

DETERMINATION AND FINDING FOR A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT

AGENCY: District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL),
Early Childhood Education Division (ECED)

CAPTION: Program Evaluation of the ECE Learning Lab Program

PROPOSED CONTRACTOR: School Readiness Consulting

CONTRACT NO.: GAGA-2018-C-0016

FINDINGS

1. Authorization:

D.C. Code 2-354.04.5 and 27 DCMR, Section 1304 and 1702

2. Minimum need:

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL), Early Childhood Education Division (ECED), has an immediate need to obtain a program evaluation of the ECE Learning Lab Program. The DCPS-ECED program is responsible for the successful implementation of the Head Start School-Wide Model (HSSWM) to ensure compliance with Head Start federal regulations. The HSSWM is a non-traditional service model that relies on the blending of Head Start and local pre-kindergarten funding to provide high quality pre-kindergarten services to children and families within DCPS.

In SY 2017-2018, ECED launched a new initiative, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Learning Lab. ECE Learning Lab classrooms demonstrate the integration of the Head Start School Wide Model by strengthening ECE teaching practices and classroom environments in a select set of schools and communities deemed as highest need.

3. Estimated cost:

The estimated cost is \$174,976.00

4. Facts which justify a sole source procurement:

The District of Columbia Public Schools, Early Childhood Education Division (ECED) recommends securing School Readiness Consulting (SRC) as a vendor to provide evaluation of this innovative program to measure the effectiveness and impact of the ECE Learning Lab toward meeting the programmatic goals of successfully integrating the HSSWM and utilizing Learning Lab classrooms as a lever for change within DCPS early childhood programming for the following reasons:

School Readiness Consulting (SRC) is uniquely qualified to complete the work due to the organization's knowledge and expertise related to early childhood education, professional learning, and program evaluation.

SRC's mission is to integrate strategic thinking, best practice, and evaluation to transform early learning and affirm the right of all children to thrive. SRC has a long history of partnership with the District of Columbia Public Schools relating to evaluation and technical assistance.

SRC is deeply committed to cultural competence as a core value, and employs an evaluation team that is diverse, multi-lingual, and reflective of the populations within the DCPS community. SRC is well positioned to carry out a timely, objective and rigorous evaluation of the ECE Learning Lab Program due to their knowledge of early childhood education and professional development systems, their methodological expertise in implementation and impact research, and their familiarity with the early learning landscape in Washington, DC and nationwide.

SRC has the research and evaluation expertise to design and execute a successful implementation evaluation and engage in actionable feedback loops with the DCPS implementation team and stakeholders. SRC has a long history of collaboration with DCPS, dating back to 2009, which will ensure that their evaluation is responsive to the early learning context in DC.

Additionally, their practice-based experience in supporting early childhood professional development initiatives within DCPS and throughout the nation will inform the identification of successful and replicable strategies and processes for the ECE Learning Lab program.

Awarding SRC with the sole source procurement would be the most efficient and cost-effective method for the program evaluation of the ECE Learning Lab. SRC's services are necessary to determine that the ECE Learning Lab is meeting the programmatic goal of providing high quality early childhood education services to the children and families of the District of Columbia through the demonstration of the Head Start Performance Standards.

DCPS is asking Bridges to implement a portion of the Workforce Development model which places students with disabilities, exiting with a Standard High School Diploma, in jobs related to their career interests. This contract will serve as a continuation of our partnership to provide supports and services to students that meet our revised needs.

Unique qualifications and experience – School Readiness Consulting (SRC) researchers have extensive training in research methodology, including fellowships and workshops offered by the Institute for Education Sciences, and experience as principal investigators and analysts on studies using a range of quantitative and qualitative methods. SRC is known as a leader in the field with regard to high quality data collection and project management, and SRC has completed over 10,000 child assessments and over 1,500 classroom observations each year for early childhood research projects in multiple states. SRC team members possess significant content expertise in early childhood programs and policies, including public pre-k and early childhood professional development. SRC is committed to drawing from their expert knowledge of early childhood education practice to effectively address research questions and provide actionable recommendations to stakeholders.

SRC is also deeply committed to communicating study results in a variety of ways to ensure that stakeholders at multiple levels (administrators, teachers, researchers and policymakers) can understand and interpret findings. In addition to SRC's work nationally, SRC has deep knowledge of the DC early learning landscape through many years of research and technical assistance projects funded by DCPS, the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education - Division of Early Learning, the DC Public Charter School Board, and others.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) of Washington, DC annually conducts a comprehensive evaluation of early childhood programs throughout the District. Since 2014, the team at SRC has partnered with OSSE to implement a system-wide, pre-kindergarten quality evaluation. SRC was contracted to design a quality evaluation that included identifying research questions, determining the sample and data collection plan, collection and management of all data, and the development and execution of an analysis plan and final report. This evaluation describes the quality of experiences of the nearly 7,365 three- and four-year-old children in participating classrooms across public schools, public charter schools, Head Start programs and child care programs in DC. This work includes assessing up to 850 classrooms annually using the CLASS® tool. SRC is also responsible for developing a report on the implications for state-level investments in additional research, professional development, policy, and QRIS development. As of 2017, this work has been expanded to include all 745 publicly funded infant and toddler classrooms in the District.

In light of the above findings, and their unique experience that make them a viable partner for this work, a sole source award to School Readiness Consulting is in the best interest of DCPS and would be the most efficient and cost-effective procurement method in order to ensure strategic goals are met.

CERTIFICATION BY THE DCPS PROGRAM OFFICE:

I hereby certify that the above findings are correct and that the anticipated cost to DCPS is fair and reasonable.

Date

Early Childhood Education Division

CERTIFICATION AND DETERMINATION

Based on the above certified findings in accordance with the cited authority, I hereby determine that it is not feasible or practical to invoke the competitive bidding process under Section 402 or 403 of the District of Columbia Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-371; DC Code 2-354) and 27 DCMR 1304 and 1702.

Date

Chief Procurement Officer