



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: **Advance CTE**

Address of prospective Contractor: **8484 Georgia Ave, Ste 620, Silver Spring, MD 20910**

Contact Name, Telephone Number and Email Address:

Dr. Emily J. Passias, 614-517-5000, epassias@careertech.org

Amount of prospective contract before tax: **\$870,000.00**

Term of prospective contract: **1 fiscal 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: Building on New Mexico's existing Credentials of Value (COV) work and the state's interest in updating approaches to developing and approving Programs of Study (POS), partner with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) to develop a statewide process for reviewing, approving, revising and sunseting programs of study; identify talent pipeline priorities that should anchor program and credential offerings; analyze current programs and courses for alignment to those priorities; lead the development of updated programs of study, including courses and standards aligned to talent pipeline priorities, refine a statewide list of credentials of value that are embedded within coherent programs of study; and support state-led rollout and implementation. This work will focus on building the policy framework, analytic foundation and

implementation supports needed for New Mexico to move from its current system to a more statewide, labor-market-informed approach to programs of study and credentials. The work will also support New Mexico in clarifying the role of locally developed programs, the criteria for state approval and Perkins funding eligibility, and the change management needed for successful statewide adoption. These services are per an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA #27-924-00095) between the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) and the Agency for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

SCOPE OF WORK:

1. Establish a Statewide Programs of Study Approval Framework

Work under the direction of and in collaboration with the College and Career Readiness Bureau of PED to develop a recommended process for how New Mexico reviews, approves, revises, and sunsets statewide Programs of Study, as well as how the state reviews and determines eligibility for locally developed programs. This will include identifying policy questions, approval pathways, decision rules and the relationship between program approval, local applications and broader state planning processes.

- A. Develop a statewide process for approving, revising and sunseting statewide and locally developed Programs of Study.
- B. Program Approval Handbook with workflow diagrams, timelines, process for requesting revisions and new POS, rubric for creating and evaluating, state vs local roles and responsibilities. Approval process portal submission including all necessary forms, documents, checklists and instructions/guidance.
- C. Guidance document for local administrators and educators on the new approach with a clear distinction of how secondary programs of study feed into New Mexico postsecondary programs.
- D. Internal documentation for PED that describes the updated process, can be leveraged in education and workforce planning, and that includes policy considerations and suggested decision rules, suggested updated/integration with local planning processes, including the CLNA, local applications and other state planning processes. Internal PED playbook detailing decisions, rules, technical assistance guidelines for staff, criteria for sunseting programs, cross-agency coordination and transition process, annual review processes. Training modules for staff and district leaders on the new framework.

2. Identify Talent Pipeline Priorities

Conduct labor market analysis and define thresholds for determining which industry sectors and occupational areas warrant programmatic investment. This work will identify statewide pipeline priorities and included recommendations for how New Mexico should account for major employers and high-wage sectors that may not be fully represented in traditional labor marked data (e.g. government employers). Produce both an external-facing summary to support communication with state and local partners, as well as an internal memo to help state leaders understand key limitations, risks and gaps.

- A. Identify talent pipeline priorities as SOC code, pathway, and cluster levels.
- B. Coordinate with our careerpathways-nm.com to develop a statewide talent pipeline priority dashboard and align current resources.
- C. Externally-facing summary of methodology and results to use to socialize with the field including an employer engagement toolkit.

- D. Internal memo with detailed methodology, data considerations/limitations, and considerations for the future (including risks and gaps identified as a result of the analysis).

3. Analyze Existing Programs of Study and Courses

Review New Mexico's existing programs of study and current CTE course inventory and standards against statewide talent pipeline priorities. Leveraging the Career Clusters Framework, organize courses into common themes, grouping them within career clusters and subclusters, and develop recommendations for which programs and courses should be retained, revised, sunsetted or identified as future gaps. This stage of work will need to focus first on conceptual and structural alignment before moving into deeper standards-level recommendations.

- A. Crosswalk of existing Programs of Study, courses and standards against statewide talent pipeline priorities, and state and national standards.
- B. Career Clusters and subcluster organization map for current course inventory and to identify redundancies, missing sequences, outdated courses, and outdated standards.
- C. Recommendations identifying programs/courses to retain, revise, sunset or flag as future gaps based on Talent Pipeline Priorities.
- D. Summary of key structural alignment findings to inform course and standards revision and development with recommendations of an appropriate transition timeline.

4. Update the Statewide Credentials of Value List

Using the talent pipeline priorities identified earlier in the project, analyze real-time labor market information and solicit employer input to refine and finalize a statewide list of Credentials of Value. Then, ensure that these credentials are aligned to and embedded within approved or revised Programs of Study. This phase will emphasize alignment between programs and credentials so that credentials are part of the coherent learner pathways rather than standalone outcomes.

