

**DETERMINATION AND FINDING  
FOR A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT**

**AGENCY:** District of Columbia Public Schools  
Office of Teaching and Learning, Early Childhood Education Div.  
**CAPTION:** School Garden  
**PROPOSED CONTRACTOR:** Cultivate the City  
**CONTRACT NO.** RQ927650

**FINDINGS**

**1. AUTHORIZATION:**

D.C. Code 2-354 and 27 DCMR, Section 1304 and 1702

**2. MINIMUM NEED:**

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Early Childhood Education Division (ECED) is seeking a vendor to build an early childhood-specific school garden from scratch at the Early Learning Center at C.W. Harris for school year 2016-2017. The vendor shall provide startup supplies, materials, as well as ongoing professional development, maintenance, and additional supports for the development, construction, and maintenance of a school garden.

**3. ESTIMATED COST:**

The estimated total cost is \$49,581.93 for School Year 2016-2017

**3. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:**

The District of Columbia Public Schools, Early Childhood Education recommends the services of Cultivate the City to provide startup supplies, materials, as well as ongoing professional development, maintenance, and additional supports for the development, construction, and maintenance of a school garden.

The garden will serve as an exploratory outdoor learning space (aligned with the Creative Curriculum used in the school) for the infant/toddler/PK3/PK4 classrooms located at the Early Learning Center at C.W. Harris Elementary School. The garden will also provide innovative new opportunities to engage and educate the parents and families of these early learners, especially around topics of health and wellness as related to nutrition and the environment.

**a. Background and history**

Pursuant an early learning grant awarded to the DCPS Early Childhood Education Division by the Federal Office of Head Start, the DCPS Early Childhood Education Division must use allocated startup funds to support the creation of an Early Learning Center at C.W. Harris Elementary School. As a part of that effort, the ECED would like to purchase supplies, materials, professional development, and sustainability services to help fully outfit a high quality functional and sustainable school garden operating at full capacity to best serve our youngest learners.

**b. The Proposed Vendor’s Unique Qualifications:**

Cultivate the City was created to inspire healthy and sustainable living by empowering communities with tools and training for urban agriculture. Cultivate the City has significant and demonstrable experience providing the high quality supplies, materials, labor, and ongoing professional development and supports needed to create an ADA accessible, sustainable, early childhood appropriate, urban school garden.

Niraj Ray is the Founder and CEO of Cultivate the City. He is an international pioneer of urban and rural vertical agriculture. He created his first backyard garden in Dayton Beach, Florida and continued to create vertical gardens for underserved school in Washington, DC and Strawberry Farms in Maharastra, India. Niraj intent is on finding innovative and sustainable ways to bring fresh produce to communities that need it. He acts as an educator and agricultural expert whose mission is to transform urban food deserts into thriving local food systems. Niraj holds a B.S. in Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology from the Ohio State University and a M.S. in Integrated Environmental Science from Bethune-Cookman University, and is a former National Wildlife Federation Emerging Leader Fellow and used to work with the US EPA – Office of Water.

DCPS researched the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) website for Certified Business Enterprises (CBE) and the National Institute of Government Purchasing (NIGP) Code 0203324 (Cultivators, Garden) and found there were no vendors listed who could provide the services.

In light of the above findings a sole source award is in the best interest of DCPS and would be the most efficient and cost-effective procurement method to fulfill the school garden requirement immediately and assist DCPS in achieving its goal.

**CERTIFICATION BY THE DCPS PROGRAM:**

I hereby certify that the above findings are correct and 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 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