REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Professional Services:
Computer Network System Administration and Technical Support

Issue Date: October 21, 2026

Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC)
A Proud Partner of America's Job Center of California Network
11 Ilahee Lane, Chico, CA 95973

NoRTEC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and provider of employment and training programs.

Cindy Newton, Interim Executive Director
cindy.newton@ncen.org

Section 1: Purpose and Background

Purpose

The Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) Workforce Development Board (WDB) is requesting proposals to provide Computer Network System Administration and Technical Support Services. The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to select a qualified contractor to provide ongoing administration, maintenance, monitoring, and technical support for NoRTEC's information technology infrastructure. The selected contractor will work collaboratively with NoRTEC management and staff to ensure the reliability, security, and efficient operation of the organization's network systems, server, cloud-based services, workstations, and related technology resources.

Respondents should demonstrate experience providing information technology services to organizations of similar size and complexity. Experience supporting Microsoft Windows Server environments, Microsoft 365, cybersecurity, cloud technologies, network infrastructure, backup and disaster recovery, and end-user technical support is highly desirable.

The resulting contract will be for a ten (10) month term, with services provided in accordance with the scope of services and compensation outlined in this RFP. All contracts awarded under this RFP shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and procurement requirements, including, where applicable, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Uniform Administrative Requirements under 2 CFR Part 200, and any additional funding-specific requirements.

Qualified individuals, independent contractors, firms, and organizations possessing the experience, technical expertise, and capacity to provide the services described in this RFP are eligible to submit a response. Organizations submitting a proposal shall identify a single individual who will serve as the primary point of contact and be responsible for contract administration and service delivery.

NoRTEC encourages participation by small businesses, minority-owned businesses, women-owned business enterprises, veteran-owned businesses, and other disadvantaged business enterprises.

Pursuant to federal requirements, NoRTEC shall not award a contract to any individual or entity that is debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in federally funded programs, in accordance with 2 CFR Part 180, 2 CFR Part 2900, and applicable U.S. Department of Labor regulations. Respondents may be required to certify that they are not debarred or suspended prior to contract award.

Background

NoRTEC is a government organization formed under a Joint Powers Agreement headquartered in Chico, California, that administers WIOA programs and other workforce development initiatives across eleven Northern California counties. Established in 1983, NoRTEC is governed by a Workforce Development Board (WDB) comprised of representatives from business, labor, education, economic development, community-based organizations, and America's Job Center of California (AJCC) partners.

NoRTEC contracts with nonprofit organizations throughout its service area to operate a network of AJCCs, providing comprehensive employment, training, and business services to job seekers and employers. As the administrative entity for multiple federal, state, and local workforce programs, NoRTEC is responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable regulations while supporting innovative workforce development strategies that strengthen regional economies and meet the evolving needs of employers and job seekers.

The selected contractor will provide information technology services that support NoRTEC's administrative operations and technology infrastructure, ensuring the security, reliability, and continuity of systems essential to the delivery of workforce development programs and services. Additional information about NoRTEC is available at **www.ncen.org**.

Section 2: Questions, Proposal Deadline and Tentative Schedule

Questions

No formal bidder's conference will be held. Respondents may submit written questions as specified in the Tentative Schedule of Events. Responses to questions that materially affect this solicitation will be provided to all prospective respondents, as appropriate.

Proposal Due Date

Proposal submissions must be received by NoRTEC no later than 5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, November 12, 2026. Proposals must be submitted electronically by email to:

NoRTEC
Attention: Cindy Newton, Interim Executive Director
E-mail: cindy.newton@ncen.org

Proposals must be formatted as PDF. Proposals in other file formats will not be reviewed. Faxed proposals will not be accepted. Late submissions will not be accepted or considered

Tentative Schedule of Events*

RFP Release Date	October 21,2026
Question Period	October 21, 2026 – November 4, 2026, 5:00 p.m. PST All questions must be submitted in writing to Interim Executive Director Cindy Newton at: cindy.newton@ncen.org
Proposal Deadline	November 12, 2026, 5:00 p.m. PST
Review Process	November 13-20, 2026
Contract Begins	December 1,2026

**These dates/times are subject to change, please check the NoRTEC website often www.ncen.org.*

Section 3: Scope of Services

Administration, maintenance, and security of NoRTEC's computer network as follows:

Managed environment: 8 users, 8 laptops, 1 physical server, VoIP phone system, and firewall.

Network and Infrastructure

- Maintenance and support of the firewall, internet circuit, network switches, wireless access points, and remote-access VPN connections.
- Windows Server administration and maintenance, including operating system updates and storage and performance monitoring.
- Support and maintenance of computer hardware, printers, scanners, and other peripherals.
- Proactive monitoring and alerting of critical systems.

