

The background of the header section is a close-up photograph of several sharpened colored pencils (orange, green, pink, blue) lying on a wooden surface, surrounded by colorful pencil shavings.

# ACES Insights

January 2025

## Executive Director, Christy Takacs

We will be running several RFP's in the next couple of months and would LOVE for you to [share vendor contact information](#) of who you are using or would like to use in the following areas:

Marketing

Data Analytics/Dashboards

Facilities Management

Digital Core Curriculum

We will reach out to them to let them know about the opportunity to submit a proposal. Take a minute to check out our [website](#) to see all the current contracts we have available to you. Be sure to let us know if there is a need you have that is not on the list. We are currently updating our solicitation schedule to include feedback we received from the procurement survey we recently sent out. We will keep you updated on the schedule! As always, please reach out to us anytime. We are here to support you.

Proposal Evaluators needed---if you are interested in helping evaluate proposals, WE NEED HELP! We do everything we can to minimize the time and effort needed to review proposals. We know your time is valuable. This is a necessary part of the process for us to have contracts available for your use. Please let me know if you would be willing to volunteer!

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## Procurement Corner

Happy New Year! While we are looking forward to putting in place several new contracts in 2025, I would like to take some time in this issue to focus on contracts already in place. ACES is working to improve ease of use and satisfaction under existing contracts in several ways:

- enhancing focus on Agency/Contractor relationships
- continuously learning and making improvements to previously solicited contracts
- modifying criteria and documenting contractor performance in an effort to encourage future participation
- selection of highly qualified contractors
- making contracts easier to understand and utilize

We hope that our efforts will lead to better communication and overall services and demonstrate that ACES can be trusted as a go-to resource for both Participating Agencies and Contractors, no matter the need or issue!

Author and ACES Procurement Program Manager

Tammy West

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### **The Good, The Bad and the Ugly – Dealing With Service Issues**

A survey conducted recently shed a little light on both good and not-so good experiences with services provided under ACES contract. We would like to remind everyone that ACES highly values communication and is here to help **both** Participating Agencies and Contractors achieve mutual satisfaction to the extent possible under any of our contracts. If you are experiencing any problems under an ACES contract, either as a participating agency or contractor, we encourage you to reach out to either Christy Takacs or Tammy West and let us help mediate the situation. Our contracts contain minimum and/or mandatory service requirements and often detail the responsibilities of both the participating agency and the vendor when utilizing and performing services. When trouble arises, please consider involving ACES early in the process and let us attempt to work on your behalf to clarify, mediate, or remedy the situation. Sometimes, company and agency representative(s) working with each other on a regular basis may not be passing necessary information up the chain to managers or administrators who have the authority to influence change. It is also important that ACES be aware of any problems under our contracts so we can document issues and utilize that documentation when vetting vendors for future contracts. We encourage you to help us be proactive in dealing with any uncomfortable or downright bad situations by calling or reaching out via email to share your experience and let us see if we can assist and achieve resolution sooner rather than later. Also, if you are experiencing a really good relationship with a contractor, we would LOVE to hear about that as well!

### **ACES Food Service Contracts**

I would like to take a step back to a few solicitations we did when I first started working with ACES in 2022, for Food Services and Cafeteria Food and Supplies and would like to highlight the following in regard to those contracts:

- Any ACES Participating Agency can utilize an ACES contract for food services if available - doing so *negates* the requirement for the school to conduct their own RFP.
- We work closely with the NM PED's Student Success and Wellness Bureau on developing specifications and when contracting.
- ACES has multiple contractors to choose from who offer both Cost Reimbursement and Fixed Cost food services, as well as a contract that offers cafeteria food and supplies; Note that food service contractors cannot provide services to all schools in all locations. We are hoping to

encourage more vendor participation and secure additional vendors the next time the contract is solicited.

- We understand these contracts are complex and can be confusing. We continue to learn more about the contracts and requirements and often make notes regarding changes we plan to incorporate into the next RFP and contracts in an attempt to make the documents (including the SFA Questionnaire) easier to understand and use, while also maintaining compliance with USDA and PED. Any input you may have in this regard is welcome.
- If ACES does not have the ability to provide a contractor for your school due to unique circumstances or inability to provide services in your area, we might be able to assist you in conducting an RFP for food services specific to your school.
- If your school food budget is strained due to high charges for food services or you feel you cannot afford food service management, please allow us the opportunity to investigate how we and our Contractors may be able work to provide food services within your budget.

## **Thank you card sent recently from a student to an ACES Food Service Contractor**



### **FUTURE UPCOMING TOPICS:**

ACES Procurement Zooms (for both Participating Agencies and Contractors)

Audits and ACES Contracts

Marketing your ACES Contract

Let me know if you have a topic you would like to see addressed!

## **PROCUREMENT FUNNY OF THE DAY:**



### CLIA Waiver

I am pleased to inform you that NMREC-1 has secured funding to resume supporting schools needing a CLIA waiver. This initiative allows us to assist you in maintaining essential health services for your students. Please contact me at 575-760-3794 if you are interested in participating...for FREE.

I look forward to working together to support the health and well-being of New Mexico's students.

De Anna Davis

CLIA Coordinator

Four Corners Regional Education Cooperative #1

575-760-3794



**Sharon Myers**

Sharon is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

