



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**

Address of prospective Contractor: **200 E Broadway, STE 215, Maryville, TN 37804**

Contact Name, Telephone Number and Email Address:

Dr. Joseph Goins

865-414-0033

jgoins@ns4ed.com

Amount of prospective contract before tax: **\$150,000**

Term of prospective contract: **23-24 School Year (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:

To enhance targeted support for New Mexico Career Advisement/School Counseling and regional workforce partnerships by supporting professional development. The CONTRACTOR will facilitate and direct the work, to support the following goals:

- Improving the level of NM college and career counseling/advisement resources;

- Improving the level of college and career counseling/advisement professional learning;
- Supporting school counselors (at all levels) around the state; and
- Supporting NM PED in reaching their outcome goals around college and career counseling/advisement

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 June 30, 2024, pursuant to an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with NMPED.

SCOPE OF WORK: CONTRACTOR shall perform the following with regards to NM Career Advisement/School Counseling:

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 2023-2024. 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 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.
- f. **NS4ed Educate Portal:** Use the educate.ns4ed.com portal as a repository of resources for school counselors and to present coursework relevant to the role of the counselor.

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 2024. 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 15th of each month starting in August and ending in April, with the month of December excluded.

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.

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 is seeking a sole source for the research and facilitation of necessary meetings for the School Counselor Community in fiscal year 2023-24. The goal is to

establish a community of best practices and leverage real-world challenges within the leadership.

This community will rely on the research and professional learning communities that NS4ed, LLC has developed over the years, ensuring continuous growth. NS4ed, LLC pioneered the community and research protocols in FY 2020 and witnessed the positive impact as over 400 counselors benefited from the research and protocols.

NS4ed, LLC is the sole provider of Pathway2Careers™, a comprehensive career identification and readiness platform. In the state of New Mexico, there is a requirement for a statewide Policy Tool that helps school districts understand career readiness based on their local labor market. NS4ed, LLC's Pathway2Careers™ serves as the sole source for this tool, offering valuable insights into the characteristics and dynamics of the local job market.

The Pathway2Careers™ report and system organize regional labor market information by career clusters, providing clear communication on the highest-value clusters in terms of demand and earning potential. It also highlights specific organizations within each cluster, emphasizing demand, earning potential, requisite education, and career pathways. This practical approach enables local students to discern the path toward the region's most valuable careers.

It should be noted that NS4ed, LLC retains sole ownership of Pathway2Careers™, with federal trademarks and complete control over its properties and systems. The company has not granted any rights to other entities to sell or host these programs, reinforcing its status as the sole source provider, publisher, ASP hosting source, and distributor of Pathway2Careers™.

- 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.”)**

NS4ed is the sole source capable of providing the required professional services. They offer a range of products and services aimed at bridging the gap between education and the workforce to drive student success and economic growth and have demonstrated their expertise in the field through their professional learning programs and coaching services, which provide educators with personalized resources and support. Their research services cover topics such as college and career readiness, quality instruction, curricula development, educational technology tools, and evaluation services.

Furthermore, NS4ed has developed self-directed tutorials and online training courses on the use of labor market information in educational practices. Led by Dr. Joseph Goins, their team has provided professional development to educators nationwide, focusing on career readiness resources and the integration of labor market data in educational settings.

Additionally, NS4ed plays a vital role in hosting and maintaining website domains utilized by NMPED, including schoolcounselors-nm.com and careerpathways-nm.com. They have continually updated and improved the user experience of these websites to ensure they are informative and user-friendly.

Considering the comprehensive range of services provided by NS4ed and their expertise in the field, they are the sole source capable of delivering the required professional services outlined in the Scope of Work.

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 possesses unique qualifications that make them well-suited to fulfill the contract's intended purpose. Here are the reasons why:

1. NS4ed has provided Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Monthly Meetings, and Special Events for the School Counselor Community. The PLC archives, monthly meeting recordings, and special events hosted by NS4ed have offered continuous support and shared best practices among school counselors in New Mexico.
2. NS4ed has conducted comprehensive needs assessments for the 10 Career and Technical Education (CTE) regions in New Mexico. These assessments have facilitated discussions and generated reports for each region, laying the foundation for the development, improvement, approval, and funding of CTE programs. This experience enables NS4ed to analyze the impact of the pandemic and the state's economic situation, allowing for updated needs assessments.
3. NS4ed has almost 10 years' experience working with HPREC, NM PED, and the New Mexico Association for Career and Technical Education. This partnership has given NS4ed firsthand knowledge of previous initiatives and efforts, eliminating the need to spend valuable time learning the history. Dr. Joseph Goins, the Founder & CEO of NS4ed, has established strong relationships with representatives from HPREC, NM PED, principals, counselors, and other leaders in the state, ensuring a personalized and exceptional level of service.

Based on their extensive experience, track record, and existing relationships, NS4ed is uniquely qualified to provide the required services outlined in the Scope of Work.

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

Given the unique circumstances of the contract, it is evident that no other educational consultant can fulfill the intended purpose of the contract as effectively as NS4ed. This is primarily due to the proprietary nature of the domains required to successfully execute the Scope of Work outlined by the Agency. The ownership and management of these domains by NS4ed make them an indispensable component of the project.

Furthermore, the SOW presented is intricately linked to past work and experiential

knowledge of NS4ed. Another educational consultant would not have the necessary familiarity with NS4ed's previous accomplishments and expertise to complete the SOW within the designated timeframe of the contract.

Considering these factors, NS4ed stands as the sole source capable of fulfilling the requirements of the contract, ensuring its successful execution.

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.

Based on the research conducted by HPREC, it has been determined that no other contractor in the field possesses the extensive professional experience required in areas such as public education, workforce development, early college high schools, curriculum development, employer engagement, and private industry. After careful consideration, it was found that Dr. Joseph Goins, the CEO and Founder of NS4ed, stands out as a national expert in the field of Early College High Schools and Workforce Readiness.

Dr. Goins and NS4ed have a proven track record of successfully translating research into practical applications, making them an invaluable asset for this contract. Their expertise and credibility have been recognized and utilized in multiple states, further highlighting their suitability for the project and recognition as sole source.

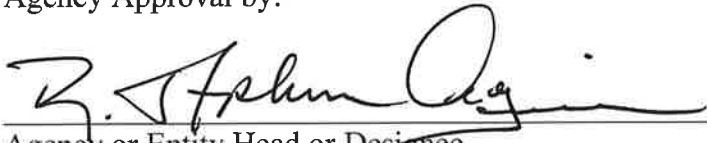
Certified by:



Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Date: 8/31/23

Agency Approval by:



Agency or Entity Head or Designee

Date: 08/31/2023