

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

AGENCY: District of Columbia Public Schools, Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)
CAPTION: FreshFarm Food Prints for Sustainable Agriculture and Improved Food Access and Equity.
CONTRACT NO.: GAGA-2021-C-0007
CONTRACTOR: FreshFarm Marketing, 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 with FreshFarm Marketing, Inc., to create a partnership effective November 20, 2020 to develop and expand FoodPrints, a program that integrates gardening, cooking, and nutrition education into the curriculum, in nine DCPS elementary schools.

3. ESTIMATED REASONABLE PRICE:

The estimated annual not to exceed price for DCPS is \$300,000.00 from November 20, 2020 to September 30, 2021.

4. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY:

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Office of the Chief Operating Officer (OCOO), Food and Nutrition Services (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; and
- Kitchen and Cafeteria Improvements.

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 (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 federal funding 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 (run by FRESHFARM) at Watkins Elementary School was launched and has since expanded to total of nine schools. 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/implementing a garden program in their schools. FRESHFARM is prepared to begin work almost immediately to ensure the continuation of the program for the balance of SY 2020-2021, programming is in place for the successful rollout of the program.

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. Centralizing Garden Programs at Schools

Finally, this request is the first step in centralizing garden programs at DC Public Schools. Currently, schools operate independently, and the programs can fall to the wayside for more pressing budget priorities. FNS hopes FRESHFARM continues its successful operations allowing it to grow its business and eventually operate fiscally independent of FNS. 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 awarding a contract for one fiscal year 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, as a result of a legal settlement between the parties.

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 requires annual updates to USDA on the follow-through of the committed funding. This is the last year of the 5 year plan, hence the award for one fiscal year.

In light of the above it is a necessary governmental function and in the best interest of DCPS to award a sole source contract to FreshFarm.

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.

Date

Director, Office of Food and Nutrition Service

7. 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.

Date

Contracting Officer