



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 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: **\$300,000.00**

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: The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED), through its College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB), seeks to sustain and enhance statewide technical assistance for New Mexico's Early College High School (ECHS) programs during the 2026–2027 school year. High Plains Regional Education Cooperative #3 ("the Agency"), acting as the contracting agency in support of this statewide initiative, requires a contractor to continue delivering the comprehensive ECHS technical assistance

program that NS4ed, LLC dba Pathway2Careers (“P2C”) has built and operated in partnership with NMPED for more than eight (8) years:

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

per an Intergovernmental Agreement (#27-924-00096) with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) through the College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

SCOPE OF WORK:

ECHS Community of Best Practice Resource Center: The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) seeks to enhance and strengthen support for its Early College High School (ECHS) programs statewide. This Statement of Work outlines a comprehensive technical assistance and continuous-improvement plan for the 2026- 2027 school year. The plan will provide statewide support to all designated ECHS sites, targeted assistance to schools with specific needs, professional development opportunities for the ECHS community, student engagement initiatives, and robust evaluation and reporting measures.

In addition to maintaining core statewide support, this Scope of Work is intended to move New Mexico toward a more data-driven and evidence-based ECHS model. Services will therefore emphasize not only technical assistance and resource development, but also stronger implementation supports, clearer evidence expectations, and more consistent validation of schools that are authentically advancing the ECHS model in alignment with NMAC 6.30.13 and state priorities.

Key Implementation Focus Areas

Throughout the 2026-2027 implementation, the following focus areas will be emphasized to ensure successful outcomes:

1. **Designation Compliance Support:** Ensure all ECHS activities and services align with NMPED's ECHS designation and re-designation requirements, helping schools maintain their status and meet state standards.
2. **Role-Based Training & Coaching:** Provide targeted training and coaching for specific roles, for example school leaders, counselors, work-based learning coordinators, and data specialists, to build capacity and expertise in implementing ECHS model components.
3. **Equitable Access & Barrier Removal:** Promote equitable access by identifying and helping schools remove barriers to ECHS participation for historically underrepresented student groups. This may include strategies to support first-generation college students, low-income students, and others who face challenges in accessing early college opportunities.
4. **Student Engagement & Career Exposure:** Integrate robust student engagement and career exploration strategies into all activities to ensure that

students remain motivated and receive ample exposure to college and career pathways.

5. **Continuous Improvement:** Establish regular data review sessions and feedback loops, for example quarterly performance reviews and stakeholder feedback meetings, to allow for mid- course corrections and continuous refinement of supports based on data and feedback.

School Support: Universal supports provided to all New Mexico ECHS programs to build capacity, facilitate communication, and strengthen high school-college partnerships.

Deliverable Name

la. Newsletters: Monthly ECHS newsletters featuring best practices, policy updates, success stories, upcoming events, and resource highlights.

1b. Canvas Course: Annual maintenance and updates of online resources through the NMPED Canvas learning management system (LMS) as required by LMS staff and PED project lead. \$3,000.00.

lc. New Mexico ECHS Resource Center website: Update resources available at least quarterly and maintain public access to the site

ld. Cross-School Resource Sharing: Establish and communicate access to an online forum for sharing resources and best practices among ECHS sites.

le. Annual On-Site Support Visits: Conduct full school day, in-person site visits to each of 23 ECHS campuses to review program progress, provide coaching, and offer tailored feedback and support.

lf. Three-tier designation framework: Work with PED project lead to establish a 3-tier designation status reflecting new/conditional, established/continuing, and underperforming/probationary. Assign each existing ECHS to a tier, based on their adherence to NMAC standards as determined by data gathered from in-person site visit and review of data gathered from ECHS administrators.

lg. ECHS report card: Following 3-tier designation framework and assignment (If), provide each ECHS with a report indicating their designation status for the following school year, including data justification and action steps.

Professional Development and Community Supports: Professional development, networking opportunities, and capacity building activities for each community across New Mexico.

Deliverable Name

2a. Monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) Meetings: Facilitation of monthly PLC meetings for ECHS leaders and staff to share best practices, address challenges, and collaborate on solutions.

