 Non-State Government Entities (IHLs, Community Colleges, local governing authorities) and State Agencies outside of the Enterprise State Network:

- 9.2.1 For AWS Purchases, Non-State Government Entities and State Agencies outside of the Enterprise State Network have no special instructions and must follow the standard instructions.

9.2.2 For Azure Purchases, Non-State Government Entities and State Agencies outside of the Enterprise State Network have additional options, listed below. Please note that purchasing Azure through a Cloud Service Provider (CSP) could require a technical migration in the future. Please consult with Microsoft support prior to choosing this option.

9.2.2.1 Inclusion on entity's existing Enterprise Agreement (EA)

9.2.2.2 Microsoft EPL 3736, expires July 2025

[MICROSOFT PURCHASES | Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services](#)

9.2.2.3 NASPO Software Value Added Reseller Cooperative Agreement (SVAR), expires April 24, 2027

[NASPO SVAR FOR MICROSOFT PURCHASES | Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services](https://www.its.ms.gov/procurement/express-products-lists-epls-and-cooperative-purchasing-agreements)
<https://www.its.ms.gov/procurement/express-products-lists-epls-and-cooperative-purchasing-agreements>

10. **Preparing the Solicitation**

10.1 Review the *Solicitation Workbook* published on the [ITS Website](#).

10.2 Select the appropriate solicitation template for your project:

10.2.1 Where price is the only consideration, use the template titled *CSPV Pilot Solicitation Template - 100% Cost*.

10.2.2 When a Lowest and Best offering is appropriate, use the template titled *CSPV Pilot Solicitation Template – Lowest and Best*.

10.3 Verify the requirements for your purchase.

10.4 Entities using the CSPV Pilot must have well defined business objectives and technical requirements for the items being purchased. These objectives and requirements will be used to evaluate vendor offerings and to determine the lowest and best solution.

10.5 Fill out the *Solicitation Template* with your developed specifications, project timeline, and how responses will be evaluated.

10.6 Describe your existing equipment and software in your solicitation.

10.7 Consider life-cycle maintenance costs

- 10.7.1 Investigate the total life cycle cost, including maintenance costs and requirements. Some license agreements require the customer to purchase subsequent software maintenance.
- 10.7.2 Be sure to ask the vendors if the license is perpetual or subscription.
- 10.8 If a customer wishes to capture pricing for optional items, meaning products or services that at the time of solicitation the customer is undecided if they will purchase or not, the customer must include these optional items in their solicitation and their cost evaluations. Customer must also include the cost for the optional items in their total lifecycle cost for determining Dollar Limit Thresholds, regardless of if or when these items will be purchased.
- 10.9 In general, when soliciting responses from CSPV Pilot vendors, specifications must be competitive and open and not name a specific product or manufacturer. The [ITS Procurement Handbook](#), Chapter 10: Rule 210.4: 019-030, provides guidance on when it is appropriate to issue brand specific specifications. The ITS CSPV Pilot does permit the issuance of brand specific specifications under the following conditions:
 - 10.9.1 There are multiple CSPV partners who can provide competitive pricing for the requested acquisition.
 - 10.9.2 Justification for issuing the brand specific solicitation is well-documented on the Justification for Brand Specification Request Form available on the ITS website and kept with your purchase/audit file. *Note: It is not necessary to submit this form to ITS for CSPV Pilot purchases unless your project requires further review from ITS.*
- 10.10 It is the CSPV Pilot Customer's responsibility to evaluate vendor proposals and document that they are choosing the response that is "lowest and best". Customers must include in their solicitation how this evaluation will be conducted.

11. **Obtain Quotations**

Customers must work with the CSPV to obtain proposals from [CSPV partners](#) by using the instructions below.

- 11.1 Customer must complete either a 100% Cost or Lowest and Best solicitation template. A Solicitation Workbook is provided on the [ITS Website](#). Please carefully review which sections may be deleted and which must remain in the final solicitation document.
- 11.2 Customer must document all approvals required by their entity's internal control processes in the solicitation.
- 11.3 Customer may work with the CSPV to scope their Project, including the identification of requirements, market research, cost forecasting, and identification of available cost savings opportunities.

- 11.4 When using the 100% Cost Template, Customers must ensure that quotations for the same software must be identical in terms of items and quantities and the lowest cost quotation must be selected.
- 11.5 For projects where the products and services could also be procured from the NASPO SVAR, ITS highly encourages customers to also solicit quotes through that procedure.
- 11.6 For Projects exceeding the ITS Board approval limits (6.4), the final solicitation document should be submitted to ITS with your planned purchase Request Form and an IT Project Business Case or IT Consulting Resources Business Case. Business Case templates can be found on the ITS website.
 - 11.6.1 [PLANNING \(AGENCY IT PLANS\) | Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services](#)
- 11.7 Submit final solicitation document to the CSPV for distribution. CSPV shall provide a list of partners in receipt of the solicitation.
- 11.8 It is the customer’s responsibility to alert the CSPV should the customer request brand specification. Please note that a Justification for Brand Specification Request form must be completed as noted in Item 7.3 above.
- 11.9 Customer shall coordinate any requested Vendor Conferences or Walkthroughs and shall manage Vendor Q&A, as well as Evaluation and any requested BAFOs. Please note that the *contact for the selection process*, provided in the solicitation template, should be from within the customer entity.