Endpoint and Identity Management

- Remote monitoring and management (RMM) of all workstations, including automated patching of operating systems and third-party software.
- Device provisioning, configuration, and secure decommissioning of retired equipment.
- Identity and access management through Microsoft Entra, including user onboarding and offboarding, licensing, and Conditional Access.
- Multi-factor authentication (MFA) enforcement across all accounts.

Backup and Disaster Recovery

- Automated, monitored backup of the server with local and offsite (cloud) copies.
- Periodic recovery testing and documented business continuity and disaster recovery planning.

Microsoft 365 and Collaboration

- Administration of Exchange Online, SharePoint, Teams, and OneDrive, including mailboxes, distribution lists, and shared resources.
- Tenant configuration, security baseline maintenance, and license optimization.

Website Services

- Website hosting, design, maintenance, and administration.
- Domain, DNS, and SSL certificate management.

End User Support

- Help desk and technical support for staff under defined service level agreements (SLA), with a one-hour response target for emergencies and a four-hour response target for all other incidents. New equipment orientation and staff technology assistance, as requested.
- Support for the VoIP phone system, including user changes and carrier coordination.

Planning, Procurement, and Reporting

- Evaluation and recommendation of new hardware and software to meet current and future needs.
- Research and procurement of hardware, software, and network-related items.
- Maintenance of a current IT asset inventory and network documentation.
- Periodic technology review meetings with management covering system health, security posture, and recommendations.

Meeting Technical Support

- Provide on-site technical support for approximately three (3) NoRTEC Governing Board and WDB meetings during the contract term, including setup, operation and removal of NoRTEC equipment and meeting technology, including, but not limited to, microphones (approximately 20), projectors, laptops, presentation displays, Zoom or other virtual meeting platforms, and audio/video recording as requested. Meetings are planned as follows:

  February 25, 2027 – Chico, CA
  May 27, 2027 – Anderson, CA
  (Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided)

Additional Requirements

- Unless otherwise specified herein, the selected contractor shall provide all vehicles, tools, equipment, materials, and other resources necessary to perform the required services.
- Travel and travel-related expenses associated with meetings can be reimbursed in accordance with applicable WIOA requirements and must be included in the contractor's proposal.
- Supplies and consumable materials used exclusively for NoRTEC operations may be purchased by the contractor only with NoRTEC's prior written approval. Approved

purchases must be separately itemized on invoices. NoRTEC reserves the right to procure equipment and supplies directly.

- Due to the evolving nature of NoRTEC's technology environment, the scope of services may be modified during the contract term. Significant projects or services outside the scope of routine administration and support may be authorized separately and compensated at a mutually negotiated rate.
- At the time of contract award, the selected contractor must provide certificates of professional liability insurance naming NoRTEC as an additional insured and evidence of workers' compensation insurance, if applicable. The selected contractor must maintain all required insurance coverage throughout the contract term.
- NoRTEC reserves the right to terminate any resulting agreement in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.

Section 4: Proposal Components

Specific Proposal Requirements

All proposals must cover the services that will be offered and should clearly demonstrate the contractor's interest and ability to provide such services. Proposals shall include the following components:

1) Include name, address, phone number, and email address of the primary contact, as well as their title and capacity within the organization and company description.
2) Contractor's prior experience and related qualifications, including relevant training, education and professional credentials or certifications.
3) Plan of Work detailing the understanding of the work to be performed, how services will be provided, procedures and any other pertinent information.
4) Two (2) professional references.
5) The proposed estimated price for services on a monthly basis with all fees, charges, billing rates, and overhead costs explained. All proposals shall include a total for the 10 month period.
6) Indicate as applicable whether the organization is a small and/or minority-owned business.

Section 5: Evaluation Criteria and Award

Process

NoRTEC will put together a RFP Scoring Panel (Panel) of staff who will score and rank all proposals that meet the compliance requirements described in the RFP. The Panel will score and rank all proposals using the criteria described within the RFP and specifically developed to examine the competence of the respondents and suitability of their proposals. The Panel may assign each proposal a maximum of 100 points. Panel members will review and rank each proposal

and, based on their knowledge and assessment of the proposals, recommend one of the respondents for designations and contract negotiation.

