



HIGH PLAINS REC #3 SOLE SOURCE REQUEST AND DETERMINATION FORM

A sole source *determination* is not effective until the *sole source request for determination* has been posted for thirty (30) calendar days without challenge, and subsequently approved in writing by the State Purchasing Agent or, for Professional Services Agreements, the Secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration. The foregoing requirement is regardless of whether the *sole source request for determination* has been signed by the Agency and/or the Contractor.

I. Name of Agency: **High Plains Regional Education Cooperative #3**

Agency Chief Procurement Officer: **Brandon Hightree**

Telephone Number: **(575) 445-7090**

Agency Contact for this request: **Brandon Hightree**

Telephone Number & Email Address: **(575) 445-7090; bhightree@hprec.com**

II. Name of prospective Contractor: **NS4ed LLC**

Address of prospective Contractor: **200 E Broadway, Suite 305, Maryville, TN 37804**

Contact Name, Telephone Number and Email Address:

Joseph Goins

865-414-0033

jgoins@ns4ed.com

Amount of prospective contract before tax: **\$155,000.00**

Term of prospective contract: **August 6, 2020 – June 30, 2021**

Note: For terms longer than one year, Request for Policy Exemption from DFA MUST be included.

III. Agency is required to state purpose/need of purchase and thoroughly list the services (scope of work), construction or items of tangible personal property of the prospective contract (if this is an amendment request to an existing contract, include current contract number issued by SPD):

PURPOSE:

High Plains Regional Education Cooperative #3 (HPREC), an agency of the State of New Mexico (NMSA 1978, 22-2B-3 Regional Education Cooperative Authorized) hereinafter termed "HPREC", is soliciting Request for Proposals from qualified persons, firms and/or corporations, hereinafter termed "Contractors", for local and national contractors to provide Educational Consultation to the College & Career Readiness Bureau of the New Mexico Public Education Department.

Total services contracted by HPREC for Educational Consultation is per New Mexico State Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)* for Career and Technical Education (CTE) and

Early College High Schools (ECHS) with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) for Fiscal Year 2021.

SCOPE OF WORK:

High Plains Regional Educational Cooperative is seeking a provider of Educational Consultation in which High Plains Regional Educational Cooperative #3 will act as the Lead Agency in facilitating Cooperative Contracts for use by all public agencies, including but not limited to: schools, charter schools, institutions of higher education, any/all state department and/or agencies, any/all federal departments and/or agencies, Indian tribes, boards, commissions of any state, county, city or town, all municipal corporations, and any other political subdivision or any state, any non-profit agency of any state.

1. CONTRACTOR shall perform the following with regards to Career Pathways and Labor Market Information:

- a. Create a 10 regional business analyst reports, one per CTE region, reflecting updated outlooks reflecting the worldwide pandemic and New Mexico's specific economic situation. Reports will be provided for all ten CTE regions no later than December 31, 2020 so that comprehensive local needs analyses can be updated.
- b. Provide weekly newsfeeds covering topics relevant to CTE through a subscription/push platform. Work with College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) staff to develop a mailing list such that an initial opt-in messaging request is delivered no later than August 31, 2020.
- c. Develop a marketing plan for increasing usage of CareerPathways-NM.com website and related CTE resources. Plan to be developed by August 31, 2020. Deliverables for said marketing plan shall be due December 31, 2020, March 31, 2021, and May 31, 2021. Marketing materials shall include a self-directed online tutorial and other professional development materials
- d. Career Pathways-NM Website: CONTRACTOR shall keep site current. Site shall include data, news, and relevant material.

2. CONTRACTOR shall perform the following with regards to Counselors and Advisors:

- a. Collaborate with CCRB in the development of a community of best practices for school counselors, with principal emphasis on assisting counselors in the effective use of labor market information. The community will have a virtual presence via a counseling community technical assistance webpage.
 - i. Technical Assistance Webpage: Create and manage a counseling community webpage that provides technical assistance with the following features:
 1. Professional Development: Provide online training courses on the use of labor market information in educational practices (see section ii below).
 2. Resource Center: Construct a resource center that displays links to academic/scholarly websites, articles, videos, etc. related to best practices in school counseling, with emphasis on the use of LMI
 3. News Feed: Develop a news feed for announcements and updates related to career readiness and counseling practices originating from CCRB and national sources