12. **Select the Winning Proposal**

- 12.1 Valid quotations must adhere to the following:
 - 12.1.1 A reference to “CSPV Pilot 48296” must be printed on the quotation.
 - 12.1.2 Quotations may only include items described in Section 2 above.
- 12.2 The CSPV guarantees a minimum discount off MSRP. Customer should refer to the CSPV’s price list and request MSRP information from the CSPV to ensure pricing is less than or equal to the minimum discount. No proposal may exceed this guarantee.
 - 12.2.1 <https://www.its.ms.gov/procurement/CSPV-Pilot>
- 12.3 If the 100% Cost Solicitation Template was used, the lowest valid quotation must be selected.
- 12.4 If the Lowest and Best Solicitation Template was used, evaluation documentation must include sufficient justification for selection of the lowest and best proposal.
- 12.5 Customer must notify CSPV of award.

13. Place Your Order

- 13.1 Place orders directly with the CSPV.
 - 13.1.1 Exceptions – see 10.1 above
- 13.2 Confirm your order with the vendor and issue appropriate purchase orders:
 - 13.2.1 Reference CSPV Pilot 48296 on your purchase order.
 - 13.2.2 The purchase order and quote should match in terms of items purchased, quantities purchased, and total amount.
- 13.3 Shipping costs are included as part of the purchase price.

14. Mississippi's Accountability System for Government Information and Collaboration (MAGIC)

- 14.1 State agency customers are required to purchase through Mississippi's Accountability System for Government Information and Collaboration (MAGIC).
 - 14.1.1 The Contract Number and Supplier Number are provided on the ITS website: <https://www.its.ms.gov/procurement/CSPV-Pilot>
 - ex. MAGIC Contract Number - 8500000xxx
 - ex. MAGIC supplier Number - 3100020xxx
- 14.2 State agency customers will be required to use NIGP codes when purchasing through Mississippi's Accountability System for Government Information and Collaboration (MAGIC). The following NIGP codes will be used for products purchased using the CSPV Pilot.

NIGP Code:	NIGP Product Description
20811	Application Software, Microcomputer
20880	Software, Microcomputer (Not Otherwise Classified)
92045	Software Maintenance/Support
92046	Software Updating Services
92007	Computer Services, Application Software
92005	Computer Services, App, Infrastructure, Hosting & Cloud Comp

- 14.3 The following must be uploaded to MAGIC for CSPV Pilot purchases as attachments to your Purchase Order:
 - 14.3.1 A copy of all responses received.
 - 14.3.2 A copy of the solicitation that was sent to vendors.
 - 14.3.3 Documentation detailing your evaluation and justifying your selection.

14.3.4 A copy of this Instructions for Use Memorandum.

14.3.5 If the purchase is related to a project that is a part of the Agency’s IT Plan, a copy of the related planning form from the ITS planning system.

15. **CSPV Pilot Audit Integrity**

15.1 It is the responsibility of every customer using the CSPV Pilot to maintain proper records to reflect that all procurements from the CSPV Pilot are made in accordance with ITS policies and procedures.

15.2 What Goes in Your Purchase/Audit File?

15.2.1 Make sure you provide adequate documentation that you followed the recommendations and directives in this Instructions for Use Memorandum. At a minimum, include:

15.2.1.1 Justification detailing the evaluation of other procurement options before selecting the NASPO ValuePoint Cloud Solutions Cooperative Agreement.

15.2.1.2 A copy of brand specification documentation, if applicable.

15.2.1.3 A copy of the solicitation.

15.2.1.4 A copy of the purchase order.

15.2.1.5 A copy of the list of CSPV partners in receipt of the solicitation

15.2.1.6 A copy of all responses received.

15.2.1.7 A copy of this Instructions for Use Memorandum.

15.2.1.8 If the purchase is related to a project that is a part of the Agency’s IT Plan, a copy of the related planning form from the ITS planning system.

15.2.1.9 Documentation of the evaluation process.

15.2.1.10 Any additional project-related documentation or justification.

16. **Contracts and Additional Considerations and Best Practices**

16.1 *Evaluate your current and anticipated technical needs.*

16.1.1 Customer should follow their internal information technology planning processes and procedures to ensure alignment with the agency’s mission as well as capturing time, funding, and other critical dependencies. Documentation of the business need for the Cloud Technology Project (Project) should be retained in the Project file.

16.1.2 Customer may engage the CSPV to discuss preliminary requirements and receive feedback including but not limited to market research and cost forecasting for the cloud products and services being requested.

16.2 *Negotiate for best pricing*

CSPV Pilot pricing may be lowered but not raised. Check with the CSPV for availability and for quantity discounts.

16.3 *Consider contracts*

16.3.1 The awarded CSPV has signed a Master Agreement with NASPO ValuePoint and a Participating Addendum (PA) with ITS. The purchase order from any individual customer will serve as a supplement to these agreements. You may request a copy of a vendor's Master Agreement and/or Participating Addendum from ITS.

16.3.2 Additional terms and conditions may be negotiated between the Customer and vendor at the time of sale, as needed, as a supplement to underlying agreements. These additional negotiations are the responsibility of the Customer in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

16.3.3 No terms and conditions may conflict with the underlying Mississippi Participating Addendum or NASPO Master Agreement. Any such conflicting terms shall be considered null and void.

17. **To Report Problems or Request Assistance**

If you have any feedback that may help us to improve this process or if you have any problems with your CSPV Pilot order, please let ITS know. We suggest you notify the CSPV of the problem in writing and send a copy to ITS. You may contact us in writing by one of the following ways:

17.1.1 E-mail: isshelp@its.ms.gov

17.1.2 FAX: (601) 713-6380

17.1.3 Mail: ITS, 3771 Eastwood Drive, Jackson, MS 39211

If you have questions about using the CSPV Pilot, please contact the Procurement Help Desk at (601) 432-8166 or isshelp@its.ms.gov.

ITS is also available to host training on how to use our CSPV Pilot and other procurements such as EPLs at a customer's request. Please contact the ITS Procurement Help Desk if interested.