Review Criteria

The following criteria will be considered in evaluating responses:

- Prior Experience and Expertise (40 points) – Experience related to the Scope of Services
- Qualifications and Staffing (15 points) – Ability to perform the work
- Budget/Cost (20 points) - Costs are reasonable for the services
- Work Plan (10 points) – How services will be provided
- References (10 points) – Confirm past performance
- Certified Minority Business (5 points) CFR 200.321

The arrangement of criteria is not meant to imply order of importance in the evaluation process.

Notice of Award

It is anticipated that the successful Respondent will be notified of the contract award prior to December 1, 2026. Any award is subject to funding availability. The resulting contract is anticipated to commence on December 1, 2026, and continue through June 30, 2027, subject to successful contract negotiations and execution by both parties.

Lack of Competition

In the event that only one responsive proposal is received in response to this RFP, NoRTEC reserves the right to proceed with the procurement without reissuing the solicitation, provided that NoRTEC determines the respondent is qualified and the proposed pricing is fair and reasonable. NoRTEC may conduct a cost or price analysis, as appropriate, to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local procurement requirements.

Appeals Process

Only respondents to this RFP may appeal the results if they believe the procurement process was violated in some manner, and/or Federal, State, and/or NoRTEC procurement guidelines have been violated. An appeal will not be allowed to contest individual scores, the rating system, disqualification, or dissatisfaction with the evaluation results.

Any respondent wishing to protest shall submit a written appeal to the Interim Executive Director of NoRTEC no later than five (5) calendar days following the date of the Notice of Award. The protest shall clearly identify the specific grounds for the protest and include all supporting documentation. The Interim Executive Director or designee will review the protest and issue a written decision in accordance with NoRTEC's procurement and vendor selection procedures. The Interim Executive Director's decision shall be final unless otherwise provided by applicable law or NoRTEC policy.

Written protests shall be submitted by email to the Interim Executive Director Cindy Newton, cindy.newton@ncen.org.

Contract Renewal Option

At NoRTEC's sole discretion and subject to satisfactory contractor performance, funding availability, and mutual written agreement, the resulting contract may be extended for up to two (2) additional one-year terms under substantially the same terms and conditions. Any adjustments to compensation for renewal periods shall be negotiated and agreed upon in writing by both parties prior to execution of a contract amendment.

Section 6: General Provisions and Disclaimers

Minority Business Participation

NoRTEC, as a recipient of State and Federal funds, subscribes to the practices below and will fully comply with Federal, State, and Local laws and directives governing non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and affirmative action in all activities.

- No person shall be discriminated against whatsoever on the grounds of race, religion, color, age, sex, physical handicap, or national origin.
- No person shall because of race, religion, color, age, sex, physical handicap, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded entirely or in part by the City, the State, or the Federal Government.
- Affirmative Action shall be taken by all levels of governments, where necessary, to support the underlying objectives of said anti-discrimination policies.

To further support policies relative to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination, NoRTEC will make every effort to ensure that Minority Business Enterprises have the maximum practicable opportunity to participate in construction contracts and in the procurement of goods, professional services, and supplies. Contractors are encouraged to indicate in their RFP response if they are a certified minority business as certified through the State of California. A listing of certified minority businesses, as well as the services and commodities they provide is available from the California Unified Certification Program.

Addenda to this Request for Qualifications

At the discretion of NoRTEC, if it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an addendum will be posted on NoRTEC's website. Any clarification will become an addendum to this RFP. Respondents are responsible for checking the website frequently to remain informed about the procurement process and other information that may affect this RFP.

Anti-Assignment/Subcontracting

The Contractor acknowledges that if selected by NoRTEC to perform the services required hereunder, it will be based, in part, upon the Contractor's special skills and expertise. The Contractor shall not assign, subcontract or otherwise transfer this agreement in whole or in part without the prior written consent of NoRTEC, which NoRTEC may, in its sole discretion, approve or deny without reason. Any attempted assignment or transfer of its obligations without such consent shall be null and void. No such approval by NoRTEC of any subcontract shall be deemed in any way to provide for the incurrence of any obligation of the State in addition to the total fixed price agreed upon in this agreement. Subcontracts shall be subject to the terms and conditions of this agreement and to any conditions of approval that NoRTEC may deem necessary. Subject to the foregoing, this agreement shall be binding upon the respective successors and assigns of the parties.

