

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

<b>AGENCY:</b>	District of Columbia Public Schools
<b>CAPTION:</b>	Office of the Chief Operating Officer
<b>PROPOSED CONTRACTOR:</b>	Self-Operating Operations Contractor
<b>CONTRACT NO.</b>	Wellness In The Schools (WITS) RK121664

### **FINDINGS**

**1. MINIMUM NEED:**

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Food and Nutrition Services, has an immediate need for an Operations Contractor for two self-operating school sites in SY19-20. In FY19, services are to be provided from date of award through September 30, 2019.

**2. ESTIMATED COST:**

The estimated cost for FY19 for the proposed services through 9/30/2019 is \$49,467.75.

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

DCPS has an urgent requirement for a qualified Contractor to provide specialized operations services to meet its requirements. Based on prior experience of the Program, the pool of experienced and available contractors for the requirements is very limited. And considering the Agency's urgent need, it is not feasible and indeed not cost effective, to compete the requirement. In addition, the Agency, is vulnerable to lose approximately \$1,000,000 in Federal funding if it fails to provide the appropriate level and quality of oversight required for the funding.

The New York-based provider, Wellness In The Schools ("WITS"), is the only entity available that can completely and satisfactorily meet the requirements of the FNS programs from across the Schools' nutrition industry, based on the Agency's experience in the industry and with the Contractor. WITS has been partnering with various schools across the nation, to provide nutrition and fitness education, healthy scratch-cooked meals and active recess periods as a component of its mission since 2005. To date, WITS programs reach 70,000 students in over 140 public schools daily.

With the proposed sole source contract, the Contractor, Wellness In The Schools (WITS), shall provide the personnel, as an extension of the Foods and Nutrition Services staff to provide the following support services:

1. Work closely with food service staff to seamlessly and rapidly integrate fundamental needs of strong, consistent and sustainable execution.

2. Implement and manage new and existing operations (such as FoodPrints programming) in schools as assigned, including the training and oversight of knife skills, cooking methods, ingredient identification, utilization and cross utilization.
3. Ensure and monitor work and work area standards for sanitation, safety, and personal hygiene (hand washing, etc.).
4. Actively inspect kitchen work areas, serving areas, and dining areas to determine that high standards of food, safety, and sanitation are maintained.
5. Train staff in the knowledge of commercial cooking equipment.
6. Maintain high standards of personal hygiene and food sanitation (HACCP)
7. Train staff of how to forecast food quantities needed for relatively large numbers of persons.
8. Implement and institutionalize new initiatives of innovative methods of meal delivery to students which will result in increased participation and satisfaction.
9. Create systems and improvements to existing program initiatives, including those specialized programs that require comprehensive training in scratch-cooking environments.
10. Teach and uphold procedures and best practices; convey appropriate leadership skills by establishing the standard for performance expectations.
11. Demonstrate flexibility in teaching style between hands-on and “side-by-side” method to a higher level of observation and validation method.
12. Create and implement systems to evaluate each school’s existing culinary and customer service skill level as well as strategic action plans to continually improve at each location.
13. Assist in the menu development of meal programs and ensure that superior meals can be executed utilizing the existing equipment.
14. Oversee recipe testing and yielding, including the adaptation and conversion of non-commercial recipes to standardized formats and specifications.

Vendor requirements:

The additional support of an operations contractor is necessary for to improve food quality and the skills of the food service staff in its self-operated schools to align with the USDA nutritional regulations. The ideal Contractor shall possess the following qualifications:

- 1) 10+ years of high-volume multi-unit experience with senior-level manager experience in school food and nutrition programs.
- 2) Specific experience in DC Public Schools meal programs and mastery of the complicated compliance nutritional requirements which are proprietary to the city and the DCPS FNS department.
- 3) Must be able to demonstrate food service business acumen in food, labor and supply cost control.
- 4) Certification or diploma in Food safety or HACCP; extensive knowledge of food handling.

- 5) Demonstrates a passion for high quality food; possesses artistic and creative talents and a desire to create new recipes and menu items through research and testing, while pursuing current industry trends.
- 6) Possesses event, catering and banquet services knowledge and experience.
- 7) Possesses a significant knowledge and understanding of current industry products, tools and equipment.
- 8) Expertise in commercial food service organizational tasks and responsibilities associated with scheduling, inventories, recipe costing and “theoretical” costs, financial statements, safety and sanitation regulations and programs.
- 9) Demonstrates the leadership, communication skills, personnel development and training required for a large school district nutrition program.
- 10) Expertise in the dynamics of multi-unit and multi-business operations and complexities.
- 11) Possess strong communication and technology skills including, but not limited to Microsoft Office Suite and general computer skills
- 12) Has a strong understanding of kitchen equipment, including utilization, specification for intended purposes, repair, maintenance and purchase costs.
- 13) Ability to implement nutrition training and cooking classes for students at all grade levels.
- 14) Provide a prepared curriculum for nutrition and cooking classes with proven results from prior experience in a large school district.
- 15) Capacity to collect and assess student level and school wide metrics to improve programming.
- 16) Network of external partners and resources to bolster school level programming.
- 17) Familiarity with the regulations and policies of DCPS, including, but not limited to those around attendance, suspensions, family engagement, school climate and culture, etc.

#### 4. **RESULTS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS:**

In SY 2018- 2019, DCPS acquired Excel Academy and the decision was made to make foodservice at this location self-operating through DCPS FNS. There is no FSMC vendor operating foodservice at Excel Academy. DCPS hired a team of six foodservice employees to prepare breakfast, lunch, and supper onsite for the approximately 500 students attending this school. No additional positions were hired at the DCPS Central Office, where all menu services and compliance processes are developed and maintained.

In SY19-20, DCPS is acquiring Bard Early College HS which is expected to enroll 150 students. DCPS is expecting to hire four additional foodservice employees to prepare breakfast, lunch, and supper onsite. In addition, the pursuit of more self-operated schools is imminent and FNS is unable to provide the appropriate oversight through its own FTEs.

DCPS’ meal services have changed dramatically since 2010. The introduction of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole muscle meats, and other holistic products have called for a higher set of skills among employees versus the days of prepackaged, warmed meals. Cafeteria staff members are now tasked with utilizing conventional means of food

preparation, such as boiling, simmering, braising, sautéing, roasting and steaming, among other methods. In addition, the utilization of whole fruits, vegetables and meats require knife skills that require instruction to avoid injury. And finally, staff must be able to provide strong customer service to entice students to consume their meals and try new and unfamiliar foods that help young bodies and minds remain focused and prepared for the rigors of classroom learning.

**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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contract Specialist

**CERTIFICATION AND DETERMINATION**

Based on the above certified findings in accordance with the 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

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Chief Procurement Officer