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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Protest Decision

**Matter of:** DCG Consultants Group Inc.

**File No.:** 2025-215

**Posting Date:** May 20, 2025

**Contracting Entity:** South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

**Solicitation No.:** HHS REQ-00535699

**Description:** Unified Enterprise Support Services

### DIGEST

The Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) dismisses the protest of DCG Consultants Group (DCG) challenging the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) intent to award a contract as a sole source for Unified Enterprise Support Services where HHS has subsequently awarded an emergency contract for the same services. DCG's protest is attached as Exhibit A.

### AUTHORITY

The Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) conducted an administrative review per S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-4210. This decision is based on materials in the procurement file and applicable law and precedents.

### BACKGROUND

On April 16, 2025, HHS advertised its intent to award a sole source contract to Microsoft Services (Microsoft), for Unified Enterprise Support Services. [Exhibit B] On April 21, 2025, DCG protested asserting that it could provide the "required services at a comparable or superior

level to Microsoft Unified Support.” On May 2, 2025, HHS advertised a notice that it had entered a one-year contract with Microsoft on an emergency basis noting that its contract for Unified Enterprise Support Services had expired on April 28, 2025, and the services were critical to its operations.<sup>1</sup> [Exhibit C]

## **DISCUSSION**

HHS’s emergency acquisition of Unified Enterprise Support Services has rendered DCG’s protest of the sole source moot. However, considering the potential for recurrence of this situation the CPO cannot help but make some observations. HHS’s sole source determination does not support its conclusion that Microsoft is the only entity that can supply these services. HHS’s description of the market research it performed to determine that Microsoft was the only entity capable of providing the required services does not describe any market research at all but makes a conclusory statement that only Microsoft can provide these services. HHS’s explanation of why no other vendor can meet its needs is nothing more than a description of what Microsoft Unified Support Services are rather than a cogent argument that Microsoft is the only supplier of the services necessary to meet HHS’s needs. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that Microsoft is not the only entity capable of supplying Unified Support Services. For one, a simple internet search for competitors to Microsoft for these services indicates that there are at least a couple of competitors. Moreover, one other state agency has already successfully completed a competitive acquisition of these services and others are developing competitive procurements to acquire them. Finally, Microsoft provided a document to another agency called “Microsoft Enterprise Support Services Program Description.” This document has a statement at the end that suggests that Microsoft is not the only supplier of these services. [Exhibit D]

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<sup>1</sup> HHS indicates that the emergency will allow it time to review whether these services are a sole source and, if not, to develop a solicitation to acquire them.

Protest Decision, page 3  
Case No. 2025-215  
May 20, 2025

## **DECISION**

For the reason stated above, the CPO dismisses DCG's protest as moot.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John St. C. White", is positioned above a horizontal line.

John St. C. White  
Chief Procurement Officer

Columbia, South Carolina

## STATEMENT OF RIGHT TO FURTHER ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

*Protest Appeal Notice (Revised July 2024)*

The South Carolina Procurement Code, in Section 11-35-4210, subsection 6, states:

(6) Finality of Decision. A decision pursuant to subsection (4) is final and conclusive, unless fraudulent or unless a person adversely affected by the decision requests a further administrative review by the Procurement Review Panel pursuant to Section 11-35-4410(1) within ten days of posting of the decision in accordance with subsection (5). The request for review must be directed to the appropriate chief procurement officer, who shall forward the request to the panel or to the Procurement Review Panel, and must be in writing, setting forth the reasons for disagreement with the decision of the appropriate chief procurement officer. The person also may request a hearing before the Procurement Review Panel. The appropriate chief procurement officer and an affected governmental body shall have the opportunity to participate fully in a later review or appeal, administrative or judicial.