Independent Contractor Status

The Contractor shall, at all times, be regarded as an independent contractor and shall at no time act as an agent for NoRTEC. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed or construed by NoRTEC the Contractor, or any third party as creating the relationship of principal and agent, master and servant, partners, joint ventures, employer and employee, or any similar such relationship between NoRTEC and the Contractor. Neither the method of computation of fees or other charges, nor any other provision contained herein, nor any acts of NoRTEC or the Contractor hereunder, creates or shall be deemed to create a relationship other than the independent relationship of NoRTEC and the Contractor. Contractor's personnel shall not be deemed in any way, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, to be employees of the State. Neither the Contractor nor its employees shall, under any circumstances, be considered servants, agents or employees of NoRTEC; NoRTEC shall be at no time legally responsible for any negligence or other wrongdoing by the Contractor, its servants, agents, or employees. NoRTEC shall not withhold from the contract payments to the Contractor any federal or State unemployment taxes, federal or State income taxes, Social Security tax, or any other amounts for benefits to the Contractor. Further, NoRTEC shall not provide to the Contractor any insurance coverage or other benefits, including Workers' Compensation, normally provided by the State for its employees.

Contract Type

NoRTEC contemplates payment on a cost-reimbursement basis. A Cost Reimbursement Contract is one that establishes an estimate of total costs for the purpose of obligating funds and a ceiling that the Contractor may not exceed (except at Contractor's risk) unless the awarding party agrees to amend the contract and provide additional funds.

NoRTEC is responsible for ensuring that contracted costs are both necessary and reasonable. Provisions are made for limited movement of funding among line items. The Contractor is required to maintain records sufficient to account for all expenditures. Costs will be reported monthly.

For the purpose of responding to this RFP, Respondents should develop a line-item budget showing all expected costs associated with delivering the proposed services.

Due to the nature of the WDB's funding sources, potential changes in legislation and policies, and performance achieved, Respondents are advised that any contract awarded under this RFP may be modified to incorporate such changes, adjustments in the delivery system, or any activities provided.

Conflict of Interest

All proposals will be reviewed for a perceived conflict of interest. All respondents must disclose any potential conflicts of interest arising from the relationships of the one-stop operators with particular training service providers or other service providers, including but not limited to, career services providers. Conflicts must be disclosed and submitted as part of the proposal (Attachment "A" to this RFP).

Respondents will not offer or provide any gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value to any officer, member, employee, or agent of the WDB (including special committees), Local Chief Elected Official(s), Fiscal Agent, or other individual/organization for the purpose of having an influencing effect toward their own proposal or any other proposal submitted. No employee, officer, or agent of the WDB (including standing committees), Local Chief Elected Official(s), Fiscal Agent, or other individual/organization shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by WIOA funds if a conflict of interest or potential conflict would be involved. Respondents shall not engage in any activity that will restrict or eliminate competition. Violation of this provision may cause a respondent's proposal to be rejected.

General Disclaimers

1. No costs will be paid to cover the expense of preparing a proposal or procuring a contract for services or supplies under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

2. NoRTEC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to accept or reject any or all items in the proposal, waive any minor irregularities or informalities, request clarification from respondents, negotiate with the selected respondent, or cancel this solicitation at any time and to award contracts in whole or in part as deemed to be in the best interest of NoRTEC.

3. All responses to this RFP become the property of NoRTEC. At such time a final award is made, all proposals submitted in response to this RFP become a matter of public record and shall be regarded as public records, with the exception of those elements in each proposal which are defined by the bidder as business or trade secrets, and marked "Trade

Secret", "Confidential" or "Proprietary", or if disclosure is required under the Public Record Act.

4. Proposals submitted for funding consideration must be consistent with, and if funded, operated according to, the federal Workforce Investment Act legislation, all applicable federal regulations, State of California policies, and NoRTEC policies and procedures.

5. Proposers selected for funding must also ensure compliance with the following, as applicable: U.S. DOL regulations 20 CFR Part 652; 29 CFR Parts 96, 93, 37, 2 and 98; and 48 CFR Part 31; Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-21, A-87, A-110, A-122, and A-133 as applicable.

6. NoRTEC is required to abide by all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act legislation and regulations. Therefore, NoRTEC reserves the right to modify or alter the requirements and standards set forth in this RFP based on program requirements mandated by state or federal agencies.

ATTACHMENT "A" – Conflict of Interest Form

By submitting a proposal, the bidding entity certifies to his/her knowledge and belief that there is no conflict of interest (real or apparent) inherent in the bid or in delivering the scope of work if NoRTEC awards a contract. A conflict of interest would arise if any individual involved in the preparation of this proposal and delivery of services has a financial or other interest or would be likely to gain financially or personally from the award of a contract. The same would hold true for any member of the individual's family, partner, or an organization employing or about to employ any of the above as a direct result of the successful award of a contract under the RFP. NoRTEC reserves the right to disqualify a bidding entity should a conflict of interest be discovered during the solicitation process.

_____ _____

Principal Agent Signature Date