



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: **\$1,575,000.00**

Term of prospective contract: **1 year**

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:

NMPED desires to complete and expand upon the statement of work originally defined for the math curriculum implemented across the state of New Mexico federally funded by the New Mexico Ready and Equitable CTE grant. These services are per an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA #21-924-00171) and Amendment (#21-924-00171-A3) between the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) and the Agency for Fiscal Year 2022-2023, with the termination date of September 30, 2023, pursuant to the amended IGA with NMPED.

New Mexico's Ready and Equitable CTE program supports mathematics education, career exploration, and career readiness. PED desires to improve mathematics proficiency and career readiness through a comprehensive system that includes curricula, infrastructure, and professional development. Academic competencies alone prepare no one for the realities of the world of work. Likewise, technical competencies are only a piece of the puzzle. Personal and interpersonal skills were identified by New Mexico employers as their top priorities, but even these critical skills alone do not prepare a student for the rigors of the professional world. Only the comprehensive skills profile identified by New Mexico employers during the 2020 Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment initiative optimally positions the student for success in New Mexico's 21st Century workplace.

SCOPE OF WORK:

The Contractor shall perform the following with regards to Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II and **Pathway2Careers™**:

1. **Academic Content Development:**
 - a. Revise/update not less than 10% of existing math content in each course. This must include pandemic-related updates to occupational descriptions, Labor Market Information (LMI) and questions; replacement of careers no longer meeting Perkins standards as high value; replacement of careers featured in more than two courses as application-type lessons; and responses to requests and suggestions from content users.
 - b. Extract "Career Spotlight: Check" questions into a customizable question bank from which teachers may select individual questions for assignments to students.
 - c. Complete a Spanish translation of revised Algebra I content, the updated Pathway2Careers (P2C) learning platform and the updated Careers2Communities (C2C) website.
 - d. Add digital tools to math content including accessibility features, interactive math tools, and upgrades to User Interface.
2. **Content Delivery:**
 - a. Maintain and provide access and technical support to a virtual learning platform that includes statewide access to **Pathway2Careers™** content.
 - b. Maintain the LTI to make P2C platform accessible through Canvas and provide technical support as requested by LEAs.
3. **MetaMetrics/Assessment:**
 - a. Provide ongoing access to and support for beginning, middle and end of year Quantile assessments and related insight.
 - b. Provide state level membership to Quantile HUB (MetaMetrics assessment portal), as requested by New Mexico educators using the P2C content with students.
4. **Marketing:**
 - a. Create, provide, and distribute additional marketing materials (mailers,

samples, flyers, & digital imagery).

- b. Maintain and provide access to a website for the Careers2Communities program, including a curated page of Educator Resources, review at least biannually.

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 expand and revise the math curriculum used statewide. NS4ed, LLC has developed, designed and trademarked the curriculum and research protocols for the math courses.

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://careers2communities.com>.
 - B. NS4ed has developed self-directed tutorials and online training courses on the use of labor market information in educational practices, including with P2C Curriculum. 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.
- 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:

- A. NS4ed designed and developed the P2C math curriculum based on actionable research and from a different perspective which the majority of curriculum is written.
 - B. The continual nature of engaging students with actionable research will be critical for the continued development of the NM RECTE grant.
 - C. NS4ed has six years’ experience working with HPREC and NM PED. 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 initially 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, regional workforce partnerships, LMI development, curriculum development, employer engagement and private industry. Since the initial research, Dr. Joseph Goins' work with the NMPED on this project, experiential knowledge, and proprietary content developed has assisted the agency in the determination that no other business can perform the SOW within this contract.

Additionally, the Executive Director of HPREC performed extensive research 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 New Mexico and multiple other states over the past several years developing credibility across the nation's service centers.

Certified by:

Date: Oct 20, 2022

Bando Lightree

Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Agency Approval by:

Date: Oct 19, 2022

R. Stephen Aguirre

Agency or Entity Head or Designee







2022-2023 NS4ed Sole Source CTE

Final Audit Report

2022-10-20

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