

Sole Source Application and Determination Form

A sole source determination is not effective until the sole source application for determination has been posted on the Purchasing website for thirty (30) calendar days without protest and is subsequently approved in writing by the Vice President of Administration and Finance.

1. Name of Department: SWIA – STEM Outreach
Contact Name: Ronda Cole Harmon
Phone: (505) 846-8042 or cell (505) 401-5456
Email: ronda.harmon@nmt.edu

2. Name of Prospective Vendor: ASM Global – Albuquerque Convention Center
Contact Name: V. Michelle Roybal
Phone: (505) 768-3870 or cell (505) 463-8028
Email: MRoybal@albuquerquecc.com
Estimated Cost: \$26,000
Duration (for Services or Professional Services – limited to four years): Facility Rental - 2 days

3. Purpose/need for purchase and detailed list of items of tangible property, services, or professional services:

This purchase is for the rental of space in the City of Albuquerque's Convention Center to use as a venue for this annual event. Details about the event follow:

NM Tech conducts STEM outreach on behalf of the Air Force Research Laboratory at Kirtland AFB. For more than 30 years we have been implementing the Mission to Mars Link-Up Day event for fifth-grade students from throughout New Mexico. This culminating event brings together more than 1,000 students to conduct a simulated manned mission to Mars.

Prior to the event students spend 10-12 weeks in the classroom preparing for the mission by completing base operations that include learning Mars facts, researching and building a life support system model, creating a saga detailing their journey from Earth to Mars, and designing a mission patch.

During the event, students work in classroom crews to build 12' x 12' x 8' plastic structures that represent the habitats they will live in to protect them from the harsh Martian environment. Each row of habitats includes 6' tunnels that connect them to allow the student participants to explore the colony after habitat construction is complete. We anticipate the 2026 event will have more than 60 habitat structures once again.

The habitats are constructed from landscape plastic and inflated with a standard box fan, so each habitat requires access to a power outlet. The photo below shows inflated habitat structures at the 2025 Mission to Mars Link-Up Day event.



4. Detailed explanation of criteria developed for this purchase:

The event is open to all schools, but most of the schools are from Albuquerque, so the venue needs to be centrally located in the city to provide the fewest transportation challenges. We initially conducted this event in a large hangar at Kirtland AFB, but due to increased security measures and space availability on base we now conduct this event off base.

To accommodate safely and comfortably the 1,000+ students, as well as invited parents and community members, we have identified the following venue needs for this event based on historical experience:

- 100,000 square feet of unobstructed space with a ceiling that is more than 12 feet high.
 - Electrical outlet access for the 60 (or more) box fans needed to inflate the habitats.
 - Large room for use as the Technical Briefing Station where up to 100 students at a time can explain their Life Support Systems to STEM professionals.
 - Restroom facilities that can meet the needs of more than 1,000 students.
 - Location for out-of-town buses to park.
5. Provide a detailed, sufficient explanation of the reasons, qualifications or unique capabilities of the prospective vendor that make that prospective vendor the one source for providing the items of tangible property, services, or professional services:

Halls 1 & 2 at the Albuquerque Convention Center provide 106,000 square feet of unobstructed space and ceilings that are more than 20 feet. In addition to the space being large enough to

accommodate the considerable number of student participants safely and comfortably, its high ceiling contributes to the overall feel of being on an uninhabited planet. The space requirement allows room for each grouping of habitats both during and after construction and provides clear egress in case of an emergency.

The Convention Center team is able drop electrical outlets to power box fans based on the unique habitat layout we create each year. The venue has lobby space where arriving schools can gather to get organized into crews, a long hallway where arrival procedures for each classroom are completed, a large room for conducting technical briefings, and restrooms for the 1,500 participants and visitors who attend the event. In addition, this venue provides an upstairs viewing area that allows parents and other invited guests to see the students at work from a bird's eye view.

6. Provide a detailed, sufficient explanation of how the items of tangible property, services, or professional services is/are unique and how this uniqueness is substantially related to the intended purpose of the department/grant:

The Mission to Mars Link-Up Day event is the largest and longest running STEM outreach event that NM Tech conducts on behalf of the Air Force Research Laboratory through the Southwest Innovation Alliance Partnership Intermediary Agreement #FA9453-22-3-0002. It increases student awareness of the challenges of space exploration, engages students in applying STEM content to problem solve using the engineering design process, aligns with New Mexico educational content standards, and provides connections to STEM related careers.

7. Please provide a narrative description of the department's due diligence in determining a basis for the procurement. Include:
 - a. method used to research and review other available sources (i.e. list of potential vendors from Purchasing, internet, state pricing agreements, purchasing cooperatives)
 - b. list of vendors contacted, the date and method of contact (i.e. email, phone call)
 - c. documentation explaining why:
 - i. those vendors cannot provide the required items of tangible property, services, or professional services.
 - ii. other similar items of tangible property, services, or professional services cannot meet the intended purpose of department/grant:

Through internet research I have determined that there are no other venues in the Albuquerque area that offer the amount of unobstructed open space required for this event.

Below is a summary of my findings:

- Isleta Resort & Casino offers over 100,000 square feet of total event space, but its largest open space is only 43,344 square feet.
- Sandia Resort & Casino offers 78,660 square feet of total event space, but its largest conference room is only 11,692 square feet.
- Hotels offer conference spaces, but like Isleta and Sandia Resorts, their space is broken into smaller rooms rather than one large unobstructed space.
- The large Manuel Lujan Jr. Exhibit Building at Expo NM has only 22,000 square feet of open space.

I certify I have performed thorough and diligent research and analysis to determine that ASM Global – Albuquerque Convention Center is the only source capable of providing the required Venue Space. I understand that violations of the New Mexico Procurement Code (Chapter 13, Article 1 NMSA 1978) can carry severe penalties. I affirm that the information provided in this Sole Source Determination is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Name, Title: Ronda Cole Harmon, SWIA - STEM Outreach Director



21 July 2025


Review: Purchasing Services (Name, Title): *Meradeth Montoya*
Assistant Director of Purchasing

AdobeSign/Date 7/22/2025

Website Posting Date: 7/22/2025

Posting Expiration Date: 8/21/2025

Protested (Yes/No):

Approval: Delilah A. Walsh 
Vice President of Administration and Finance

AdobeSign/Date 22-Jul-2025