DETERMINATION AND FINDING
FOR A SOURCE PROCUREMENT

AGENCY:	District of Columbia Public Schools Office of the Deputy Chancellor for Operations
CAPTION:	Ward 5 Targeted Enrollment Outreach Campaign
PROPOSED CONTRACTOR:	Wildfire Contact, LLC
CONTRACT NO.	RQ883959

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 Deputy Chancellor for Operations has an immediate need to procure the services of Wildfire Contact, LLC to conduct a targeted outreach campaign that will contact 15,000 families in Ward 5 by no later than April 1, 2015. The outreach is designed to raise awareness about public school options in the historically underserved Ward, including information about the brand new Brookland Middle School, located in a $50M new facility opening in 2015. Specific work will include the purchase and analysis of relevant, geocoded data, the creation of walk maps by neighborhood, the recruitment and deployment of experienced issue campaign canvassers, the creation of a customizable script that conveys the importance of enrolling in Ward 5 schools, and the provision of weekly analytics reports indicating progress.

3. **ESTIMATED COST:**

The estimated cost is $98,402 from date of award to April 30, 2015.

3. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:

The District of Columbia Public Schools, Office of the Deputy Chancellor for Operations recommends Wildfire Contact, LLC ("Wildfire Contact") to create and implement a targeted outreach campaign to contact 15,000 families in Ward 5 during a nine-week engagement beginning in February 2015.

Background and History

During 2014, DCPS experienced its largest single percentage enrollment growth in over 40 years. However, while DCPS enrolled more families in 7 out of 8 Wards in 2014, DCPS enrollment lags in Ward 5 DC.

At the request of the DCPS Chancellor, DCPS plans to engage Ward 5 families in a new and direct way in 2015. After conducting an intensive community engagement process in Ward 5 for the

past several years, DCPS is ready to unveil a brand-new middle school, built from the ground up and tailored to the specific interests of the Ward 5 community. To ensure that the new middle school opens with full enrollment, the DCPS Chancellor has instructed the DCPS enrollment team to "meet parents where they are"—to knock on 15,000 doors in Ward 5 to contact both current and prospective DCPS families about the new options available to them in Ward 5. The DCPS Chancellor has instructed this outreach work be completed by no later than April 1, 2015, the date when families can officially enroll for next school year.

Launching a campaign of this size is a time- and labor-intensive effort that requires a significant number of staff available to operate in the field. Based on prior experience during recruitment efforts in 2013 & 2014, it would be prohibitively difficult for DCPS to complete this project only utilizing resources in-house. This work necessitates full-time dedicated staff in the field, and hiring or repurposing DCPS FTEs would be both expensive and to the detriment of other priorities. Using an outside vendor allows for the deployment of full-time canvassers whose exclusive focus will be to knock on doors in the targeted neighborhoods in Ward 5.

The Proposed Vendor's Unique Qualifications:

Wildfire Contact is a highly successful voter outreach firm. The company is composed of veterans from the successful Obama presidential campaigns in 2008 and 2012, which were widely regarded as ground-breaking in their organizational approach to voter outreach. The company has gone on to support issue campaigns, not-for-profit organizations, and others spread their message through tried-and-tested campaign outreach methods, including targeting, message development, field canvassing, and sophisticated data analytics. Wildfire Contact essentially offers outreach "in a box"—by designing, implementing, and monitoring campaigns on behalf of clients with the ability to scale and customize as needed.

Wildfire Contact also brings essential experience from their recent work in the education space. Wildfire Contact conceived and launched a phone campaign to reach tens of thousands of voters to promote the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The Common Core is a set of academic curriculum standards that DCPS itself uses. Common Core is designed to create consistency in education to ensure all students, regardless of home or region, are prepared for college and career. Much like DCPS, the issue of Common Core standards can be perceived as controversial at times and requires a thoughtful approach when engaging the public on it. During thousands of individual telephone conversations, Wildfire successfully unpacked the complicated issue of state education standards, their importance to students' learning, and ultimately motivated thousands of voters to contact their local representative to express support for the Common Core.

For DCPS, the ability to partner with a proven company like Wildfire Contact will allow DCPS to reach its goal of knocking on 15,000 doors in a nine-week period without the need to recreate those services in house, which would be prohibitively difficult. Since families begin enrolling on April 1, 2015 it is critical that DCPS contact families about their options *before* families make those final decisions. Therefore, DCPS must contact 15,000 families before April 1. Wildfire Contact has the experience necessary to create and implement an outreach campaign on an accelerated timeframe without risk to quality.

Wildfire Contact is the only vendor that could:

- Purchase, analyze and geocode data from different sources to create a representative array of Ward 5 households to contact, including blending census, voter and consumer data by February 20, 2015.

- Convert the blended data into walkable neighborhood maps that are efficient and realistic for a single canvasser to reach a maximum number of households during a single shift by February 20, 2015.

- Recruit sufficient number of experienced issue campaign canvassers to staff sufficient shifts to complete the task of reaching 15,000 doors in a nine-week period by February 20, 2015. (Inexperienced canvassers require more training than this period of time would allow, therefore prior experience is critical.)

- Train experienced canvassers on the specific DCPS enrollment message, tying the procedure of enrollment to larger policy goals like opening Brookland Middle and enrolling more than 50,000 students, by early February 2015. Create customizable scripts that will allow canvassers to have a natural conversation with Ward 5 residents while relaying critical DCPS enrollment information by February 24, 2015.

- Manage and deploy these canvassers in the most efficient way possible to reach 15,000 doors within the expected number of shifts during February and March 2015.

- Provide DCPS with continous analytics on the canvass itself, including operations data like numbers of doors-knocked, numbers of contacts made, and collection of key constituent data like parent e-mail addresses and telephone numbers throughout the engagement.

- Conduct a thorough postmortem analysis on the project, including recommendations that could be used to improve future campaigns, by April 10, 2015.

If DCPS were unable to contract this service with Wildfire Contact, it would adversely affect the DCPS ability to plan and implement a successful outreach campaign to contact 15,000 families in order to boost awareness of new school options in Ward 5 to residents of Ward 5 by April 1, 2015. It would jeopardize the $50M+ spent on the new Brookland Middle School facility, as the school must be fully enrolled to pay off the investments already made. It would risk the DCPS ability to meet the goal set by the DCPS Chancellor to contact 15,000 Ward 5 residents before enrollment season opens on April 1, which in turn puts at risk the DCPS Chancellor's goal of enrolling over 50,000 students by 2017.

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.

_____2-2-15_____ _____

Date Deputy Chief, Office of Student Enrollment

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.

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Date Chief Procurement Officer