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Copies of the Panel's decisions and other additional information regarding the protest process is available on the internet at the following web site: <http://procurement.sc.gov>

FILING FEE: Pursuant to Proviso 111.1 of the 2024 General Appropriations Act, "[r]equests for administrative review before the South Carolina Procurement Review Panel shall be accompanied by a filing fee of two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00), payable to the SC Procurement Review Panel. The panel is authorized to charge the party requesting an administrative review under the South Carolina Code Sections 11-35-4210(6), 11-35-4220(5), 11-35-4230(6) and/or 11-35-4410...Withdrawal of an appeal will result in the filing fee being forfeited to the panel. If a party desiring to file an appeal is unable to pay the filing fee because of financial hardship, the party shall submit a completed Request for Filing Fee Waiver form at the same time the request for review is filed. *[The Request for Filing Fee Waiver form is attached to this Decision.]* If the filing fee is not waived, the party must pay the filing fee within fifteen days of the date of receipt of the order denying waiver of the filing fee. Requests for administrative review will not be accepted unless accompanied by the filing fee or a completed Request for Filing Fee Waiver form at the time of filing." PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO THE "SC PROCUREMENT REVIEW PANEL."

LEGAL REPRESENTATION: In order to prosecute an appeal before the Panel, business entities organized and registered as corporations, limited liability companies, and limited partnerships must be represented by a lawyer. Failure to obtain counsel will result in dismissal of your appeal. *Protest of Lighting Services*, Case No. 2002-10 (Proc. Rev. Panel Nov. 6, 2002) and *Protest of The Kardon Corporation*, Case No. 2002-13 (Proc. Rev. Panel Jan. 31, 2003); and *Protest of PC&C DCGs, LLC*, Case No. 2012-1 (Proc. Rev. Panel April 2, 2012). However, individuals and those operating as an individual doing business under a trade name may proceed without counsel, if desired.

**South Carolina Procurement Review Panel  
Request for Filing Fee Waiver  
1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 367, Columbia, SC 29201**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Requestor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Business Phone

- 
1. What is your/your company's monthly income? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. What are your/your company's monthly expenses? \_\_\_\_\_
  3. List any other circumstances which you think affect your/your company's ability to pay the filing fee:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To the best of my knowledge, the information above is true and accurate. I have made no attempt to misrepresent my/my company's financial condition. I hereby request that the filing fee for requesting administrative review be waived.

Sworn to before me this  
\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public of South Carolina

\_\_\_\_\_  
Requestor/Appellant

My Commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

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For official use only: \_\_\_\_\_ Fee Waived      \_\_\_\_\_ Waiver Denied

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman or Vice Chairman, SC Procurement Review Panel

This \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_  
Columbia, South Carolina

**NOTE: If your filing fee request is denied, you will be expected to pay the filing fee within fifteen (15) days of the date of receipt of the order denying the waiver.**

# Exhibit A

**From:** [Tristan Thuro](#)  
**To:** [Rebecca O'Brien, CPM, CPPB](#); [protest-itmo@itmo.gov](#)  
**Subject:** Formal Grievance – Microsoft Unified Support Sole Source Procurement-Dynamic Consultants Group (DCG) - Department of Health and Human Services  
**Date:** Monday, April 21, 2025 1:01:40 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[FY26-Microsoft-Services-Justification-Signed.pdf](#)

You don't often get email from [tthuro@dynamicconsultantsgroup.com](mailto:tthuro@dynamicconsultantsgroup.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

## WARNING:

**This is an external email originating outside our email system. DO NOT CLICK links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe!  
For suspicious emails, please report using the “Phish Alert Report” button.**

Dear Rebecca and Procurement Team,

I am writing on behalf of Dynamic Consultants Group (DCG) to formally challenge the Notice of Intent to Sole Source Microsoft Enterprise Unified Support for the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Based on our expertise, industry recognition, and direct Microsoft agreements, we firmly believe that this procurement does not meet the criteria for a sole-source justification, as DCG is fully capable of providing the required services at a comparable or superior level to Microsoft Unified Support.

### Basis for Grievance

The justification for sole-source procurement states that only Microsoft can provide direct engineer support, dedicated security specialists, and unlimited support coverage. However, this is not accurate, as DCG has successfully transitioned multiple organizations from Microsoft Unified Support to our direct Microsoft-aligned support model.

