



WASHINGTON STATE  
Department of  
Children, Youth, and Families

## SOLE SOURCE FILING JUSTIFICATION

TO: Karena McGovern
CONTRACT # 2532-63733
TODAY'S DATE: 6/6/2025
CONTRACT SUB OBJECT CODE: CJ - Training Serv

CONTRACTOR'S LEGAL NAME	TIN/UBI NUMBER
Northwest Credible Messengers, LLC	

**ADDRESS** 500 South 336<sup>th</sup> St., Unit 102, Federal Way, WA 98003

### CONTRACT PURPOSE

The purpose of this Contract is to provide the Department of Children, Youth & Families, with consultation services to develop and implement Transformational Mentoring through a Credible Messenger (CM) Statewide Framework that will have a greater impact on violence prevention and help communities develop a pathway to address this alarming social issue, resulting in a greater return on our investment.

This contract engages Northwest Credible Messenger (NWCM) to develop and implement a statewide Transformational Mentoring through a Credible Messenger (CM) framework under a single agreement, NWCM will assume responsibility for:

- Overall project and site management
- Training, technical assistance, and implementation oversight
- Disbursing funds directly to regional implementation partners
- Monthly reporting and reimbursement documentation to DCYF
- Centralized data collection via NWCM's existing HIPAA-compliant JotForm Enterprise Suite
- Annual program evaluation (conducted by The Athena Group, LLC)

Previously, DCYF-JR executed five separate contracts under the Gang Reduction Intervention Prevention (GRIP) legislative proviso; one Sole Source for coordination and consultation with NWCM and four Client Service for localized delivery implementation sites.

- Filed Sole Source with NW Credible Messenger on 5/4/2023 for a 7/1/2023 start date. Contract #2332-48340. Contract Reference Number: 90157. No capability statements received.
- For the credible messengers (GRIP) implementation sites, we did an RFA (System Assigned Identifier #50991 in WEBS) and contracted with four businesses.

At that time, NWCM did not have sufficient capacity to oversee the entire initiative. NWCM is now prepared to serve as the sole contractor, consolidating statewide coordination and local oversight into a single contract. This streamlined approach will reduce administrative complexity, enhance consistency across all sites, and ensure fidelity to the CM model.

<b>FUNDING</b>	
FEDERAL FUNDING \$	STATE FUNDING \$500,000
<b>CONTRACT TOTAL \$500,000</b>	
<b>CONTRACT DATES</b>	
START DATE: 7/1/2025	END DATE: 6/30/2026
<b>SOLE SOURCE CRITERIA</b> <u>What is a sole source contract?</u> <i>"Sole source" means a contractor providing goods or services of such a unique nature or sole availability at the location required that the contractor is clearly and justifiably the only practicable source to provide the goods or services. (RCW 39.26.010)</i>  <i>Unique qualifications or services are those which are highly specialized or one-of-a-kind. Other factors which may be considered include past performance, cost-effectiveness (learning curve), and/or follow-up nature of the required goods and/or services. Past performance alone does not provide adequate justification however will not be on its own a sufficient justification.</i>  <u>Why is a sole source justification required?</u> <i>The State of Washington, by policy and law, believes competition is the best strategy to obtain the best value for the goods and services it purchases, and to ensure that all interested vendors have a fair and transparent opportunity to sell goods and services to the state.</i>  <i>A sole source contract does not benefit from competition. Thus the state, through RCW 39.26.010, has determined it is important to evaluate whether the conditions, costs and risks related to the proposal of a sole source contract truly outweigh for going the benefits of a competitive contract.</i>	
<b>SPECIFIC PROBLEM OR NEED</b>	
<b>1. What is the business need or problem that requires this contract?</b>  <p>The Department of Children, Youth &amp; Families - Juvenile Rehabilitation (DCYF-JR) must implement a legislative directive that provides \$500,000 over FY 2026 and \$500,000 over FY 2027 for a gang prevention and intervention grant program. The statute requires prioritizing nonprofit and local governmental applicants with proven, effective gang-intervention experience.</p> <p>To fulfill this mandate, DCYF-JR needs a partner that can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate expertise in community-based, evidence-informed strategies for engaging gang-involved youth.</li> <li>• Show a proven track record of achieving outcomes consistent with legislative goals.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance, quality assurance, and capacity-building support to grassroots organizations.</li> </ul> <p>Northwest Credible Messenger (NWCM) is uniquely qualified to meet these needs. As the only Washington State organization operating a statewide Credible Messenger framework, NWCM emphasizes healing-centered engagement, mentorship by individuals with lived experience, and culturally responsive case management. Their long-standing community presence ensures relevance and effectiveness.</p> <p>DCYF-JR has already partnered, with the assistance of NWCM, with four local providers to implement gang intervention and prevention services. However, to effectively address the significant gang challenges in counties such as Pierce, Clark, Yakima, and Spokane, there is a critical need to expand</p>	

