



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 215, Maryville, TN 37804**

Contact Name, Telephone Number and Email Address:

Joseph Goins

865-414-0033

jgoins@ns4ed.com

Amount of prospective contract before tax: **\$134,198**

Term of prospective contract: **Valid through September 30, 2023**

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:

To enhance the Pathway2Careers System and tools, including the NM Career Guidebook and Spanish accessibility (API Development and Spanish Translation) already available to New Mexico teachers and schools throughout the state. Stated goals for the updated NM Career Guidebook tied to the Pathway2Careers (P2C) System, include the following:

- Update Career Guidebook using the P2C regional data
- Update Career Pathways to be aligned to current offerings and approved Program

- of Studies;
- Update Occupational Data using the P2C system to be current;
- Develop occupational career models developed from the P2C System
- Supporting schools (at all levels) across the state; and

These services are per an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) and the Agency, with the termination date of September 30, 2023, pursuant to the amended IGA with NMPED.

SCOPE OF WORK:

Contractor will perform the following to support the program:

- **Spanish API Development**
 - Platform API will be developed to build internal efficiencies that support ongoing Spanish translation efforts for P2C Math.
- **Spanish Translation of Algebra Curriculum Projects**
 - Problem-based lessons allow students to become immersed in various careers and evaluate the employability skills gained during the process. All lessons focused on projects will be translated in Spanish.
- **As an extension of Career Exploration in the P2C System, a Career Guidebook will be developed including the following:**
 - Interest Profile
 - Examples of Occupations by Interest type and cluster
 - Comprehensive Career Mapping across 16 Career Clusters and 79 Pathways
 - Labor Market Analysis for each Cluster and Pathway.
 - Program of Studies mapped to Career Pathways
 - Career Readiness Benchmarks Career Clusters
 - Mapping from Career Guidebook to P2C
 - PDF Format for Print will be made available.

- 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 development of a Career Guidebook to be used by schools. The research will be developed through the **Pathway2Careers™ system.**

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, LLC is the sole provider of **Pathway2Careers™** 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 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, **Pathway2Careers™** is federally trademarked with 100% of its properties and systems solely and wholly owned by NS4ed, LLC. NS4ed has not reassigned any rights to other entities to sell or host these programs.

System Overview. **Pathway2Careers™** 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.
- e. 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:

- A. NS4ed currently hosts and holds proprietary ownership of website domains used by NMPED including <https://schoolcounselors-nm.com/> , <http://careerpathways-nm.com/> and <http://www.echs-nm.com/>. NS4ed recently updated the backend design for <http://careerpathways-nm.com/> to provide a more user-friendly, supportive experience

for its customers. Informational updates for the <https://schoolcounselors-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. Under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Goins, the team at NS4ed has provided professional development to educators across the U.S. on the use of LMI and <http://careerpathways-nm.com> focusing primarily on career readiness resources and the use of labor market data in educational settings ultimately making information relatable and developmentally appropriate to learners of diverse ages and backgrounds.
- NS4ed has developed the API for occupational data and career alignment through the P2C, not readily available anywhere else.

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.***

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- NS4ed conducted comprehensive 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 and provides the team at NS4ed intimate knowledge of the state.
- NS4ed has seven years' experience working with HPREC, NM PED, and the New Mexico Association for Career and Technical Education. Having personal, experiential knowledge of initiatives and efforts during these partnerships, NS4ed can initiate the Scope of Work without taking valuable time to learn the history of efforts to date. Additionally, Dr. Joseph Goins, Founder & CEO of NS4ed, has built working relationships based on mutual respect and trust with representatives from HPREC and NM PED as well as principals, counselors and other leaders in the state. 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 timeframe 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 conducted an extensive search on the internet, as well as the GSD Price Agreements, and found no contractor that can offer comprehensive professional experience in public education, workforce development, early college high schools, curriculum development, employer engagement and private industry. No other businesses can perform the contract due to the nature of this scope of work as an addition to foundational/backend work completed previously, copyrighted material and website domains, etc.

Additionally, the Executive Director of HPREC performed extensive research around Career Pathways as well as Workforce Readiness and found at the national level, Dr. Joseph Goins has been the content person for the Association of Education Service Agencies (AESAs). 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: 7/27/23



Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Agency Approval by:

Date: 07/27/2023



Agency or Entity Head or Designee