



## 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: **\$106,481.48**

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 enhance targeted support for NM Career Advisement/School Counseling and regional workforce partnerships by supporting professional development and collaboration.

CONTRACTOR will facilitate and direct the work, in order to support the following goals:

- Improving the level of NM career advisement resources;
- Improving the level of career advisement professional learning;
- Supporting school counselors (at all levels) across the state; and

- Supporting NM PED in reaching their outcome goals around career advisement/counseling.

Total services contracted by HPREC for NM Career Advisement/School Counseling is per a New Mexico Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for Career Advisement/Counseling with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**

CONTRACTOR shall perform the following with regards to NM Career Advisement/School Counseling for the 2022-2023 academic year:

1. **New Mexico School Counselors' Community of Best Practice Resource Center:** CONTRACTOR will identify new material to publish on NM's School Counselors' Community of Best Practice (schoolcounselors-nm.com) weekly so that it is current, relevant, and accurate for 2022-2023. Specific updates to include:
  - a. **Labor Market Information:** Work with PED in the continued development of a community of best practices for school counselors, with principal emphasis on assisting counselors in the effective use of labor market information.
  - b. **Resource Center:** Expand the 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).
  - c. **News Feed:** Maintain a news and events feed for announcements and updates related to career readiness and counseling practices originating from CCRB and national sources.
  - d. **Community Collaboration:** Develop a space within the counselor community website that utilizes popular communication tools for counselors to connect and collaborate with each other. Weekly topics and activities will be distributed to encourage counselor participation.
  - e. **Technology Support Page:** Develop a page with the counselors' community webpage that provides access to technology tools and technology-related information that can be used to support counseling activities.
2. **Structured Meetings & Annual Conference:** In collaboration with PED LEAD, CONTRACTOR will plan, develop, and implement structured meeting, including an annual conference and monthly meetings.
  - a. Manage and facilitate a one-day virtual or in-person winter school counseling/advising meeting in February 2023. Provide content consultants, registration mechanisms, facilitate surveys, and provide reimbursement to eligible workshop participants.
  - b. Offer monthly meetings for school counselors. Meetings will be one hour in length and delivered on, or around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month starting in August and ending in April, with the month of December excluded; recorded videos and presentations will be posted on the NM School Counselors' Community of Best Practice (schoolcounselors-nm.com).

3. **Professional Development & PLCs:** CONTRACTOR will develop, present, and/or arrange for professional development and professional learning communities around counselor-related topics, with an emphasis on the use of labor market information in educational practices in the following manners:
  - a. Provide synchronous and/or asynchronous 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. Attention will be directed to communicating the value of LMI to counselors through monthly meeting presentations, weekly discussion activities, and dedicated information sessions that introduce counselors to LMI.
  - b. Fall and spring professional learning communities will be offered to counselors with each community including 2-3 one-hour sessions focused on a particular topic related to best practices for school counselors.
  
4. **Communication & Support:** CONTRACTOR will work with staff from CCRB to deliver:
  - a. 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.
  - b. A weekly communication that includes announcements, a calendar of upcoming events, resources, and collaboration activities submitted to school counselors via email using a subscription/push platform.
  - c. Bi-monthly surveys distributed to counselors to assess the effectiveness of the community and ascertain counselor needs. Survey results will be used to adjust and improve school counselor services provided by the CONTRACTOR in collaboration with PED.
  - d. Next Step Plan Template will be developed, in consultation with PED LEAD as fillable and customizable templates by downloading Pathway2Careers student Career Pages.

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 the School Counselor Community for fiscal year 2022-2023. The technical assistance related to the school counselor community is to build a community of best practices and utilize problems of practice within the leadership.

The community will utilize the research and the professional learning communities that have been developed over the 12 months to continue the growth. NS4ed, LLC developed

the community and research protocols in FY 2020 and saw over 400+ counselors benefit from the research and the protocols.

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.
  - B. 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.
- 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 delivered Professional Learning Communities, Monthly Meetings, and Special Events for the School Counselor Community with the following programs:
    - a. <https://schoolcounselors-nm.com/plc-archives/>
    - b. <https://schoolcounselors-nm.com/2021-22-monthly-meetings/>
    - c. <https://schoolcounselors-nm.com/special-events/>
  - B. The continual nature of the support and best practices for 2022 will be critical for the development of the counselor community.
  - C. 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.
  - D. NS4ed has six 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 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, career advisement and counseling, regional workforce partnerships, LMI 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.

In addition, the Executive Director of HPREC has done extensive research around Career Advisement and Counseling as well as Workforce Partnerships. 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.

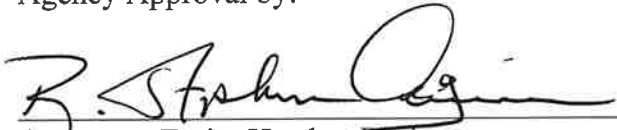
Certified by:

Date: 10/12/2022

  
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Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Agency Approval by:

Date: 10/13/2022

  
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Agency or Entity Head or Designee