services and establish additional providers capable of delivering the CM3 intervention model. NWCM is uniquely positioned to assist in this expansion due to their expertise in capacity building, which includes implementation support, training in areas like diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), grant support, and access to a network of partners. DCYF-JR does not have the internal capacity to offer technical assistance, consulting, or mentoring to new community contractors, particularly those not delivering services directly to youth under JR jurisdiction.

By partnering with NWCM, DCYF-JR can leverage their specialized expertise and infrastructure to effectively administer the grant program, ensure compliance with legislative requirements, and maximize the program's impact on reducing youth gang involvement.

**PROVIDING COMPELLING ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL FACILITATE THE EVALUATION**

**SOLE SOURCE CRITERIA**

**2. Describe the unique features, qualifications, abilities or expertise of the contractor proposed for this sole source contract.**

Northwest Credible Messenger, LLC (NWCM) is the only known organization in Washington State offering formal Credible Messenger (CM) training and certification, including a proprietary curriculum that certifies adult mentors and agency staff as Healing-Centered Practitioners. NWCM is the designated Washington State Ambassador for the national Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement and is awarded grant funding by Washington State Department of Commerce Community Reinvestment Project to deliver statewide CM certification programs. NWCM has also served as the statewide Gang Intervention Technical Assistance Provider for DCYF since 2019, aligning CM implementation with DCYF's youth justice transformation goals. Their peer-led, trauma-informed, and culturally grounded model is rooted in lived experience and restorative justice.

Although other organizations, such as the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, incorporate elements of the Credible Messenger (CM) approach, Northwest Credible Messenger (NWCM) remains the only entity in Washington State providing formal CM3 certification and structured technical assistance aligned specifically with DCYF's Transformational Mentoring through a Credible Messenger framework. NWCM's proven outcomes, robust infrastructure, and established relationships uniquely position them to deliver the services required under this contract with fidelity and cultural relevance.

Similarly, Jones Community Solutions is a respected BIPOC-owned, consumer-run organization specializing in behavioral health peer support and community engagement. Their primary offerings include Certified Peer Counselor (CPC) trainings for individuals with lived experience in behavioral health recovery, and consulting services focused on intentional peer support and community navigation. While Jones Community Solutions plays an important role in the behavioral health space, they do not offer formal Credible Messenger (CM3) training or certification, and therefore cannot meet the specific technical, programmatic, and fidelity requirements of this contract.

**3. What kind of market research did the agency conduct to conclude that alternative sources were inappropriate or unavailable? Provide a narrative description of the agency's due diligence in determining the basis for the sole source contract, including methods used by the agency to conduct a review of available sources. Use DES' Market Research Template if assistance is needed.**

DCYF-JR conducted a structured and thorough market analysis to determine whether other qualified vendors could meet the specialized service requirements outlined in the Statement of Work for the Credible Messenger Framework. This included reviewing current statewide contracts, consulting with internal and external stakeholders, examining publicly available information, and comparing organizational qualifications and service offerings against the required scope.

**Methods Used:**

- **Statewide Contract Review:** DCYF reviewed relevant contracts available through the Department of Enterprise Services (DES), the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE), and DCYF's own contracting history. No existing contracts

contained providers offering CM3-certified mentorship and capacity-building aligned with DCYF's statewide framework.

- **Agency Consultation and Cross-Agency Review:** DCYF staff consulted with peer agencies including the Department of Commerce, the Health Care Authority (HCA), and local juvenile justice systems (e.g., King County Juvenile Court) to identify organizations engaged in gang prevention or youth mentorship work. These discussions reaffirmed that NWCM is the only provider offering statewide CM3 certification and formal technical assistance.
- **Public Database and Web Search:** DCYF staff reviewed national resources, including the Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement (CM3) partner list ([crediblemessenger3.org](https://crediblemessenger3.org)), which shows that NWCM is the designated Washington State Ambassador and only CM3-certified training provider operating in Washington. Other national providers (e.g., InnerCity CDC, West Coast Credible Messengers) do not have a service presence in Washington State nor formal contractual relationships with DCYF.
- **Provider-Level Comparison:** DCYF considered other Washington-based community organizations that operate in related service areas:
  - The **Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle** incorporates CM-inspired principles in its programs but does not provide formal CM3 training, certification, or technical assistance services.
  - **Jones Community Solutions** is a BIPOC-owned, consumer-run organization that specializes in behavioral health peer support. Their offerings include Certified Peer Counselor (CPC) trainings and community engagement consultation. However, they do not offer formal CM3 certification or Credible Messenger implementation support and therefore cannot fulfill the scope of work.