- 4. Bulletin Board: Build a group discussion feature that provides an opportunity for counselors to communicate on shared topics of interest with the ability to post and answer questions
 - ii. Online Training Courses: Provide online training courses on the use of labor market information in educational practices, offering a total of eight hours of professional development training to school counselors.
- b. Work with staff from CCRB to develop and deliver a monthly newsletter to school counselors that presents topics related to the use labor market information in education and best practices in school counseling. Newsletters shall display brief summaries and links to timely and relevant news, as well useful online resources that support counseling activities. Announcements from CCRB will also be included. Distribution of newsletters will be on or before the first Friday of each month starting in August and ending in May.
- c. Present a webinar series for school counselors. Webinars will be one hour in length and delivered on around the 15th of each month starting in August and ending in May, with the month of December excluded.
- d. Manage and facilitate a one-day winter school counseling/advising meeting in February 2021. In consultation with CCRB staff, CONTRACTOR shall secure meeting locations, contract with content consultants, provide registration mechanisms, facilitate surveys and provide lodging and mileage reimbursement to eligible workshop participants.
- e. Deliver items 1-5 pertaining to school counselors on the following deliverable schedule:

Technical Assistance Website	August 31, 2020
Access to Online Training Courses	August 31, 2020
Monthly Newsletter	On or before the first Friday of each month starting August 2020 and ending in May 2021.
Monthly Webinar Series	Around the 15th of each month starting August 2020 and ending May 2021 with the month of December excluded
School Counseling/Advising Meeting	February 2021

3. CONTRACTOR shall perform the following with regards to Early College High Schools (ECHS):

- a. Work collaboratively with PED to expand professional development for ECHS leaders to advance the ECHS mission and outcomes in New Mexico. Such program shall include individual phone support and virtual meetings in September, November, January, March, and May or June. Training shall be based upon national associations and practices that advance and improve access to postsecondary education.
- b. Work collaboratively with PED to review ECHS designee performance reports and provide TA to designees so that they understand their data.
- c. Two regional meetings will each be hosted at an ECHS. Topic selected with input

from ECHS leaders, with meeting dates in October and February.

d. CONTRACTOR shall secure meeting locations, contract with content consultants, provide registration mechanism, facilitate surveys and provide lodging and mileage reimbursement to eligible workshop participants.

e. Host the ECHS website, to include the Resource Center. CONTRACTOR shall identify new material and provide updates to keep material current and relevant.

f. Host a bulletin board for asynchronous communication among ECHS leaders.

- IV. Provide a detailed explanation of the criteria developed and specified by the agency as necessary to perform and/or fulfill the contract and upon which the state agency reviewed available sources. (Do not use “technical jargon;” use plain English. Do not tailor the criteria simply to exclude other contractors if it is not rationally related to the purpose of the contract.)

The agency desires to conduct research and facilitate required meetings related to Early College High Schools and workforce to present the findings from that research throughout the school year, 2020-2021. The research/business meetings is to include a ECHS Policy requirements, updates on condition status vs. exemplary status. Research into national associations and practices that improve access to postsecondary education through ECHS’s will be made available to New Mexico’s ECHS and the associations that support it.

The agency also desires to conduct research and around the changing requirements for workforce, this will be developed and delivered via the multiple Career Models by NS4ed. NS4ed will conduct the research necessary to produce such a quarterly reports and mappint to each individual school district.

The state of New Mexico also requires a statewide Policy Tool for school districts to understand career readiness as defined by their local labor shed. NS4ed, is the sole provider of a system, Pathway 2 Careers (P2C) that provides basic intelligence on the characteristics and dynamics of the labor market in which a local School District is located. It seeks to provide perspective on the realities of the local job market. The report and system organize regional labor market information by career clusters to clearly communicate the highest-value clusters in terms of demand and earning potential. Within each cluster, specific organizations are highlighted, with particular emphases on the demand, earning potential, requisite education, and career pathways. This practical approach serves to make clear the path for local students into the region’s highest-value careers.

This confirms that NS4ed, LLC is the sole source provider, sole publisher, sole ASP hosting source, and sole distributor of Pathway2Careers (P2C) career identification and readiness platform. P2C is federally trademarked, and 100% of its properties and systems are solely and wholly owned by NS4ed. NS4ed has not reassigned any rights to any other entities to sell or host these programs.

System Overview. P2C utilizes national, state, and labor-shed occupational data in conjunction with NS4ed expertise and guidance to evaluate and interconnect available occupations and the personal interests of students. P2C provides guided occupational

analysis to align the interests, skills, and academic priorities of students and education leaders. P2C and its systems serve as the foundation for both education leaders' and students' continuing career readiness assessments and promote the attainment of career and college ready skills and training.

Unique Capabilities. P2C is a bridge between education and industry to help educators connect with the realities of their local job market.

