

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

**CONTRACT NO.:** TBD  
**CAPTION:** Teacher Recruiting, Selection and Training  
**PROPOSED CONTRACTOR:** Urban Teachers (UT)  
**PROGRAM AGENCY:** Office of School Improvement and Supports

**FINDINGS**

**1. AUTHORIZATION:**

D.C. Code § 2-354 and 27 DCMR, Section 1304 and 1700

**2. MINIMUM NEED:**

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Office of School Improvement and Supports has an immediate need for Urban Teachers to provide consulting services with respect to the recruitment and selection of new resident teachers to DC Public Schools, professional development and coaching for first- and second-year teacher fellows already teaching in the District, and ongoing partnership with their robust network of alumni in the D.C. region.

**3. ESTIMATED REASONABLE PRICE:**

The estimated reasonable price is \$320,000.00 from 10/1/21 - 9/30/22

**4. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:**

**I. Background and History**

Urban Teachers prepares, certifies, and supports new educators to be highly effective so that they can provide high-quality education for children by offering a master's degree, coaching, mentoring, and job placement support. Teachers who complete their program are committed to excellence, equity, and inclusivity, and have the skills and confidence to build lasting, fulfilling teaching careers.

As a partner to the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) since 2013, Urban Teachers has placed and supported hundreds of excellent teachers across the district, helping fuel remarkable progress for students and schools. DCPS continues to be one of the fastest improving urban school districts in the nation, measured by student test scores, thanks in part to Urban Teachers' participants and alumni. Urban Teachers sources incredibly diverse and talented candidates for their residency program through targeted recruitment and selection, with a particular focus on seeking out individuals who exemplify the core mindsets and competencies necessary to excel and commit to teaching in our hardest-to-staff schools. 62% of their 2020 resident cohort identified as a person of color and 31% were first generation college graduates.

**II. Vendor's Unique Qualifications**

Urban Teachers is the only teacher residency pipeline of its scale that provides a four-year commitment to teaching in a high-need school while also providing dual

certification in Special Education for all program participants. Participants who commit to their four-year program engage in a one-year residency followed by a three-year commitment in a high-need school. Their teachers receive a master's degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Education, one of the top 10 graduate schools of education in the country, and become dually certified in either elementary education, secondary English or secondary math, and special education. This dual-certification in special education is crucial in providing access to qualified talent for this hard-to-fill content area. Through their program, they offer more comprehensive coursework and personalized support than any other teacher training program. In the first year, their participants take part in a residency as they work alongside an experienced teacher in an urban classroom while taking graduate courses after school. In the second year, participants become fellows, moving into full-time, salaried teaching positions, while continuing to receive expert coaching from clinical faculty. That guidance and support continues for the third year, during which time, their fellows develop their teaching practices to provide students with the support they need to thrive. By the fourth year, participants are serving as change agents at their school, working to improve student outcomes and contributing fresh ideas and energy to the school community. Almost 50% of UT alumni continue to teach with DCPS beyond their four-year commitment, providing increased stability and retention of highly effective educators in our highest-need schools. Urban Teachers' values are directly aligned to those we hold as a district and the services provided by Urban Teachers directly support our organization's goal of getting, growing, and keeping top talent.

Urban Teachers has the credentials necessary to develop a nationally impactful marketing and direct recruitment campaign. Their experience in target markets for DCPS give them a unique perspective on what draws career teachers from across the nation – a credential of paramount importance to DCPS to continue to attract outstanding teaching talent from across the country, particularly for our highest-need subject areas.

Urban Teachers placed over 50 resident teachers for the 2021-2022 school and has hundreds of teachers of record working across the district annually, representing a significant and essential pipeline of high-quality teaching candidates for DCPS. They target candidates of diverse backgrounds through practices like recruiting from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), as well as marketing to post-college professionals, which brings an essential element to our force.

Additionally, a partnership with Urban Teachers gives us access to their network alumni who have four or more years of teaching experience and have undergone robust professional development and coaching throughout their four-year commitment.

### **III. Adverse impact of not choosing this vendor or completing this project**

If Urban Teachers is not retained as a vendor, DCPS may not be on track to meet its ambitious recruitment and retention targets for both the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 school year and beyond. DCPS principals benefit from hiring Urban Teachers residents as they provide a cadre of strong educational aides, establish deep connections to their school communities, and familiarize themselves with the instructional and pedagogical best practices of our district during their residency year. After serving as a resident teacher, they matriculate into teachers of record in our highest need content areas, areas that where the district historically cannot find enough talent through traditional recruitment methods alone. Urban Teachers' residents and fellows are available to fill positions in these critical areas and, on average, 75% are rated Effective or Highly Effective in their very first year as teachers of record. Students benefit from access to strong teachers, who would not otherwise be available.

This work is necessary because teacher recruitment remains a critical human resources function at DCPS. The Chancellor has mandated a clear focus on teacher recruitment, one that will ensure that every teacher coming into the District is predicted to be rated at least Effective on the DCPS IMPACT performance system. Teacher quality is widely recognized as the most important factor in raising student achievement. Without great teachers like those we intend to recruit to the district, DCPS cannot achieve the bold goals set out for students in the *Capital Commitment*.

Additionally, as part of its existing scope of work with DCPS, Urban Teachers provides professional development services to first- and second-year fellows teaching in DCPS classrooms. These services include classroom observations, ongoing training workshops, one-on-one coaching, as well as collaboration with school leaders and instructional coaches to improve residents' teaching skills. It is essential that there is a continuity of service through Urban Teachers so that we are able to continue placing new residents throughout the district as well as supporting current residents and fellows working with students in the 2021-22 school year.

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.

**CERTIFICATION BY DCPS PROGRAM DIRECTOR:**

I hereby certify that the above findings are true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

07/15/2021

Date



Veronica Alvarado

Manager, Teacher Recruitment and Pipelines  
Office of School Improvement and Supports

**DETERMINATION**

Based on the above 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 402 and 403 of the District of Columbia Procurement Practices Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-371; D.C. Official Code § 2-354) and 27 DCMR 1304 and 1700. Accordingly, I determine that the District is justified in using the sole source method of procurement.

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Date

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Contracting Officer