#### **Conclusion:**

NWCM emerged as the only known organization in Washington State able to meet all core requirements:

- National CM3 Master Trainer credentials.
- Experience delivering a full, statewide Credible Messenger framework.
- Capacity-building expertise to expand and support additional CM3-aligned providers in high-need regions (e.g., Pierce, Clark, Yakima, and Spokane counties).
- A proprietary Healing-Centered Practitioner curriculum and integrated technical assistance model.

This due diligence process led DCYF–JR to determine that NWCM is the only practicable and qualified source for the services described, justifying a sole source contract award.

4. **As part of the market research requirements, include a list of statewide contracts reviewed and/or businesses contacted, date of contact, method of contact (telephone, mail, e-mail, other), and documentation demonstrating an explanation of why those businesses could not or would not, under any circumstances, perform the contract; or an explanation of why the agency has determined that no businesses other than the prospective contractor can perform the contract.**

As part of the market research process, DCYF–JR conducted a thorough review of potential vendors and contract opportunities available statewide. Below is a summary of the contracts reviewed, businesses considered, and rationale for why no other organization besides Northwest Credible Messenger (NWCM) could fulfill the requirements of this contract.

### **OMWBE Certified Vendor Directory**

Date: May 2025

Method: Online directory search

Outcome: No vendors listed with CM3 certification or the technical capacity to implement a statewide Credible Messenger framework.

### **Washington State Electronic Business Solution Registry**

Date: June 2025

Method: Online search

Outcome: No veteran-owned businesses were identified with relevant experience in youth mentoring, gang prevention, or CM3-certified programming.

### **Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (G.R.O.O.M.)**

Date: June 2025

Method: Web review, internal program staff discussion, email

Outcome: The Gifted Regardless Of Oppressive Methods (G.R.O.O.M.) program, operated by the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, and Northwest Credible Messenger (NWCM) both utilize the Credible Messenger model to support at-risk and justice-involved youth. However, G.R.O.O.M. operates exclusively within King County and differs from NWCM in scope, structure, and operational capacity. It does not provide formal CM3 training, certification, or statewide technical assistance, which are core components required under this contract.

### **Jones Community Solutions**

Date: June 2025

Method: Website review, phone inquiry, Internal state agency inquiry with Dept of COM

Outcome: Specializes in Certified Peer Counselor (CPC) training and behavioral health peer support. Does not offer CM3 services or statewide implementation capacity. Not aligned with the GRIP initiative's technical assistance and fidelity-monitoring needs.

### **King County Juvenile Court Credible Messenger Program**

Date: June 2025

Method: Consultation with juvenile court staff

Outcome: Operates a local volunteer-based mentorship program. Not structured to deliver formal certification, technical assistance, or support statewide program fidelity.

### **Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Statewide Contracts**

Date: June 2025

Method: DES online contracts search

Outcome: No relevant contracts identified that include CM3-certified providers or vendors capable of meeting the scope of work outlined in DCYF's framework.

### **CM3 National Partner List ([crediblemessenger3.org](https://crediblemessenger3.org))**

Date: June 2025

Method: Online research

Outcome: Several national partners exist, but none are located in Washington or currently positioned to provide the full scope of services required at a statewide level.

DCYF–JR concluded that Northwest Credible Messenger (NWCM) is the only known organization in Washington that:

- Offers formal CM3 training and certification (including Healing-Centered Practitioner credentials);
- Is nationally certified as a CM3 Master Trainer;
- Provides ongoing technical assistance, data infrastructure, and implementation oversight;
- Has established relationships with DCYF and extensive experience managing the GRIP initiative;
- Is recognized nationally and locally as Washington State's CM3 ambassador.
- No other organizations contacted or reviewed were capable of performing the work under the proposed contract.