### Key Facts Supporting Our Grievance:

**Direct Microsoft Escalation:** DCG holds a Premier Support for Partners (PSFP) agreement, which provides direct escalation pathways to Microsoft engineers, including specialists in security, compliance, and product development. This ensures the same level of escalation as Microsoft Unified Support.

**Dedicated Security & Compliance Support:** DCG provides assigned security engineers with expertise in Microsoft Defender, Azure Sentinel, and compliance-driven security assessments, ensuring the same level of security oversight Microsoft claims as unique to their service.

**Proven Unified Support Replacement:** DCG has successfully transitioned government agencies, healthcare providers, and enterprise organizations from Microsoft Unified Support to our cost-effective, more flexible alternative—demonstrating that an equivalent or superior service is available outside of Microsoft.

**Flexible, Cost-Effective Support Model:** Unlike Microsoft’s rigid, high-cost structure, DCG provides customized service allocation, allowing SCDHHS to optimize hours for Azure, Microsoft 365, Windows Server, and security services as needed.

As such, we respectfully request that SCDMH reconsider its intent to award this contract as a sole source and instead allow an open, competitive bidding process that aligns with S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-1560.

### **Proposal Submission**

To support our grievance, we have attached our formal proposal for Microsoft Unified Support Services, demonstrating how DCG fully meets or exceeds the technical, operational, and security requirements outlined in the sole-source justification.

### **Our proposal details:**

- Direct Microsoft escalation pathways through our Premier Support for Partners (PSFP) agreement.
- Guaranteed response times – <15 minutes for critical issues (compared to Microsoft's queue-based system).
- Dedicated security engineers and account management, ensuring a personalized and proactive support experience.
- A flexible pricing model that reduces cost while maintaining premier-level support services.
- A formal certification letter from Microsoft (attached) verifying DCG's qualifications as a Microsoft Solutions Partner for infrastructure, security, cloud services, and business applications.

We strongly believe that South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services deserves the opportunity to explore a competitive, best-fit solution, rather than being locked into a sole-source procurement. We appreciate your time and consideration of this grievance and our proposal.

We are willing to set up a call to discuss our services and answer any questions, as we are also interested in next steps.

Please confirm receipt of this email, and we look forward to your response.

Best regards,

Tristan Thuro

**Tristan Thuro**

Sales Consultant

**Office:** +1 816-298-5559

**Mobile:** 816-977-4625

# South Carolina Business Opportunities

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Published by Division of Procurement Services - Delbert H. Singleton, Jr., Division Director

**Ad Category:** Sole Source and Emergency

**Notice Start Date:** April 16, 2025

**Notice End Date:** May 1, 2025

**Vendor Name:** Microsoft Services

**Contract Amount:** \$609,395.70

**Agency Procurement Manager:** Rebecca O'Brien

**Agency Procurement Manager Email:** rebecca.obrien@scdhhs.gov

**Agency Procurement Manager Telephone#:** 8038981535

**The Agency hereby provides notice that it intends to enter into a sole source contract per S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-1560 with Vendor for the following supplies, services, information technology, or construction:**

Unified Enterprise Support Service Agreement including support account management, workshops, assessments, problem resolution support, cyber security support assistance, and information services. Workshops will serve to further strengthen the agency's security posture and to fully implement and manage products included in the Microsoft enterprise agreement. Link to Justification: <https://img1.scdhhs.gov/dEpnO5NCdDzlkX3n/FY26-Microsoft-Services-Justification-Signed.pdf>

**Agency's justification for a sole source procurement may be viewed or immediately obtained at:** Agency Procurement Manager (Listed Above)

**PROTESTS:**

Any actual or prospective bidder, offeror, contractor, or subcontractor aggrieved in connection with the intended award or award of this sole source contract, shall notify the appropriate chief Procurement officer in writing of its intent to protest within five (5) business days of the date this notice is posted. Any actual or prospective bidder, offeror, contractor, or subcontractor who is aggrieved in connection with the intended award or award of this sole source contract and has timely notified the appropriate chief procurement officer of its intent to protest, may protest to the appropriate chief procurement officer in the manner set forth below within fifteen days of the date this notice is posted; except that a matter that could have been raised as a protest of the solicitation may not be raised as a protest of the award or intended award of a contract.