- a. P2C is a flexible framework that allows educators to explore labor market information and access innovative methods for preparing students for careers.
- b. The P2C platform provides a labor market exploration system to identify high-value career destinations for students.
- c. P2C provides specifically crafted career readiness resources to ensure student users become career ready.
- d. NS4ed exclusively utilizes its extensive labor market analysis, delivering the most high-value career options in local communities to users.
 - i. NS4ed utilizes numerous datasets, dependent upon the individual needs of each client or user, to create personalized analysis to connect clients to data specific to their concerns, needs, and location.

- V. Provide a detailed, sufficient explanation of the reasons, qualifications, proprietary rights or unique capabilities of the prospective contractor that makes the prospective contractor ***the one source*** capable of providing the required professional service, service, construction or item(s) of tangible personal property. (Please do not state the source is the “best” source or the “least costly” source. Those factors do not justify a “sole source.”)

In reviewing the Scope of Work, NS4ed is the one source capable of providing the required professional services in the following ways:

- NS4ed currently hosts, and has proprietary ownership of, website domains used by NMPED including <http://careerpathways-nm.com/> and <http://www.echs-nm.com/>. NS4ed is currently updating backend design for <http://careerpathways-nm.com/> in order to provide a more user-friendly, supportive experience for its customers. This will be ready to roll out by the end of the month. Regular updates for the <http://www.echs-nm.com> website occur weekly, at a minimum.
- NS4ed has developed self-directed tutorials and online training courses on the use of labor market information in educational practices. Dr. Danielle Tallent, Chief Learning Officer at NS4ed, has provided focused professional development to educators in New Mexico on the use of LMI and <http://careerpathways-nm.com>. She focuses primarily on career readiness resources and the use of labor market data in educational settings, making information relatable and developmentally appropriate to learners of diverse ages and backgrounds.

- VI. Provide a detailed, sufficient explanation of how the professional service, service, construction or item(s) of tangible personal property is/are ***unique and how this uniqueness is substantially related to the intended purpose of the contract.***

NS4ed is uniquely qualified to fulfill the intended purpose of the contract in the following ways:

- NS4ed recently conducted needs assessments for the 10 CTE regions in New Mexico, led meetings to discuss those assessments and developed reports for each region to serve as the foundation for the development, improvement, approval, and funding of NM CTE programs. This previous work easily segues into the development of reports for each region analyzing the impact of the worldwide pandemic and New Mexico's specific economic situation so that needs assessments can be updated.
- NS4ed has four years' experience working with HPREC, NMPED, and the New Mexico Association for Career and Technical Education. Having personal, experiential knowledge of initiatives and efforts during these partnerships, means that NS4ed can jump right into the Scope of Work without taking valuable time to learn the history of efforts to date. Additionally, Joseph Goins, CEO of NS4ed, has built working relationships based on mutual respect and trust with representatives from HPREC and NMPED as well as principals, counselors and other leaders in the state's Early College High Schools. Joseph Goins' many visits to Early College High Schools has allowed him to develop a personal, working knowledge of each school, including areas of strength and expressed areas for growth. Based on this familiarity, NS4ed is uniquely qualified to offer more personalized, targeted and exceptional service.

VII. Explain why other similar professional services, services, construction or item(s) of tangible personal property **cannot** meet the intended purpose of the contract.

Similar professional services cannot meet the intended purpose of contract due to the proprietary nature of domains necessary to fulfill the Scope of Work as designed by the Agency. Additionally, without having experiential knowledge of work previously completed by NS4ed, the SOW as presented cannot be completed by another educational consultant within the time-frame of the contract, as proposed.

VIII. Provide a narrative description of the agency's due diligence in determining the basis for the procurement, including procedures used by the agency to conduct a review of available sources such as researching trade publications, industry newsletters and the internet;; contacting similar service providers; and reviewing the State Purchasing Divisions' Statewide Price Agreements. Include a list of businesses contacted (**do not state that no other businesses were 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.

HPREC did an extensive search on the internet, as well as the GSD Price Agreements, and found no contractor that can offer professional experience in public education, workforce development, early college high schools, curriculum development, employer engagement and private industry.

In addition, the Executive Director of HPREC has done extensive research around early College High Schools as well as Workforce Readiness. At the national level, Dr. Joseph

Goins has been the content person for the Association of Education Service Agencies (AESA). His broad background makes him the expert in developing current research into practice. Dr. Goins has provided his knowledge and expertise in multiple states over the past several years developing credibility across the nation's service centers.

Certified by:

Date: 7/14/2020



Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Agency Approval by:

Date: 07/14/2020



Agency or Entity Head or Designee