**5. Per the Supplier Diversity Policy, DES-090-06: was this purchase included in the agency's forecasted needs report?**

Yes, this purchase was included in DCYF's forecasted needs report in alignment with DES Supplier Diversity Policy DES-090-06. The agency identified the need for a specialized vendor to support the statewide implementation and expansion of the Credible Messenger (CM) framework under the Gang Reduction Intervention and Prevention (GRIP) legislative proviso for fiscal years 2026 and 2027.

Northwest Credible Messenger (NWCM), a certified minority-owned small business, was identified early as a likely sole source provider due to their unique qualifications, prior contractual history with DCYF, and role as the only CM3-certified training and capacity-building organization in Washington. The agency's forecast recognized that this engagement would contribute toward statewide supplier diversity goals and help fulfill strategic equity priorities by working with a BIPOC-led organization embedded in Washington's most impacted communities.

**6. Describe what targeted industry outreach was completed to locate small and/or veteran-owned businesses to meet the agency's need?**

To identify small and/or veteran-owned businesses capable of meeting the agency's needs under the GRIP initiative, DCYF-JR conducted targeted outreach and market review activities, including the following:

**Directory Searches:** DCYF searched the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) business registries for vendors offering credible messenger, youth violence prevention, or capacity-building services. No vendors with CM3 certification or the ability to provide statewide oversight and support were identified.

**Supplier Diversity and Equity Networks:** The agency engaged internal supplier diversity liaisons and external equity partners to identify qualified small or veteran-owned organizations. No additional candidates meeting the specialized scope were referred.

**Review of Known and Potential Providers:**

**Jones Community Solutions:** A BIPOC-owned organization specializing in behavioral health peer support and CPC trainings. While mission-aligned, they do not offer CM3 training or structured implementation support.

**Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle (G.R.O.O.M. Program):** Operates a localized Credible Messenger program in King County but does not offer formal CM3 certification, statewide technical assistance, or coordination capacity.

**Pierce County Juvenile Court & King County Juvenile Court:** Both operate local credible messenger-style mentorship efforts, primarily in volunteer or community-based formats. These programs do not offer certification, statewide reach, or the infrastructure required to meet the contract scope.

**Current GRIP Contractors:**

Northeast Washington Educational Services District 101 (Contract #2313-52072)  
Inner City Action (Contract #2313-52002)  
OUR Journey (Contract #2313-52010)

While these organizations provide valuable on-the-ground youth mentorship and intervention services, they rely on external support and technical assistance for fidelity and capacity development. None have the qualifications or infrastructure to lead or scale a statewide CM3 framework independently.

Following this outreach, DCYF-JR determined that NWCM is the only qualified minority-owned small business in Washington capable of delivering the full scope of services outlined in the Statement of Work—including CM3 certification, capacity-building, and statewide coordination. NWCM is also the only provider currently recognized as Washington’s CM3 ambassador and has an established track record supporting GRIP implementation partners.

**7. What considerations were given to unbundling the goods and/or services in this contract, which would provide opportunities for Washington small, diverse, and/or veteran-owned businesses. Provide a summary of your agency’s unbundling analysis for this contract.**

Currently, the identified Contractor, Northwest Credible Messengers, is a small business, minority owned entity. Activities associated in the planning and implementation will include local community engagement and small businesses in goods/services.

**8. Provide a detailed and compelling description that includes quantification of the costs and risks mitigated by contracting with this contractor (i.e. learning curve, follow-up nature).**

NWCM currently possesses the essential knowledge, training, expertise and experience through the CM3 specialized training. The contractor has designed and implemented the Credible Messenger model in multiple demonstration sites in the northwest and would not require significant start-up costs. It would be cost beneficial for this contractor to develop the scope, design and implementation for a statewide strategy. This contractor has demonstrated experience and skills to operationalize the desired outcomes. JR does not possess the necessary staff with the level of expertise of this Contractor and it would be unrealistic to have staff trained to the level of competency to implement the Credible Messenger Model in the timeframe needed.