A protest must be in writing, filed with the appropriate chief procurement officer, and set forth the grounds of the protest and the relief requested with enough particularity to give notice of the issues to be decided. The protest must be received by the appropriate chief procurement officer within the time provided above. Days are calculated as provided in S.C. Code Ann. § 11-35-310(13).

**Any Notice Of Intent To Protest And Protest Must Be Addressed To:** Information Technology Management Officer

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South Carolina Business Opportunities • SCBO Team • 1201 Main Street, Suite 600 • Columbia, SC 29201  
803-737-0600 • [scbo@mmo.sc.gov](mailto:scbo@mmo.sc.gov) • <https://scbo.sc.gov> • <https://procurement.sc.gov>





**JUSTIFICATION FOR  
SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT**

Agency: Department of Health and Human Services

Sole Source Vendor: Microsoft Services, PO Box 844510, Dallas, TX 75284-4510

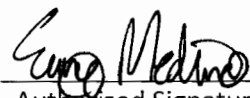
Based upon the following determination, Agency proposes to acquire the supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services described herein from the Vendor named above per S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-1560 and S.C. Regulation 19-445.2105, Sole Source Procurement.

Description of the Agency need that this procurement meets: Unified Enterprise Support Service Agreement including support account management, workshops, assessments, problem resolution support, support assistance, cyber security and information services.

Description of market research Agency performed to determine the availability of products or services that would meet the Agency's needs: Only Microsoft has the access to the SCDHHS tenant, the trained staff, product knowledge, and infrastructure required to provide these services.

Description of supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services Vendor will provide under the contract: Unified Enterprise Support Service Agreement including support account management, workshops, assessments, problem resolution support, cyber security support assistance, and information services. Workshops will serve to further strengthen the agency's security posture and to fully implement and manage products included in the Microsoft enterprise agreement.

Detailed explanation why no other vendor's supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services will meet the needs of the Agency: SCDHHS is an enterprise customer of Microsoft products and services. These products and services are integral to the daily operation of SCDHHS mission critical systems. Microsoft Support Services are comprised of a comprehensive support solution that helps reduce costs, enhance productivity, and use technology throughout the IT lifecycle. They are the only entity that offers direct, expedient and unique access to Microsoft product development teams, software developers and source code for current and future products. Specialized training of Microsoft personnel is provided from Microsoft product development teams on how enterprise customers can best plan for, deploy, manage and maximize productivity of existing and future Microsoft products. Both reactive and proactive services are included. Reactive services are comprised of Problem Resolution Support, Advisory Support, and Support Assistance. Maintenance Services, Optimization Services, and Education Services are included as Proactive Services. All of these services are managed by a Microsoft Customer Success Account Manager who also assists with problem prioritization and escalation. A website portal enables SCDHHS staff to enter, update, and monitor service requests. The breadth and depth of services described above are only performed by Microsoft Corporation.



Authorized Signature

Printed Name: Eunice Medina

Title: Director

Date: 4/14/2025

**Notes:**

Authorized signature is the agency head unless the agency head has delegated that authority.  
Delegation of authority must be submitted to the Materials Management Officer in writing.

The Agency must obtain a Drug-free Workplace certification from the Vendor if the sole source procurement is \$50,000 or greater.

