

DETERMINATION AND FINDING FOR A SOURCE PROCUREMENT

AGENCY:	District of Columbia Public Schools, Office of the Chief Operating Officer
CAPTION:	Self-Operating Operations Contractor
PROPOSED CONTRACTOR:	Wellness in the Schools (WITS)
CONTRACT NO.	GAGA-2019-C-0132

FINDINGS

1. AUTHORIZATION:

DC Official Code 2-354.04 and 27 DCMR Section 1701.

2. MINIMUM NEED:

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), requires a sole source with Wellness In The Schools (WITS) to ensure continuation of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm to School Grant requirements and long-term commitment on continuity of the program at two DCPS school sites (Excel Academy and Bard High School).

3. ESTIMATED COST:

The estimated cost for the proposed services through September 30, 2020 is \$148,403.25.

4. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:

New York-based provider Wellness in the Schools (“WITS”) is the only entity that can satisfy all these requirements for FNS programs across the school nutrition industry. WITS has been partnering with public schools 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.

The ideal organization must possess the following qualifications/experiences:

- a) 10+ years of high-volume multi-unit experience and multi-business operations and complexities
- b) Senior-level management experience in school food and nutrition programs.
- c) Certification or Diploma in Food safety or HACCP; extensive knowledge of food handling.
- d) Network of external partners and resources to bolster school level programming.
- e) Experience preparing curriculum for nutrition and cooking classes in a large school district.
- f) Familiarity with the regulations and policies of DCPS, including, but not limited to those around attendance, suspensions, family engagement, school climate and culture, etc.

- g) 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
- h) Experience with the collection and assessment of student level and school wide metrics to improve programming.
- i) Experience implementing nutrition training and cooking classes for students at all grade levels.
- j) Has a strong understanding of kitchen equipment, including utilization, specification for intended purposes, repair, maintenance and purchase costs.
- k) Event, catering and banquet services knowledge and experience.
- l) Experience creating high quality food; possesses artistic and creative talents to create new recipes and menu items through research and testing, while pursuing current industry trends.

The above expertise and experience for these services that satisfy the grant requirements are so specific that there is not a sizable pool of qualified potential candidates from which to draw. In addition, the failure of the agency to provide the appropriate quality and level of oversight leaves DCPS vulnerable to a loss of approximately \$1,000,000 in federal funding for DCPS students.

WITS is prepared to provide personnel who will act as an extension of DCPS staff that will provide the following support services:

- a) 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.
- b) Monitor work and work areas, serving areas, and dining areas to ensure standards for sanitation, safety, and personal hygiene (HACCP) are maintained.
- c) Train staff in the knowledge and operation of commercial cooking equipment.
- d) Train staff on forecasting food quantities needed for relatively large numbers of persons.
- e) Implement and institutionalize new initiatives on innovative methods of meal delivery to students to result in increased participation and satisfaction with the overall food service program.
- f) Recommend improvements to existing program initiatives, including those specialized programs that require comprehensive training in scratch-cooking environments.
- g) Teach and uphold procedures and best practices; convey appropriate leadership skills by establishing the standard for performance expectations.
- h) Demonstrate flexibility in teaching style between hands-on, “side-by-side” method, and observation and validation methods.
- i) 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.
- j) Assist in the menu development of meal programs and ensure that superior meals can be executed utilizing the existing equipment.

- k) Oversee recipe testing and yielding, including the adaptation and conversion of non-commercial recipes to standardized formats and specifications.

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. WITS is equipped to help DCPS food services staff keep up with industry trends and satisfy USDA requirements by consulting with the agency recommending the necessary changes and program modifications.

WITS has been embedded in DCPS' meal programs throughout the 2018-2019 school year as it was operating as a component of the USDA Farm to School Grant, providing technical assistance in training and execution of DCPS menus. The explicit knowledge of DCPS nutrition requirements, Union labor parameters and navigation through existing systems has allowed for the uninterrupted continuation of the work for this Grant.

CERTIFICATION BY THE DCPS PROGRAM:

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

Date

Director, Food and Nutrition Services

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

Chief Procurement Officer