

Robert P. Astorino
County Executive

Office for Women

Camille Failla Murphy
Director

April 30, 2010

To: Board of Acquisition and Contract

From: Camille Failla Murphy
Director, Office for Women

Re: Resolution to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with the Women's Enterprise Development Center, Inc., for the provision of a micro-enterprise training program, pursuant to Section 3(a)(xxi) of the Westchester County Procurement Policy.

Authority is hereby requested from your Board to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement (the "Agreement") with the Women's Enterprise Development Center, Inc. (the "Center"), to provide micro-enterprise training and assistance to poor and minority women to assist them in reaching economic self-sufficiency, for a term of one year commencing January 1, 2010 and terminating December 31, 2010, in an amount not-to-exceed Sixty Thousand Two Hundred Ninety Dollars (\$60,290).

Ordinarily under Section 5(b) of the Westchester County Procurement Policy, the County is required to solicit written quotations from no fewer than three entities customarily providing the requested services.

However, the Center is uniquely qualified to run this kind of program. While there are other micro-enterprise programs in the County, no other entrepreneurial training program in Westchester County focuses specifically on women, although needs assessment research has shown that women face greater obstacles in setting up and maintaining businesses.

The need for this training for women is great. Self-employment through entrepreneurship provides low-income women with the opportunity to step out of poverty, supplement low wages earned in the job market, capitalize on talents and experience, remove themselves from the welfare rolls, and become self-sufficient.

The proposed agreement will promote the public health, safety and general welfare by providing women with the training necessary to become economically self-sufficient. The skills learned by participants enable them to depend less on government entitlements or not at all. Some graduates augment their low incomes with entrepreneurship, while others are able to support themselves entirely. Some even hire staff, creating new avenues for employment for Westchester residents. In 2009, nearly 1,200 women participated in 38 workshops/seminars. In addition, over 130 women received one-on-one technical assistance. The Center anticipates holding 25 workshops/seminars for 850 women and providing technical assistance to approximately 125 women during the proposed contract term.

In accordance with the approved workplan, the effectiveness of this program will be determined in a variety of ways. By the end of the proposed contract term, 65-95 women will have completed the entrepreneurial training; 60-90 will have completed business plans; and 50-70 women will have opened their own businesses. Of the 850 anticipated workshop participants, besides gaining business information, more than 90% will return positive evaluations. In addition, more than 75% of women participating in the Microenterprise Fairs are expected to increase their sales and customer base. For example, in 2009:

- 83 women completed the training program
- 100% of women who participated in the Microenterprise Fairs increased their sales and customer base

If this resolution were not approved, many women and their families would remain or become economically needy. This may consequently cause many of these individuals to seek government intervention, including but not limited to TANF, food stamps and/or Medicaid.

Payments will be made to the Center on a quarterly basis for services rendered, pursuant to an approved budget. The Westchester County Office for Women will be responsible for monitoring the Center's performance under this Agreement by means of site visits, as well as their monthly statistics and quarterly narratives.

The Center provides a program consisting of recruitment and assessment; 60+ hours of entrepreneurial training; life skills seminars, and paired work with a volunteer mentor from the women's business community. The Center also provides post-training seminars, ongoing technical assistance and access to capital.

Since 2001, the program has produced over 800 graduates, all of them socially and economically disadvantaged women, displaced homemakers, Latina women, and child care providers. Of these graduates, approximately two-thirds successfully started businesses.

The Center has performed this service under contract with Westchester County since the beginning of 2001. In the years that the Center has been funded through the Office for Women, your Board has determined that it was in the best interests of the County to exempt those contracts from the Procurement Policy requirements because of its unique focus.

Pursuant to Section 3(a)(xxi), the Westchester County Procurement Policy is not applicable to any procurement for which the Board determines, by resolution passed prior to commencing such procurement, that compliance with the Policy would not be in the best interests of the County. For the reasons set forth above, it is proposed that the best interests of the County would be served by entering into this Agreement.

Accordingly, I recommend that your Honorable Board make the determination that it is in the best interests of the County to exempt this contract from the application of procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy.

An appropriate resolution is attached herewith.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 5-13-2010 - JOMARY VIEIRA, SECRETARY

RESOLUTION

Upon a communication from the Director of the Office for Women, be it hereby

RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 3(a)(xxi) of the Westchester County Procurement Policy, it is hereby determined that application of the procedural requirements contained therein, including the necessity of soliciting price quotations, is neither cost effective nor expedient and accordingly not in the best interests of the County in connection with the procurement of an agreement for micro-enterprise training and assistance to poor and minority women to assist them in reaching economic self-sufficiency, with the Women's Enterprise Development Center, Inc., 1133 Westchester Avenue, Suite N-220, White Plains, New York 10604.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 5-13-2010 - JOMAR VELAZQUEZ