# South Carolina Business Opportunities

Published by Division of Procurement Services - Delbert H. Singleton, Jr., Division Director

**Ad Category:** Sole Source and Emergency

**Notice Start Date:** May 2, 2025

**Notice End Date:** May 17, 2025

**Vendor Name:** Microsoft Services

**Contract Amount:** \$609,395.70

**Agency Procurement Manager:** Rebecca O'Brien

**Agency Procurement Manager Email:** rebecca.obrien@scdhhs.gov

**Agency Procurement Manager Telephone#:** 8038981535

**The Agency hereby provides notice that it entered into an emergency contract per S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-1570 with Vendor for the following supplies, services, information technology, or construction:**

The Microsoft platform is critical to the day to day operation for SCDHHS. The current Microsoft Unified Enterprise Support Services Agreement will expire on April 28, 2025. Without the support the system could be vulnerable to cyber-attacks and could experience issue effecting performance and the ability for users to utilize the Microsoft products in the normal work activities. It is imperative that SCDHHS has ongoing and uninterrupted access to the support provided through the Unified Enterprise Support Services Agreement with Microsoft Services. Because the product is not available on state-term contract or other contracting mechanisms available to SCDHHS this has resulted in the need for an Emergency Procurement for a one (1) year services agreement. Link to Justification: <https://img1.scdhhs.gov/dEpnO5NCdDzlkX3n/Microsoft-FY26-Emergency-Just-Signed.pdf>

**Agency's justification for this emergency procurement may be viewed or obtained at:** Agency Procurement Manager (Listed Above)

## PROTESTS:

Any actual or prospective bidder, offeror, contractor, or subcontractor aggrieved in connection with the intended award or award of this emergency contract, shall notify the appropriate chief Procurement officer in writing of its intent to protest within five (5) business days of the date this notice is posted. Any actual or prospective bidder, offeror, contractor, or subcontractor who is aggrieved in connection with the intended award or award of this emergency contract and has timely notified the appropriate chief procurement officer of its intent to protest, may protest to the appropriate chief procurement officer in the manner set forth below within fifteen days of the date this notice is posted; except that a matter that could have been raised as a protest of the solicitation may not be raised as a protest of the award or intended award of a contract.

A protest must be in writing, filed with the appropriate chief procurement officer, and set forth the grounds of the protest and the relief requested with enough particularity to give notice of the issues to be decided. The protest must be received by the appropriate chief procurement officer within the time provided above. Days are calculated as provided in S.C. Code Ann. § 11-35-310(13).

**Any Notice Of Intent To Protest And Protest Must Be Addressed To:** Information Technology Management Officer

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803-737-0600 • [scbo@mimo.sc.gov](mailto:scbo@mimo.sc.gov) • <https://scbo.sc.gov> • <https://procurement.sc.gov>



## **JUSTIFICATION FOR EMERGENCY PROCUREMENT**

Agency: South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS)

Emergency Vendor: Microsoft Services, PO Box 844510, Dallas, TX 75284-4510

Agency has contracted with or plans to contract with Emergency Vendor for the supplies, services, information technology, or construction described below per S.C. Code Ann. §11-35-1570 and S.C. Regulation 19-445.2110, Emergency Procurement.

Describe the nature of the emergency condition and the resulting immediate threat to public health, welfare, critical economy and efficiency, or safety that this procurement responded to: SCDHHS has historically contracted with Microsoft Services via a Sole Source procurement to provide the trained staff, product knowledge, and infrastructure required to provide Unified Enterprise Support Services that include support account management, workshops, assessments, problem resolution support, cyber security support assistance, and information services. SCDHHS is an enterprise customer of Microsoft products and services. These products and services are integral to the daily operation of SCDHHS mission critical systems, especially ensuring cyber security through the Cyber Incident Response services. Microsoft Support Services are comprised of a comprehensive support solution that helps reduce costs, enhance productivity, maintain security, and use technology throughout the IT lifecycle. They are the only entity that offers direct, expedient and unique access to Microsoft product development teams, software developers and source code for current and future products. Specialized training of Microsoft personnel is provided from Microsoft product development teams on how enterprise customers can best plan for, deploy, manage, and maximize productivity of existing and future Microsoft products. Both reactive and proactive services are included. Reactive services are comprised of Problem Resolution Support, Advisory Support, and Support Assistance. Maintenance Services, Optimization Services, and Education Services are included as Proactive Services. All of these services are managed by a Microsoft Customer Success Account Manager who also assists with problem prioritization and escalation. The product is not available on state-term contract or other contracting mechanisms available to SCDHHS resulting in the need for an Emergency Procurement for a one (1) year subscription to ensure that stability and security of SCDHHS Microsoft platform and allow for the determination of the proper sourcing method.