**9. Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of special circumstances such as confidential investigations, copyright restrictions, etc.? If so, please describe.**

☒ **NOT APPLICABLE**

**10. Is the agency proposing this sole source contract because of unavoidable, critical time delays or issues that prevented the agency from completing this acquisition using a competitive process? If so, please describe. For example, if time constraints are applicable, identify when the agency was on notice of the need for the goods and/or service, the entity that imposed the constraints, explain the authority of that entity to impose them, and provide the timelines which work must be accomplished.**

☒ **NOT APPLICABLE**

**11. What are the consequences of not having this sole source filing approved? Describe in detail the impact to the agency and to services it provides if this sole source filing is not approved.**

Not approving a sole source contract with Northwest Credible Messenger would significantly undermine DCYF-JR's ability to implement a statewide, coordinated approach to gang intervention and violence prevention. It would delay service delivery, jeopardize legislative compliance, disrupt existing community partnerships, and result in inconsistent outcomes due to the lack of certified, experienced providers.

Washington currently lacks a unified strategy to address gang violence. Without NWCM's leadership and technical assistance, DCYF-JR cannot expand or support additional community providers with fidelity to the Credible Messenger (CM3) model. NWCM is the only organization in the state with national CM3 certification and the capacity to deliver certified training, implementation support, and culturally grounded capacity building. Their Healing-Centered Practitioner curriculum and HIPAA-compliant data infrastructure are proprietary and not available through other vendors.

National examples, such as New York City's Arches and AIM programs, have shown that Credible Messenger models can significantly reduce recidivism. Not leveraging NWCM's expertise would waste years of investment and prevent Washington from achieving similar outcomes. In addition, attempting to replicate NWCM's services through another vendor could violate intellectual property protections and compromise program integrity.

Ultimately, NWCM is the only provider equipped to fulfill the legislative intent, reduce gang-related harm, and support positive youth development at a statewide scale. Without this partnership, the state risks continued fragmentation, lost momentum, and rising youth violence in communities already facing disproportionate impact.

## REASONABLENESS OF COST

**12. Since competition was not used as the means for procurement, how did the agency conclude that the costs, fees, or rates negotiated are fair and reasonable? Please make a comparison with comparable contracts, use the results of a market survey, or employ some other appropriate means calculated to make such a determination.**

DCYF has reviewed the rates for the various professional services contracts we have held that contained consultation services, trainings, organizational studies to compare similar services to this contract in determining our costs. These contracts included Evidence- Based Programs such as Functional Family Therapy, LLC consultants who are paid an hourly rate of \$250 for initial 20-hour FFT trainings; trainings for a six-hour Popular Education and Empowering Facilitation Skills Workshops at \$3,400 per day; an Institutional and Community Facilities Staffing Study that was conducted for four (4) months at approximately \$149,000.

Additionally, in reviewing the pre-qualified list of consultants' costs for Organizational Development on the DES website, these Contractor's hourly rates ranged from \$90 to \$1,100 with an average rate of \$270 per hour.

Previous consultation and technical assistance work performed by NW Credible Messengers with other entities billed at a rate of \$250 per hour.

Based upon this research, DCYF believes the rates for the Deliverables in the contract based at \$250 per hour are fair and reasonable and within the average range of similar consultant fees.

### FY26 Project Summary

- Outreach & Engagement: \$38,000
- Training & Professional Development: \$83,750
- Quality Assurance & Technical Assistance: \$21,750
- Data Management/Evaluation (JotForm): \$0 (covered by NWCM)
- Data Management Admin Fee: \$0
- Travel: \$5,300
- Four GRIP Implementation Sites (\$87,800 each): \$351,200
  - Total Per Contract: \$87,800
  - Group Mentoring Sessions
    - 72 sessions at \$50.00 each = \$3,600
    - 1:1 Mentoring Sessions
    - 432 sessions at \$50.00 each = \$21,600
    - Intake/First Day Packets
    - 36 packets at \$100.00 each = \$3,600
  - Goal Plans
  - 36 plans at \$100.00 each = \$3,600
- Last Day Packets
  - 36 packets at \$100.00 each = \$3,600
- Monthly Reports
  - 9 reports at \$100.00 each = \$900
- Consultation and Technical Assistance

- 24 hours at \$50.00/hour = \$1,200
- Site Visits / Observations
  - 4 visits at \$150.00 each = \$600
- Annual Report
  - 1 report at \$500.00 = \$500
- Training Stipends
  - 3 staff attending 3 trainings each (9 stipends) at \$1,000 = \$9,000
- Base Programming & Operations (administrative support, indirect costs, supervision, etc.)
- Flat allocation = \$40,600

FY27 Budget Outlook (Pending Finalization)

- Quality Assurance & Technical Assistance: \$37,200
- Four GRIP Implementation Sites (\$115,700 each): \$462,800

FY27 funding will prioritize direct support to community partners and may include a fifth implementation site once plans are finalized.