



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 dba Pathway2Careers**

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

Joseph.goins@p2c.org

Amount of prospective contract before tax: **\$85,000.00**

Term of prospective contract: **26-27 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 provide services contracted by the Agency to enhance targeted support for New Mexico Career Advisement/School Counseling and regional workforce partnerships by supporting professional development and collaboration per an Intergovernmental Agreement (#27-924-00162) with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) through the College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) is continuing the School Counselors Community of Practice Initiative to strengthen the capacity of school counselors statewide to guide students toward college, career, and life success. High Plains Regional Education Cooperative #3 (“the Agency”) requires a contractor to continue operating this initiative — which NS4ed, LLC dba Pathway2Careers (“P2C”) built and maintains in partnership with NMPED’s College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) — for the 2026–2027 school year.

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

The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) seeks to strengthen the capacity of school counselors statewide in guiding students toward college, career, and life success. This initiative focuses on enhancing school counselors' ability to support student career readiness, facilitate postsecondary planning, and increase awareness of workforce opportunities with resources, professional learning, and a community network.

Deliverable Name

1. **Monthly Communities of Practice (CoP) for counselors.**
 - Topics for each month will be decided by NMPED.
 - Each CoP shall be one hour in length.
 - Target months August- April. To be held monthly except for the month of the Annual School Counselor Conference.
 - Create a single registration link that will register participants for every occurrence.
 - Provide CCRB with registration link.
 - Provide CCRB with attendance list one week after the CoP.
 - Record and post CoP videos, PowerPoints and resources to the counselor resource site within a week after the CoP.
2. **Manage and facilitate a hybrid (in-person/virtual) School Counselor Conference to be held in Albuquerque.**
 - Accommodate a minimum of 125 in-person attendees.
 - Provide registration mechanism.
 - Provide online capabilities for virtual participants via a contractor if needed.
 - Record conference sessions.
 - Secure a venue for the in-person conference.
 - Provide lunch for the conference.
 - Provide travel reimbursement to eligible workshop participants.
 - Topics for the conference will be decided by NMPED.
 - Post conference videos, PowerPoints, and resources to the counselor resource site within a week after the conference.
3. **Monthly Newsletters for School Counselors.**
 - Present topics related to the use of labor market information in education

- and best practices in school counseling.
- Newsletter shall display brief summaries and links to timely and relevant news and useful online resources that support counseling activities.
- Announcements from CCRB shall be included.
- Topics for the newsletters will be developed under the direction of the PED project lead.
- 4. **Online Resources and Portals.**
 - Annual maintenance and updates of online resources through the NMPED Canvas learning management system (LMS) as required by LMS staff and PED project lead. Allow for digital badging.
- 5. **New Mexico School Counselor Resource Center website.**
 - Update resources available at least quarterly and maintain public access to the site.

CONTRACTOR shall have the authority to move funds within the budget with prior written approval from the Project Lead and Chief Financial Officer.

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 developed and specified the following criteria as necessary to perform and fulfill this contract, and reviewed available sources against these criteria:

- Continuity of the established statewide counselor Community of Practice, its membership network, and its scheduled cadence of monthly meetings and annual convening;
- Ability to maintain and expand the existing New Mexico School Counselors Community of Practice website (schoolcounselors-nm.com), which is already built and hosted for the initiative;
- Integration of counselor resources with the New Mexico Career Pathways online dashboard and P2C’s labor-market information tools, so that counselors and students draw on the same statewide data;
- Management of the existing NMPED Canvas “New Mexico Counselor Resource Center” and its accumulated library of Community-of-Practice recordings, trainings, and materials;
- Demonstrated capacity to design and deliver counselor professional development aligned to CCRB’s goals and to New Mexico labor-market data tools.

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.”)

The following reasons, qualifications, proprietary rights, and unique capabilities make NS4ed, LLC dba Pathway2Careers the one source capable of providing the required services:

P2C is the developer, owner, and current host of the New Mexico School Counselors’ Community of Best Practice at schoolcounselors-nm.com — the exact website named in the scope of work — which is live today and serving counselors statewide. The website, its curated content, and the community network it convenes are proprietary to, and operated by, NS4ed, LLC dba Pathway2Careers.

This initiative is delivered as a collaborative effort between NMPED’s College and Career Readiness Bureau and P2C, drawing on more than eight (8) years of partnership. The deliverables depend on P2C’s proprietary labor-market tools and the New Mexico Career Pathways dashboard (careerpathways-nm.com, also built and operated by P2C) with which the counselor resource center is required to integrate.

P2C already hosts the NMPED Canvas New Mexico Counselor Resource Center and holds the accumulated library of Community-of-Practice meeting recordings, trainings, and resources, together with the established statewide counselor network and meeting cadence that the 2026–2027 deliverables continue.

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 scope of work continues an initiative and a community that already exist. It names P2C’s own website (schoolcounselors-nm.com) as the resource center to be maintained and requires integration with the P2C-operated New Mexico Career Pathways dashboard. The deliverables are extensions of P2C-owned platforms, content, and relationships — not an interchangeable service available from multiple sources.

This uniqueness is substantially related to the contract’s purpose: sustaining and growing a statewide professional community and its knowledge base for counselors. Continuity of the network, the website, the Canvas library, and the labor-market integrations can only be provided by the entity that created and operates them.

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

Other providers of counselor professional development or college-and-career-readiness tools identified through market research cannot deliver this initiative. No other entity may maintain or expand the P2C-owned schoolcounselors-nm.com website, host the existing NMPED Canvas Counselor Resource Center, or integrate counselor resources with the proprietary New Mexico Career Pathways dashboard and P2C labor-market tools specified

in the scope of work.

Transferring the initiative to another vendor would dissolve the continuity of an active statewide counselor community — requiring a new website, a new resource library, and re-recruitment of the counselor network mid-year — which would disrupt the monthly meeting cadence and the Spring 2027 convening and undermine the purpose of strengthening, rather than restarting, the community of practice.

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.

That review confirmed that, while several providers offer overlapping categories of service, the required work is the continuation, maintenance, and enhancement of statewide platforms, datasets, and community relationships that are owned, built, and hosted by NS4ed, LLC dba Pathway2Careers and that reflect more than eight (8) years of partnership with NMPED. No other business identified can lawfully or practically perform the contract, because no other business holds rights to the Contractor’s proprietary platforms and integrated tools or possesses the New Mexico-specific historical data and relationships on which the deliverables depend.

The Contractor’s continued delivery is publicly evidenced by the platform it currently operates for this initiative, which is live and in active statewide use:

New Mexico School Counselors’ Community of Best Practice — schoolcounselors-nm.com.

Certified by:

Brandon Hester

Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Date: 07/31/2026

Agency Approval by:

Jill Fernandez

Agency or Entity Head or Designee

Date: 08/03/2026

Sole Source Justification - NM Career Advisement & Counseling 26-27

Final Audit Report

2026-08-03

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