2b. Statewide Convenings: Organization of biannual statewide convenings (fall and spring) for ECHS stakeholders - including administrators, teachers, counselors, and IHE partners - featuring workshops, presentations, and collaborative sessions. Pathway2Careers will cover

venue and food expenses. Travel expenditures will be borne by the school/school district. Under the direction of the PED project lead, conduct direct outreach to all NM ECHS site leaders to communicate the opportunity. 2@ \$12,000.00.

2c. Statewide Student Virtual Event: Coordination of an annual virtual engagement event for all ECHS students. This online event will feature interactive college and career readiness activities, guest speakers, and the sharing of student success stories to inspire and connect students across the state. Under the direction of the PED project lead, conduct direct outreach to all

NM ECHS site leaders to communicate the opportunity.

2d. Application webinar: Facilitate a virtual webinar to provide guidance to interested LEAs regarding the application and designation process and timeline, focused on standards as set forth in NM statute, rule and guidance, including review and feedback on planning-year applications, as well as advice on developing partnership agreements and sustainability plans. Under the direction of the PED project lead, conduct direct outreach to all NM school and district leaders to communicate the opportunity. Record, edit and post the webinar for asynchronous access within two weeks of the recording on both the Canvas course and ECHS Resource Center.

2e. Redesignation webinar: Facilitate a virtual webinar to provide guidance to designated ECHS sites regarding the re-designation process and timeline, focused on standards as set forth in NM statute, rule and guidance, including corrective measures as applicable. Under the direction of the PED project lead, conduct direct outreach to all NM ECHS site leaders to communicate the opportunity. Record, edit and post the webinar for asynchronous access within two weeks of the recording on both the Canvas course and ECHS Resource Center.

Collateral: Resources designed explicitly for use by New Mexico Early College High Schools perpetuity.

Deliverable Name

3a. Designation Application: Develop an updated application for first-time designees for use by PED project lead, ensuring adherence to all standards as set forth in NM statute, rule and guidance. Include a comprehensive review rubric.

3b. Re-designation Application: Develop an updated application for existing ECHS sites seeking redesignation, ensuring adherence to all standards as set forth in NM statute, rule and guidance. Include a comprehensive review rubric.

3c. ECHS Toolkit: Produce a printable/shareable toolkit to offer guidance, sample documents, templates, and exemplars to support effective program implementation at each ECHS site. Include core operating requirements for high school-college partnerships (e.g., joint governance structures, coordinated scheduling, data-sharing agreements) and support for issue resolution between secondary and post-secondary partners. Deliver the toolkit via pdf to the PED project lead.

3d. "ECHS 101": Produce a printable/shareable document covering the fundamentals of the ECHS model, NMPED's designation criteria, and best practices for new ECHS

implementation. Deliver the document via pdf to the PED project lead.

3e. Student Recruitment Support: Produce a printable/shareable document for use by designated ECHS sites to attract and enroll underrepresented student populations as determined by NMAC. Deliver the document via pdf to the PED project lead.

Evaluation & Reports: Comprehensive evaluation and data analysis efforts to measure program impact and inform continuous improvement.

Deliverable Name

4a. Application review: Review and evaluate all submitted applications for designation and re-designation (using the rubric created under 3a and 3b above) within the timeframe agreed upon by and under the direction of the PED project lead. Submit recommendations for designation and re-designation with justification to the PED project lead.

4b. ECHS Data Dashboard: Update and maintain access to required data dashboard that aggregates and visualizes key performance metrics (e.g., student enrollment, dual credit attainment, graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment and persistence, and work-based learning participation).

4c. ECHS Student Voice Survey: Administer an annual statewide survey to gather feedback from ECHS students about their experiences, needs, and suggestions. Analyze data to summarize student feedback, identify trends, and highlight areas for growth or additional support to inform program improvements and address student concerns. Provide raw survey data to the PED project lead.

