

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

AGENCY: District of Columbia Public Schools, Division of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)
CAPTION: FreshFarm Food Prints for Sustainable Agriculture and Improved Food Access and Equity.
CONTRACT NO.: GAGA-2021-C-0206
CONTRACTOR: FRESHFARM Markets Inc.

FINDINGS

1. AUTHORIZATION:

D.C. Official Code: §2-354.04, and 27 DCMR 1304, 1701.

2. MINIMUM NEED:

DCPS has a need to establish a contract for the continuation of the FoodPrints program with FRESHFARM Markets Inc., effective October 1, 2021, thru September 30, 2022. FoodPrints is a school-based program that integrates gardening, cooking, and nutrition education into the curriculum. The contract will cover services in at least nine DCPS elementary schools as listed: Marie Reed ES, Langley ES, Burroughs ES, Tyler ES, Beers ES, C.W. Harris ES, Kimball ES, Simon ES, Garfield ES.

3. ESTIMATED REASONABLE PRICE:

The estimated annual not to exceed price for DCPS is \$708,517.24 from October 1, 2021, thru September 30, 2022.

4. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY:

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Food and Nutrition Services Division (FNS) in consultation with USDA has been tasked with the improvement of the food service programs, specifically in the areas of:

- Food Service Equipment Needs,
- Staffing Needs,
- Nutrition, Gardening and Cooking program,

- Kitchen and Cafeteria Improvements.

DCPS awarded Contract Number GAGA-2017-C-0036 base year plus four option years. However, DCPS only exercised two option years. The option years could not be exercised in a timely manner due to untimely funding approval which resulted in contract expiration.

Since the need for these services continued, DCPS awarded another Sole Source Contract Number GAGA-2021-C-0007 base year plus four option years, starting November 13, 2020, thru July 31, 2021, per Letter Contract dated November 01, 2020. However, untimely funding approval resulted in contract expiration. Additionally, the initial decision was made that the requirements per the contract would be assigned and managed by schools and not the central office. Due to this decision DCPS did not exercise the option year.

On August 13, 2021, a reversal of earlier decision was communicated that this requirement will be handled by the central office due to using federal funding. Because of the tight timing DCPS awarded a short-term sole source purchase order for services from August 27, 2021, thru September 30, 2021.

DCPS is working to award one-year sole source contract to FreshFarm Markets, Inc., for the FRESHFARM FoodPrints Program with its unique features that developed for DCPS Schools during previous contracts. This sole source will continue those programs.

In addition to the minimum needs described above, the following core are critical needs, steps, and approach to satisfy the “Five-Year Strategic Improvement Plan” set by USDA. The plan was developed in accordance with the following:

A. Contractual Requirement of Food Service Management Contract

Food Service Management Company Solicitation (FSMC) solicitation and resultant contracts required contractors to promote school gardens in coordination with DCPS and utilize the garden in nutrition education activities, including “working directly with or supporting a school garden coordinator as well as other community-based or DCPS contracted programs such as Food Prints”. This contract will allow DCPS to continue with the contractual requirement for Food Nutrition Services (FNS).

B. Close Partnership with DC Public School

FRESHFARM first started working with Rudolph Elementary School until it closed in 2008. In 2009, the FoodPrints program at Watkins Elementary School was launched and has since expanded to total of nine schools, July 2020. FoodPrints has developed a robust partnership at each school, and credits much of its success to the support of the administration, teachers, staff, and families. This work lasting nearly a decade, has created a unique and intimate relationship between FreshFarm and DCPS. FoodPrints

provides expertise in implementing effective garden programs within the district and at the DC Public Schools it resides in.

C. Partnership will Meet Immediate Needs

Nine schools have expressed an immediate need for continuing the FoodPrints program at their schools. FRESHFARM is prepared to begin work almost immediately, following the robust and unique program and curriculum which they created and implemented for DCPS schools during the prior contracts with the DCPS, to ensure that successful continuation and implementation of the successful programming can take effect on day one of SY21-22.

D. Proven Track Record of Success in DCPS

In a recent evaluation of FoodPrints in DCPS, researchers from George Mason University found:

- FoodPrints lessons are focused on real world application of core subject matter concepts in math, science and language arts, and students have regular opportunities to apply math and science concepts in a real-world setting.
- FoodPrints educators encourage students to work collaboratively and engage students by involving them in every step of the process.
 - Classes offer child-centered, active learning opportunities.

The program has a positive impact on children’s knowledge of nutritious foods and their willingness to eat these foods at home; their interest in cooking nutritious food at home; and their nutrition and cooking knowledge and skills.

E. Supporting a Local Business

FRESHFARM is a DC-based non-profit organization that promotes sustainable agriculture in the Mid-Atlantic Region. As part of this work, they support local farmers through purchases at farmer’s markets and direct connections with schools. They have also developed several key local partnerships, including:

- Universities and colleges – to recruit, train and provide interns and practicum students opportunities to support the program.
- Research and evaluation experts – to assess the effects of the program and methods for continual process improvement.
- Environmental literacy educators – who work in schools to bring programming and knowledge to implement the Environmental Literacy Framework from OSSE.
- AmeriCorps FoodCorps volunteers - who provide full-time support to the program.

F. Step One in Centralizing Garden Programs at Schools

This request is the continuation in centralizing garden programs at DC Public Schools. Centralizing the program also puts food and operations back in the hands of the experts and alleviates the administrative burden on schools and central office.

5. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:

The decision for continuation of this partnership is the result of the continuous collaboration and communication between United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), and the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), since 2016 on implementing the USDA initiatives on improvement of the food service programs for the DCPS.

Below facts will provide historical data for prior Sole Source contract award to FRESHFARM Markets, Inc., and rationale for continuation of the positive and productive partnership to move forward with the FRESHFARM Markets, Inc., for this Short-Term Contract from October 1, 2021, thru September 30, 2022, in the amount of \$708,517.24.

In determining whether it was appropriate to award a sole source contract to the FRESHFARM Markets, Inc., for the above-referenced proposed contract, the following factor was considered:

Services Are Formally Approved and Scrutinized by the USDA

FNS was allocated funding from the 2016 legal settlement where the USDA has required funds to be spent on the improvement of the food service program. The FRESHFARM FoodPrints Program is listed in the DCPS five-year strategic improvement plan with a total of \$800,000 allocated throughout the course of five years. The plan required annual updates to USDA on the follow-through of the committed funding.

DC City Council


City council officials have legislated that DCPS continue the partnership with FRESHFARM for the continuation of the FoodPrints program using federal funding in FY22.

Considering the above, it was a necessary governmental function and in the best interest of DCPS to award a sole source contract to FRESHFARM, and to continue these services under this short-term contract.

6. CERTIFICATION BY DCPS PROGRAM:

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

September 13, 2021
Date



Director, Office of Food and Nutrition Service

DETERMINATION

Based on the above certified findings and in accordance with the cited authority, I hereby determine that it is not feasible or practical to invoke the competitive bidding process under Section 27 DCMR 1304 and 1701.

September 13, 2021
Date

Zakira hashmi

Contracting Officer