

**Sole Source
Written Determination**

Agency Identification: South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) – H630

Description of the agency need that this procurement fulfills: *(See instructions on last page for guidance)*

SCDE requires immediate senior-level strategic and operational support to expand and execute workforce-readiness initiatives across K-12, higher education, workforce development, and economic development partners. The engagement will provide embedded leadership to convert workforce strategy into actionable plans, align programs and funding, coordinate partnerships, and build sustainable systems. SCDE Intends a one (1) year agreement with two (2) options to renew for an Estimated total expense of \$600,000.00

Describe the Market Based on Research Performed: *(See instructions on last page for guidance)*

A market analysis was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code. The review encompassed education and workforce consulting firms, public policy consultants, workforce intermediaries, and independent practitioners operating within the relevant service area. While multiple vendors provide discrete services such as strategic planning, policy analysis, employer engagement, or program evaluation, the procurement office has determined that no practicably available alternative offers the integrated combination of strategy and implementation required to fulfill the scope of this contract. Specifically, the requirement for demonstrated South Carolina-specific requirements, in-state institutional knowledge, and the immediate operational capacity to engage state agencies, employers, educational institutions, and workforce development organizations constitutes a unique capability not reasonably available through competitive procurement. Accordingly, this contract is justified as a sole source procurement pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 11-35-1560, as competitive solicitation is not practicable given the specialized and immediately necessary nature of the services.

Sole Source Vendor Name: Laura L. McKinney

Based upon the following determination, Agency proposes to acquire the supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services described herein from the vendor named above per SC Code Ann § 11-35-1560 and SC Regulation 19-445.2105, Sole Source Procurement.

Description of supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services vendor will provide under the contract: *(See instructions on last page for guidance.)*

Provide senior-level workforce-readiness consulting and implementation support, including strategic planning, workforce program alignment, stakeholder engagement, policy and legislative support, employer partnership development, funding alignment, data and evaluation framework development, and coordination with state education, workforce, economic development, and industry partners in order to improve the work force in the state of South Carolina.

Explain why the described solution is the only solution that meets the agency's needs and how no other identified solutions were sufficient. *(See instructions on last page for guidance)*

Pursuant to **SC Regulation 19-445.2105(B)**, sole source procurement is authorized when the required services are unique and available from only one responsible source. Based on the

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agency's market research and assessment of available providers, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has determined that **Laura L. McKinney** possesses a unique combination of specific South Carolina work force development qualifications, knowledge of statewide workforce requirements, and implementation capacity that cannot be reasonably obtained from another source without significant delay, increased cost and reduced effectiveness.

SCDE requires specialized support that integrates workforce development expertise, education policy knowledge, employer engagement, cross-agency coordination, and strategic implementation. The agency's review of available providers found that while some firms and consultants could provide individual elements of the required scope, no identified source offers the comprehensive blend of South Carolina-specific experience and established stakeholder relationships necessary to immediately perform all required services.

Ms. McKinney's qualifications directly align with the agency's requirements. In her current role leading talent and workforce development initiatives for the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce, she develops workforce programs and collaborates extensively with K-12 schools, higher education institutions, employers, workforce boards, and state agencies throughout South Carolina. Her previous service as Executive Director of the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness provided extensive experience leading statewide initiatives, including Transform SC and industry-focused partnerships, work force requirements, resulting in well-established relationships across the education, workforce, business, and government sectors.

Additionally, Ms. McKinney's private-sector experience with Alcoa included responsibilities in workforce development, human resources, recruitment, and government affairs while providing firsthand employer-perspective expertise that is critical to SCDE's workforce engagement objectives. Her current service on the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee and as Vice Chair of the Midlands Workforce Development Board further demonstrates her active involvement in the state's education accountability and workforce governance systems.

The agency determined that Ms. McKinney's unique combination of statewide workforce-development leadership, education policy expertise, and established relationships across South Carolina's education, business, workforce, and government sectors is necessary to fulfill the objectives of this engagement. No other identified source possesses the same combination of expertise, stakeholder access, and immediate implementation capability.

Procuring these services from another source would require significant time to establish comparable relationships and coordination, delaying SCDE's workforce-readiness initiatives. The agency concluded that achieving comparable results would likely require multiple providers, resulting in unnecessary duplication of effort, increased costs, and reduced effectiveness. Therefore, Ms. McKinney is the only known responsible source capable of providing the full scope of services required.

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Note: Determination is not complete without required signatures and dates

Required Signatures:

Prepared by:



Date: 10 / 01 / 2026

Printed Name: Dr. Rebecca Gunnlaugsson

Title: Chief of Staff

Approved by:



Approval Date: 10 / 01 / 2026

Printed Name: Ellen E. Weaver

Title: State Superintendent of Education

The last page contains instructions and is not required to be retained.