- A. Updated draft of tiered statewide Credentials of Value list, to be validated with employers in the next phase.
- B. Develop a credential evaluation rubric for quality, portability, stackability, Labor Market Information, and appropriate grade age minimums and course level.
- C. Documentation of criteria and methodology for inclusion on the Credentials of Value list. Develop credential integration guides/systems mapping to show how each COV aligns and fits into courses, course sequences, and programs of study

5. Validate and Refine Programs, Courses, Credentials, and Standards Through Employer and Educator Input

Support a structured validation process that uses employer input to confirm whether identified programs and courses align to workforce needs. Work with educators to shape course content and organization, including standards development and refinement. Facilitate both the employer and educator-facing processes. This work may include multiple industry-facing sessions and educator sessions organized around clusters, subclusters or other relevant groupings.

- A. Employer engagement materials and facilitation agendas including but not limited to employer convening playbook standard operating procedures with flow charts, checklists, step by step process, etc.
- B. Educator engagement materials and facilitation agendas.

- C. Summary memo of employer and educator input, validation findings, and recommended refinements to course and standards.
- D. Draft and revise course recommendations, standards, and performance-based tasks for each program of study and course, informed by validation sessions, degree and occupational training programs, industry-recognized credentials of value, and workforce and postsecondary alignment.
- E. Finalize Credentials of Value list based on employer feedback

6. Develop Recommendations for Program Structure, Sequence and Transition

Develop recommendations for how approved programs of study should be structured, matching the level of specificity New Mexico wants in regard to course outcomes or standards, and whether courses should follow required or flexible sequences. Develop recommendations for transitioning from the current system to a revised statewide approach, including identifying replacement or transition options for discontinued programs or courses and the professional learning educators may need to implement changes. Develop recommendations for the conditions and indicators that distinguish high-quality implementation of Programs of Study, including the role of course sequencing, embedded credentials, work-based learning, student leadership opportunities, and other program components that support learner readiness and successful transitions. Include consideration of how these expectations should be reflected in local implementation guidance, approval criteria and transition planning.

- A. Recommendations for statewide program structure and course sequencing
- B. Transition strategy for moving from the current system to the revised model
- C. Recommendations for replacement/phaseout pathways for discontinued programs or courses
- D. Professional learning recommendations for educators and local leaders
- E. Quality framework describing key aspects of implementing high-quality Programs of Study aligned to Career Ready Practices and ACTE High Quality Framework.
- F. Crosswalk showing alignment between approved/revised Programs of Study and Credentials of Value
- G. Recommendations for embedding credentials within coherent learner pathways

7. Develop Data Reporting, Accountability and Readiness Recommendations

Review New Mexico's current approach to collecting, validating, analyzing and reporting CTE data and develop recommendations to strengthen the state's data reporting and accountability infrastructure in support of revised Programs of Study, Credentials of Value, and college and career readiness. Include recommendations for how the state can better use data to monitor Programs of Study implementation with fidelity and support continuous improvement. Develop recommendations for a more rigorous and coherent approach to defining and measuring college and career readiness, including which indicators should be considered sufficient demonstrations of readiness and which should be treated as supporting measures. Recommendations may also address implications for local applications, performance reporting, public dashboards and related state reporting structures.

- A. Recommendations for strengthening data reporting and accountability infrastructure including collection, validation, reporting and analytics.
- B. College and career readiness framework with recommended indicators and thresholds.
- C. Recommendations for implications to local applications, performance reporting and public dashboards.

8. Develop Policy and Governance Recommendations

Identify and develop recommendations for the policy mechanisms needed to formalize and support implementation of the revised statewide approach, including opportunities to embed expectations in the Perkins state plan, state policies, funding requirements, graduation requirements, and accountability systems. Include identifying policy options that clarify state expectations for program quality, learner readiness and local compliance, and provide examples from other states that may inform New Mexico's approach.

- A. Policy options memo outlining mechanisms for embedding expectations in the Perkins state plan, state policies, funding, graduation requirements and accountability, including cross agency alignment across state systems
- B. Scan of relevant examples from other states
- C. Recommendations for state policy language or policy direction to support program quality, learner readiness and local compliance

9. Develop an Implementation and Rollout Plan

Create an implementation plan outlining the strategies, activities, timelines, roles and support needed to launch and sustain the revised statewide approach. Include change management, communications and field-facing materials, rollout sequencing options and a train-the-trainer or roadshow model that positions NMPED leadership as the primary messenger to the field. The implementation plan will also need to include recommendations for how existing statewide convenings (including the Best Practices, data-related, and application convenings), workshops and technical assistance structures can be leveraged to prepare the field for changes over time, including differentiated supports for CTE directors, educators, principals, superintendents and other local leaders.

