



## 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: **\$100,000.00**

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 enhance targeted support for Early College High Schools (ECHS) and regional workforce partnerships. PED shall designate a staff person as the "LEAD" for this initiative. The LEAD shall provide support, collaborate, and communicate with "CONTRACTOR", and shall be copied on all field correspondence relating to this scope of work.

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

- Improving the level of ECHS implementation among designated programs;
- Supporting NM PED in reaching their outcome goals around ECHS.

### **SCOPE OF WORK:**

CONTRACTOR, in collaboration with LEAD, shall perform the following with regards to NM Early College High School:

1. **ECHS Community of Best Practice Resource Center:** CONTRACTOR will identify new material to publish on the ECHS online resource center weekly so that it is current, relevant, and accurate for 2022-2023. Specific updates to include:
  - a. **ECHS Website:** Update the website with a current look and feel while maintaining the integrity of the site as a hub for professional development, information, resources, and research around New Mexico's Early College High Schools.
  - b. **Resource Center:** Gather & share resources around each design principle representing best practice from designated NM ECHSs and exemplary national models.
  - c. **News Feed:** Identify and post new articles, research, blogs, and webinar opportunities from national associations that advance career preparedness and improve access to postsecondary education.
  - d. **Community Collaboration:** Develop a space within the website that utilizes popular communication tools for ECHS leaders to connect and collaborate with each other. Weekly topics and activities will be distributed to encourage counselor participation.
  - e. **Events Calendar:** Maintain an events page populated with PED and other events related to ECHS.
  - f. **ECHS Fact Sheet:** Develop and publish an ECHS Fact Sheet with information and data specific to ECHS programs.
2. **Structured Meetings, Convenings, and PLCs:** In collaboration with PEDLEAD, CONTRACTOR will plan, develop, and host:
  - a. ***Quarterly Convenings:*** These regional convenings for ECHS leaders will be hosted at an ECHS on a topic selected by the LEAD and ECHS leaders. CONTRACTOR will secure meeting locations, contract with content consultants, provide registration mechanism, facilitate surveys, and provide lodging and mileage reimbursement to eligible workshop participants.
  - b. ***Virtual Leadership Meetings:*** CONTRACTOR will collaborate with LEAD and PED to host monthly check-in meetings for ECHS leaders September through April. Meetings shall include time for ECHS announcements and an opportunity for ECHS leaders to collaborate and discuss best practices. Agendas will be set with LEAD and input from ECHS leaders.
  - c. ***Student Convening:*** CONTRACTOR and LEAD will collaborate to facilitate a virtual leadership conference for students at the end of fall or

beginning of spring semester.

3. **Focused Professional Development & PLCs:** CONTRACTOR and LEAD will collaborate to expand professional development for ECHS leaders to advance their mission and outcomes in New Mexico. Such professional development shall include:
  - a. Synchronous and/or asynchronous online professional development and PLC sessions based upon design principles and best practices.
  - b. Deliver the *Problems of Practice* Series
  - c. Areas of need as indicated by ECHS leadership
  
4. **Review, Develop, and Customize Program-Specific Materials:** CONTRACTOR will provide support, assistance, and guidance to ECHS leaders so they can update, or develop, program-specific materials for their ECHS program:
  - a. Utilize ‘The Backpack Connection Series’ to assist schools in the development and/or customization of materials and handouts, providing a way for leadership teams to create or review current materials.
  - b. Collaborate with each school to develop a spotlight piece to serve as both a recruiting tool and online recognition of individual programs. This will be accomplished via the “Spotlight School” page on the resource website with a goal of highlighting one school each month. A calendar and template will guide the ECHS leaders through the process and each school will have a OneDrive folder provided to house materials. CONTRACTOR will develop the webpage in conjunction with each school and ensure its accessibility so the schools can link to their own sites.
  
5. **Communication, Coaching, and Support:** CONTRACTOR will provide support and work collaboratively with PED to re-evaluate ECHS designee performance and ensure formal designation as required by NMAC 6.30.13.
  - a. CONTRACTOR will communicate weekly with ECHS-NM leadership with news, announcements, PED resources, and general resources relevant to performances and designation through a subscription/push platform or check-in meeting.
  - b. LEAD and CONTRACTOR will develop a tool for re-evaluation of ECHS designee performance.
  - c. CONTRACTOR will provide support to schools requiring a remediation plan. Applications that do not meet the minimum criteria for ECHS recognition require a remediation plan. PED will provide support and guidance to CONTRACTOR in developing the plan and delivering it to schools and principals as necessary.
  - d. CONTRACTOR will track, organize, and coach schools through the designation, application, or remediation processes, as needed.
  - e. Support may include collaborating with PED in developing and promoting a system to generate data reports to determine areas of strength or needed improvement. CONTRACTOR will provide technical support to schools to understand their data, as needed.
  - f. LEAD PED and CONTRACTOR will provide a webinar to introduce the concept of early college to schools that may have interest in developing their

own program. This webinar will be posted as a resource for on demand use.

- 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 Early College High School for fiscal year 2022-2023. The technical assistance related to the ECHS 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 multiple years and states. NS4ed, LLC has developed the community and research protocols for NM ECHS and other states to build application, designation, and best practices.

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.
  - C. NS4ed, LLC designed, developed, and owns all proprietary rights to *Problems of Practice* Series for professional development.
- 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 ECHS.
- B. The continual nature of the support and best practices for 2022 will be critical for the development of the counselor community.
- 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 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.

Additionally, the Executive Director of HPREC performed extensive research around early College High Schools 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: 9/9/22

  
Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Agency Approval by:

Date: 09/09/2022

  
Agency or Entity Head or Designee