

DETERMINATION AND FINDING FOR A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT

AGENCY: District of Columbia Public Schools, Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Food & Nutrition Services

PURPOSE OF CONTRACT: American University School Meal Consumption Study in DC Public Schools

PROPOSED CONTRACTOR: The American University

REQUISITION NO.: RQ 979787

FINDINGS

1. AUTHORIZATION:

(D.C. Law 18-371) D.C. Code 2-354.01, Section 404 and 27 DCMR, Section 1700.

2. MINIMUM NEED:

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) seeks to enlist a research entity to conduct a study that assesses cafeteria environment and student food consumption in DCPS cafeterias with the following study objectives:

- Identify how DC Public Schools score on the Smarter Lunchroom Movement scorecard
- Collect data on the amount of time it takes students to obtain their lunch in both “offer” and “serve” environments
- Collect data on food consumption patterns based on three dependent measures: time through the lunch line, cafeteria environment, and in “offer” and “serve” cafeterias.

3. FAIR AND REASONABLE ESTIMATED COST:

The estimated cost is \$76,937.00, based on comparison with prices on previous purchases and the Contractor’s price quote.

4. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:

- A. **Background:** In 2016, DC Council approved two new food service management contracts between the District of Columbia Public Schools and SodexoMAGIC and another with DC Central Kitchen. Under this contract, the vendors provide meals to DCPS students that meet or exceed the nutritional requirements set forth in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act and the Healthy Schools Act.

As part of this new contract DCPS FNS plans to move from a more traditional “serve” model, in which all five meal components are plated and served to students, to the “offer” model, in which students have choice in the food that goes on their plate. Students must take three of the five meal components (fruit, vegetable, meat/meat alternate, grains, and milk) for the meal to qualify as a reimbursable meal. While this proposed method could reduce waste, questions have arisen regarding student consumption of meals and possible reduction of overall student fruit and vegetable consumption. Due to the high rate of Free and Reduced Meals in Washington, DC and the nation-wide obesity crisis, it is necessary that these two models are analyzed before making this transition to a fully “offer” style.

- B. **Justification:** American University has over 30 years of experience conducting childhood nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention interventions, as well as direct work in curriculum and instruction, the breadth and depth of their experience in childhood obesity research and programming directly supported the development and implementation of Healthy Schools Act. Below are examples of previous work.
- C. **Healthy Schools Act (HSA) Policy Evaluation:** From 2011 - 2016, AU measured the implementation and impact of the Healthy Schools Act (HSA), Washington, DC's school-based wellness legislation to improve the school health environment. AU tracked school progress over time, and also created a Composite Score, an instrument that measures each school's implementation of the provisions of the HSA. Though schools report varied levels of compliance, certain provisions have been fully implemented, such as nutrition standards in school cafeterias. The five-year report, *The Healthy Schools Act of 2010: Building Healthy School Environments*, was released in February 2016 at a press conference held by Councilmember Mary Cheh (D-Ward 3), author of the legislation, and was covered by *The Washington Post* and WAMU, the local National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate. In addition to providing the State Agency with a feedback mechanism for schools, this work informs policymakers and educators on resource allocation and effective strategies for school-level health promotion activities.
- D. **Utilizing a Behavioral Economic Intervention to Improve Vegetable Consumption:** From 2011 – 2015, USDA Economic Research Services (ERS) funded AU to study the impact of behavioral economics strategies to promote vegetable consumption in DC elementary schools and to decrease plate waste. Data indicated that using vegetable taste tests resulted in significant increases in consumption of target vegetables and reduced plate waste.
- E. In 2015, this work expanded to 12 elementary schools in Arlington, Virginia. The research team partnered with the Office of Food Service to examine the effect of packaging fruit, which had historically high consumption, with raw vegetables, which had low consumption. With six control schools and six experimental schools, the research team measured consumption over seven weeks - one week of baseline and six weeks of intervention. Results showed that students in experimental schools were significantly more likely to eat the raw vegetable.
- F. **Kelly Miller Middle School Partnership:** From 2008 - 2014, Dr. Anastasia Snelling partnered with Kelly Miller Middle School, a DC public middle school with 99% eligibility for free or reduced price meals, to create a school-based health education program for teachers and students. Activities included a health curriculum infused into core subjects, establishment of a school garden, and integration of activity programs for teachers throughout the day. This opportunity created a unique and intimate relationship between AU and DCPS, allowing AU to develop a deep understanding of child nutrition programs within the district.

- G. **USDA-TEAM Nutrition, Community Voices for Health Education:** From 2011 - 2013, building on the work at Kelly Miller, AU partnered with the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) on a USDA Team Nutrition grant. These funds were used to implement the program used at Kelly Miller in 15 additional middle schools with at least 80% of students eligible for free or reduced price meals. Using a pre/post survey, the project yielded improved health measures for increased vegetable consumption, increased breakfast consumption, and lower soda consumption among students.
- H. **Conclusion:** As exemplified by their work, AU has extensive knowledge and evaluation experience with the Healthy Schools Act. This experience gives them a unique advantage for executing this study, and separates their team from other evaluators who do not meet this specific requirement. In summary, AU meets the needs for an immediate sole source based on the following:

CERTIFICATION BY THE DCPS PROGRAM OFFICE:

I hereby certify that the above statements are correct and the anticipated cost to DCPS is fair and reasonable.

Date

Office of Food and Nutrition Services

DETERMINATION

Based on the above certified findings in accordance cited authority, I hereby determined that it is not feasible or practice to invoke the competitive bidding process under Section 404 of the District of Columbia Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 D.C. Law 18-371: DC Code § 2-354.01, Section 404, and 27 DCMR 1304 and 1700.

Date

Interim Chief Procurement Officer