Description of the facts and circumstances giving rise to the above describe emergency condition and threat: The Microsoft platform is critical to the day to day operation for SCDHHS. The current Microsoft Unified Enterprise Support Services Agreement will expire on April 28, 2025. Without the support the system could be vulnerable to cyber-attacks and could experience issues effecting performance and the ability for users to utilize the Microsoft products in the normal work activities, seriously impacting SCDHHS' ability to operate. It is imperative that SCDHHS has ongoing and uninterrupted access to the support provided through the Unified Enterprise Support Services Agreement with Microsoft Services. Because the product is not available on state-term contract or other contracting mechanisms available to SCDHHS this has resulted in the need for an Emergency Procurement for a one (1) year services agreement. Microsoft does not provide services in increments of less than a one (1) year commitment and the one (1) year will allow sufficient time to determine the proper sourcing method for the next

service agreement cycle.

Basis for Selection of the Vendor – include a description of competition Agency conducted or will conduct, if any, and explain why more extensive competition was/is not practical under the circumstances: The required product/services is not available on state-term contract or other contracting mechanisms available to SCDHHS. SCDHHS has historically been securing the required services via an annual sole source contract. There may be an opportunity to competitively procure some of the required services, but SCDHHS will need this one (1) year period to validate the existence of products, make the determination that services are indeed identical, and complete the appropriate procurement process.

Description of supplies, services, information technology, or construction: Contractor must provide the trained staff, product knowledge, and infrastructure required to provide Unified Enterprise Support Services that include support account management, workshops, assessments, problem resolution support, cyber security support assistance, and information services for the Microsoft Solutions. Other entities who partner with Microsoft cannot offer access to the same services SCDHHS has under this contract, such as Microsoft Cyber Incident Response, which is a fundamental part of SCDHHS' needs.

   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature  
Printed Name: Eunice Medina  
Title: Interim Director  
Date: 4/30/2025

**Notes:**

**Authorized signature is the agency head unless the agency head has delegated that authority.  
Delegation of authority must be submitted to the Materials Management Officer in writing.**

# Exhibit D

## MICROSOFT ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**Re: Microsoft Unified Support**

**Dear Ryan Millwood**

Microsoft is pleased to provide the following information regarding our Unified Support offering as part of Microsoft Enterprise Support Services to assist **SC DNR** in making a determination relative to a sole source justification.

Microsoft Enterprise Support Services are comprised of a comprehensive support solution that helps reduce costs, enhance productivity, and use technology throughout the IT lifecycle. They offer direct, expedient and unique access to Microsoft product development teams, software developers and source code for current and future products enabling (a) specialized insight into the architecture of current solutions that can facilitate smooth migrations to existing and future unreleased products/versions; (b) quick and comprehensive resolution of product support, trouble-shooting and hot-fix type issues, and (c) immediate and focused technology feedback link between our customers and the Microsoft product development teams to help shape the direction, features and functionality of future products.

Specialized training of Microsoft personnel is provided from Microsoft product development teams on how enterprise customers can best plan for, deploy, manage and maximize productivity of existing and future Microsoft products.

Furthermore, as part of Microsoft's unique Support Services offer, the following services are available:

**Base Package** Services are a combination of proactive, reactive and service delivery management services that support Microsoft products and/or Online Services in use within your organization.

**Reactive support** helps resolve issues in your Microsoft environment and include prioritized problem resolution services to provide rapid response to minimize downtime. As part of reactive support services, Microsoft offers:

**Problem Resolution Support** provides assistance for problems with specific symptoms encountered while using Microsoft products, where there is a reasonable expectation that the problem is caused by Microsoft products. Problem Resolution Support and requests for support may be submitted via telephone or electronically through an online support portal.

