

**DETERMINATION AND FINDING
FOR A SOURCE PROCUREMENT**

AGENCY: District of Columbia Public Schools
Office of the Chancellor and Office of Innovation and Research

CAPTION: Step Afrika! International Youth Exchange Program

PROPOSED CONTRACTOR: Step Afrika!

CONTRACT NO. RQ886960

FINDINGS

1. AUTHORIZATION:

D.C. Code 2-354.04 and 27 DCMR, Section 1304 and 1700

2. MINIMUM NEED:

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Office of the Chancellor and Office of Innovation and Research have an immediate need to enter into a partnership with **Step Afrika!** The purpose of this partnership is to allow selected DCPS to attend the **Step Afrika! International Youth Exchange Program** scheduled for April 22-29, 2015 in Zagreb, Croatia. This Program supports the DCPS Chancellor's initiative to provide more Enriching Experiences for DCPS students.

3. ESTIMATED COST:

The estimated cost is \$47,033 from date of award to September 30, 2015.

3. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:

A. Background and History

DCPS is the fastest-improving urban school district in the country. To bolster student success, DCPS is creating an equitable access to learning experiences so that every student receives the same inspiring and enriching instruction. The foundation for this is based on a two-pronged approach: 1) DCPS will provide every student equal access to rigorous education experiences by implementing Cornerstone Assignments to supplement and strengthen instruction, and 2) DCPS will increase access to Enriching Experiences that personalize learning and make school fun for every student in the District.

DCPS is expanding its enrichment programs to provide every student with exposure to new experiences. This will allow DCPS students the opportunity to connect with international perspectives, learn multiple languages, and engage in music and the arts. DCPS believes that students who are exposed to multiple enrichment opportunities become complex thinkers and leaders, and find interests that motivate them inside and outside the classroom.

B. The Proposed Vendor's Unique Qualifications

Step Afrika! was founded in 1994 and is the first professional company in the world dedicated to the tradition of stepping. **Step Afrika!** is a national and international touring company and serves as a US cultural ambassador, connecting with communities all over the world. **Step Afrika!** partners with various organizations to facilitate unique and meaningful experiences for international communities that promote tolerance, unity and acceptance among audiences everywhere. For the past four years, **Step Afrika!** has partnered with the U.S. Embassy of Zagreb to travel to Croatia. During the visit, **Step Afrika!** performs and hosts workshops for local communities; and hosts a week-long International Youth Camp for young people from Croatia and other European countries. The camp has expanded each year and as a new initiative this year **Step Afrika!** is excited to share the experience with students from Washington, D.C.

The **Step Afrika! International Youth Exchange** will select ten (10) DCPS high school African American and Latino male students from Washington, DC to participate in a week-long international youth camp (April 22-29, 2015) with other students of similar ages. The selected DC students will participate in a 6-day program with 100 students from Croatia and surrounding European countries. The students will learn the art of stepping, develop creativity, enhance communication skills and improve physical coordination. In addition, the camp will also engage students with **Step Afrika!'s** three core values; discipline, teamwork, and commitment. The students will build self-confidence; develop cultural pride and improved tolerance by working, learning, and engaging with other students of various backgrounds.

Traveling with **Step Afrika!** will allow the students to engage and build relationships with the dancers. All of **Step Afrika!'s** professional dancers have graduated from a US college or university, and serve as ideal role models and mentors for high school students. DC students will also have the opportunity to experience Croatian culture, and continue their growth as well-rounded students and citizens.

Step Afrika!'s curriculum covers stepping, its history, tradition and meaning, other African dance forms and drumming, preparation for college life and simple health and fitness. Throughout this International Exchange Program, each student will be required to keep a daily personal journal to document his learning of the curriculum as well as his cultural exchange experience. The students will also be asked to share publicly through district approved social media platforms. This educational opportunity will be extremely valuable to the young men who are selected to participate, and the reflections and insights about their experience will be valuable to their home and school community. Upon returning home, the ten (10) selected students will continue to meet, and create a performance/presentation to showcase their experience. This performance will include stepping and other forms of creative expressions to communicate the full narrative of their International Exchange experience. This performance will be featured at the **Step Afrika! 20th Anniversary Home Performance Series** in June 2015 on the campus of Howard University.

When exploring other arts programs, DCPS was not able to find a program whose artistic traditions grew out of song and dance rituals practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities on college campuses. It is important that the provider actively promote a desire to attend college, be competitive globally, and have successful careers throughout their lives. **Step Afrika!** directly aligns to the DCPS organizational priorities of promoting the Arts, International Exchange Programs, and College/Career Readiness for high school students.

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 professional development 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

Deputy Chief of Innovation

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 1700).

Date

Chief Procurement Officer