4d. Annual Impact Report: Prepare a detailed annual report analyzing statewide ECHS performance data, highlighting outcomes, best practices, and recommendations for program improvement. Assess long-term impact data, including postsecondary education persistence and completion rates, as well as entry into the workforce. Summarize key findings to make strategic recommendations to PED project lead for the subsequent school year.

4e. Annual ECHS Fact Sheet: Creation of an annual fact sheet visualizing key data and outcomes for all ECHS sites (including enrollment figures, dual credit attainment, student demographics, credential outcomes, and success stories).

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 existing statewide ECHS support system without interruption to schools mid-designation cycle;
- Ability to maintain and expand the current New Mexico ECHS Resource Center website (echs-nm.com) and the NMPED Canvas ECHS learning management system, both of which are already built and hosted for NMPED;
- Custody of, and the ability to continue reporting from, the multi-year longitudinal ECHS dataset (enrollment, dual-credit attainment, demographics, credential outcomes, graduation and persistence) required for the Annual Fact Sheet, the Data Dashboard, and the Annual Impact Report;
- Established working relationships with every designated ECHS site and its institution-of-higher-education (IHE) partner statewide, enabling annual on-site visits and PLC facilitation;
- Demonstrated capacity to deliver role-based coaching (leaders, counselors, WBL coordinators, data specialists) and to align all activities with NMPED's ECHS designation and re-designation requirements.

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 original developer, owner, and current host of the statewide ECHS support infrastructure this contract continues. P2C designed and operates the New Mexico ECHS Resource Center at echs-nm.com and built the NMPED Canvas ECHS resource center — both of which are live and actively serving administrators, counselors, educators, parents, and students today. These platforms, their content, and their underlying design are proprietary to NS4ed, LLC dba Pathway2Careers.

For more than eight (8) years, P2C has partnered with NMPED and its College and Career Readiness Bureau to stand up and sustain the ECHS ecosystem statewide. Through that partnership P2C holds the historical, New Mexico-specific ECHS dataset and the established dashboards, toolkits, EWS exemplar model, and pathway-planning templates that the 2026–2027 deliverables build directly upon.

P2C maintains direct, ongoing relationships with all designated ECHS campuses and their IHE partners, and it possesses the institutional knowledge of each site's designation status, program history, and improvement needs — knowledge accumulated over the life of the partnership and not transferable to a new provider.

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 deliverables in this scope of work are, by design, a continuation and expansion of systems, data, and relationships that P2C already owns and operates. The newsletters, Canvas site, Resource Center website, Data Dashboard, Fact Sheet, Impact Report, and outcomes reports are not generic products purchased off the shelf; each is a direct extension of P2C's existing New Mexico ECHS platform and its eight-year record of delivery.

This uniqueness is substantially related to the purpose of the contract: NMPED's objective is the sustained, uninterrupted operation and improvement of a statewide ECHS support system that is already in place. Only the entity that built, hosts, and holds the data and relationships for that system can deliver true continuity of service across the designation and re-designation cycle.

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 college-and-career-readiness vendors identified through market research offer overlapping services (professional development, dashboards, advising tools), but none can provide continuation of this specific initiative. No other entity holds the rights to the P2C-owned echs-nm.com platform or the NMPED Canvas ECHS resource center, and no other entity possesses the multi-year New Mexico ECHS dataset that the required Fact Sheet, Dashboard, and Impact Report depend upon.

Engaging a different provider would require rebuilding the statewide platforms from scratch, re-collecting years of longitudinal data, and re-establishing relationships with every ECHS site and IHE partner. That would break continuity in the middle of active designation cycles, create gaps and inconsistencies in the reported data, and place schools' ECHS designation compliance at risk — defeating the core purpose of the contract, which is to sustain and strengthen an operating system rather than replace it.

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 Early College Resource Center — echs-nm.com.

Certified by:

Date: 07/31/2026

Brandon Hester

Agency Chief Procurement Officer

Agency Approval by:

Date: 08/03/2026

Jill Fernandez

Agency or Entity Head or Designee

Sole Source Justification - NM ECHS 26-27

Final Audit Report

2026-08-03

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