- A. Comprehensive implementation and rollout plan including change management recommendations, a communications plan, and recommendations for using statewide convenings, workshops and technical assistance to support rollout
- B. Sequenced timeline/Gantt chart for rollout activities, roles and Milestones
- C. Field-facing implementation materials
- D. Differentiated support plan for CTE directors, educators, principals, superintendents and other local leaders

10. Support Implementation

Support the execution of the implementation plan, including development of communications tools, facilitation supports, stakeholder engagement structures and technical assistance resources to support statewide understanding and uptake. Support the design of these materials and activities, while NMPED remains the face of the work with local stakeholders/partners.

- A. Implementation support through CTE Best Practices, data-oriented convenings, other statewide convenings, webinars and regional presentations
- B. Webinar, presentation, and facilitation materials to support statewide rollout
- C. Technical assistance resources aligned to implementation priorities
- D. Creating a new webpage or redesigning of existing webpage to support implementation. Provide reports on outcomes from each of the events, activities and convenings.

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.)

To fulfill the requirements of this contract, the agency determined that the selected contractor must possess demonstrated expertise in Career Technical Education (CTE) program design, state and federal CTE policy, workforce alignment, and the development of high-quality, standards-based Programs of Study. Specifically, the contractor must have the capacity to develop new and revise existing Programs of Study that align with current labor market demands, industry-recognized credentials, secondary and postsecondary education requirements, the National Career Clusters Framework, and applicable state and federal Career Technical Education guidance.

The agency determined that these services require specialized knowledge, technical expertise, and dedicated staffing resources that are not currently available within the agency. Existing staff are responsible for ongoing administration of federal and state CTE initiatives, monitoring, technical assistance, accountability, grant management, and stakeholder engagement. Due to these existing responsibilities and limited staffing capacity, the agency does not have sufficient bandwidth to undertake comprehensive research, stakeholder coordination, curriculum alignment, validation, and documentation required to develop and implement new, aligned Programs of Study within the required project timeline.

- 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.”)

Advance CTE is the longest-standing national non-profit representing State CTE Directors and state leaders of Career Technical Education (CTE). Their mission is to support state CTE leadership in advancing high-quality CTE policies, programs, and pathways that ensure career and college success for each learner.

Advance CTE has planned and facilitated high-quality, effective training and technical assistance sessions for its members and the CTE community across all 50 states. As the only national organization with a focus on state CTE leadership at the table with Congressional offices when the law was being drafted, Advance CTE possesses a thorough understanding of the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* (“Perkins V”), in addition to state implementation of Perkins V, the CTE landscape nationally, and adult learning best practices. As such, they have unduplicated expertise regarding the design and implementation of bodies of work directly related to Perkins V, such as work-based learning, programs of study, credentials of value and other components to support the career technical education ecosystem. Additionally, New Mexico's federally approved CTE State Plan is designed around Advance CTE's Career Ready Practices and modernized National Career Clusters Framework. Partnering with the organization that developed these nationally recognized frameworks will ensure that the development and

revision of New Mexico's Programs of Study are fully aligned with the state's CTE vision, federal Perkins V requirements, and nationally recognized best practices. This alignment will support the creation of high-quality Programs of Study that reflect current workforce needs, strengthen secondary-to-postsecondary pathways, and promote consistency across all career clusters.

- 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.***

The purpose of this contract is to develop and align New Mexico's Programs of Study with the state's CTE strategic priorities, the modernized National Career Clusters Framework, and federal Perkins V requirements. Advance CTE's direct involvement ensures that the Programs of Study are developed using the intended methodology and national best practices established through the framework's design. The organization also has extensive experience working with state education agencies to modernize Programs of Study, align secondary and post-secondary pathways, incorporate labor market and workforce data, and engage education and industry stakeholders throughout the development process.

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

New Mexico's federally approved CTE State Plan is designed around Advance CTE's Career Ready Practices and modernized Career Cluster Framework; working with the authors of these existing resources will allow the development of high-quality, nationally aligned Programs of Study that are consistent with the state's approved Perkins V plan while advancing workforce and education priorities.

- 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.

In determining the basis for this procurement, the Agency conducted a review of available sources. This review included internet research; review of career-and-technical-education and college-and-career-readiness trade publications and industry newsletters; examination of the New Mexico State Purchasing Division's Statewide Price Agreements for comparable services; and identification of commercial providers of career-readiness, advising, and platform services active in the market.

CCRB has attempted to create these resources internally over a period of two years (FY25 and FY26), without success. CCRB inquired via email with other state CTE Directors and with the Association for Career Technical Education (ACTE) throughout FY25 and FY26 to seek existing resources and information.

Although other organizations provide general educational consulting, research, or professional development, none possess the same combination of national leadership, specialized expertise, proprietary resources, and direct experience supporting statewide Career Technical Education systems using the National Career Clusters Framework and Career Ready Practices.

Certified by:

Date: 08/05/2026



Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Agency Approval by:

Date: 08/05/2026



Agency or Entity Head or Designee

Sole Source Justification Advance CTE 26-27

Final Audit Report

2026-08-05

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