**Advisory Support:** Phone-based support on short-term (limited to six hours or less) and unplanned issues for IT Professionals. Advisory Services may include advice, guidance and knowledge transfer intended to help you deploy and implement Microsoft technologies in ways that avoid common support issues and that can decrease the likelihood of system outages. Architecture, solution development and customization scenarios are outside the scope of these Advisory Services.



**Extended Hotfix Support:** Extended Hotfix Support allows you to request non-security hotfixes for select Microsoft software that has entered the Extended Support Phase of the Fixed Lifecycle, as defined by the Policy at <http://support.microsoft.com/lifecycle>.

**Service Delivery Management (SDM)** activities help to build and maintain relationships with your management and service delivery staff as well as to oversee escalation management and managing the elements of your support offering to meet your business requirements. These actions are managed by a Microsoft Delivery Manager, coordinated from a pooled set of resources, or provided digitally through access to an online services portal.

**Proactive services** which help maintain and improve the health of IT infrastructure and operations. As part of proactive support, Microsoft offers individual proactive services, available and categorized as maintenance, optimization or education services. Proactive services not included in Base Package Services may be purchased.

**Planning services** provide assessments and reviews of your current infrastructure, data, application and security environment to help you plan your remediation, upgrade, migration, deployment or solution implementation based on your desired outcomes.

**Implementation services** provide technical and project management expertise to help you accelerate your design, deployment, migration, upgrade, and implementation of Microsoft technology solutions.

**Maintenance services** help prevent issues in your Microsoft environment and are typically scheduled in advance of the service delivery to help ensure resource availability.

**Optimization services** focus on the goals of optimal utilization of the customer's technology investment. These services may deliver recommendations for remote administration of cloud services, optimizing the adoption of Microsoft product capabilities by end users and ensuring a robust security and identity posture.

**Education services** provide specialized training that help to enhance your support staff's technical and operational skills through either onsite, online or on-demand instruction. These include specialized workshops, which help prevent problems, increase system availability and assist with creating products and solutions based on Microsoft technologies, and specialized training, which includes how customers can best plan for, deploy, manage, and maximize productivity of existing and future Microsoft products. These sessions are available at your facility or at Microsoft and can include deep technical development presentations with hands-on labs to facilitate your implementation of Microsoft technologies.

**Enhanced Solutions** that are comprised of Tailored, relationship-centric support engagements designed to solve the most complex IT challenges and ensure maximum uptime. In addition to the services provided as part of the Base Package or as additional services, the following optional enhanced services and solutions may be purchased.

**Support for Mission Critical** provides a higher level of support for a defined set of Microsoft products and Online Services that make up part of your mission critical solution.

**Designated Support Engineering** delivers proactive optimization of a scoped technology workload. Focus areas for Designated Support Engineering include maintaining knowledge of business requirements to optimize performance, document and share recommendations for use of support-services related deliverables, provide recommendations to improve consistency of your planned and current implementations of Microsoft technologies, enhance your IT staff's technical and operational skills, develop and aid in implementing strategies to prevent future incidents and increase system availability of covered Microsoft technologies, and help determine the root cause of recurring incidents and to provide recommendations to prevent further disruptions in designated Microsoft technologies.

**Azure Rapid Response** provides accelerated reactive support for your cloud services by routing support incidents to technical experts and providing an escalation path to cloud service operations teams, as required.

**Azure Event Management** provides enhanced support before, during, and after critical customer events.

**Office 365 Engineering Direct** provides enhanced support for the core workloads of your Microsoft Office 365 production tenant or tenants, that includes prioritized access to the Office 365 engineering team.

**Developer Support** provides technical support based on cloud and product knowledge across the application development lifecycle for Customer developers building, deploying and supporting applications on Microsoft's platform.

The support services described above are performed only by Microsoft Corporation or its affiliates (including full time employees and outsourced service providers delivering support as directed by Microsoft), even in those circumstances where it is sold through a reseller.

Should you have any questions concerning this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

**[Austin Reed]**

Click or tap here to enter text.