

11482

TO: Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Camille Failla Murphy
Director, Office for Women

DATE: June 8, 2010

SUBJECT: Resolution to exempt from the application of the procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with My Sisters' Place, Inc. to provide domestic violence legal services in Yonkers for women victims of domestic violence through its non-residential domestic violence program, as well as accept referrals from Legal Services of the Hudson Valley

Enclosed is a Resolution that would exempt from the application of the procedural requirements of Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement (the "Agreement") with My Sisters' Place, Inc., ("My Sisters' Place") whereby My Sisters' Place will provide legal services in Yonkers for women victims of domestic violence through its non-residential domestic violence program, as well as accept referrals from Legal Services of the Hudson Valley.

The proposed Agreement will have a term of one year commencing January 1, 2010 and terminating December 31, 2010 in an amount not-to-exceed Ninety Thousand Two Hundred Sixty-Three Dollars (\$90,263) to be paid quarterly for services rendered pursuant to an approved workplan and budget. A Resolution seeking your Honorable Board's approval of this Agreement is before your Honorable Board.

The proposed Agreement will promote public health, safety and general welfare by enhancing the safety and independence of abused women. If abused women are helped to be safe they are not as likely to return to dependence on their abusers, thereby reducing public safety costs and medical costs. If they are helped to empower themselves to be independent and self-sufficient, they are not as likely to be dependent on public assistance. In 2009, My Sisters' Place provided legal assistance to over 80 victims of domestic violence. They expect to provide assistance to 100 victims from approximately 300 case consultations during the proposed contract term.

The effectiveness of this program will be determined by the outcomes of closed cases. Some of the outcomes of family law matters may include whether or not the victim obtained or

maintained custody of child(ren); obtained or preserved right to visitation; obtained a divorce, separation or annulment; obtained an order of protection; or obtained, preserved or increased child support. The following are a few examples of benefits received as a result of 78 closed cases in 2009:

- 32 clients obtained or maintained custody of their children
- 4 clients obtained an order of protection
- 4 clients obtained, preserved, or increased child support
- 11 clients obtained advice and counsel on a family matter

If this resolution were not approved, the safety and security of domestic violence victims would be compromised. Without having the option of obtaining an order of protection or knowing their rights through advice and brief counsel, the probability of continued and escalating abuse is substantially increased. This may consequently endanger their lives and the lives of their children.

Under the Westchester County Procurement Policy Section 3(a) xxi, your Honorable Board may determine “by resolution passed prior to commencing procurement that compliance with the Procurement Policy would not be in the best interests of the County.” My Sisters’ Place began providing legal services in 1997. It has in the past successfully provided these desperately needed services to approximately 8,000 victims, as Yonkers has one of the highest number of Domestic Incident Reports in Westchester (2,039 out of 10,783 in 2008). I ask that your Honorable Board make the determination that it is in the best interests of the County to exempt from the application of the procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy this Agreement with My Sisters’ Place.

I recommend approval of the attached proposed Resolution.

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 in the best interests of the County to exempt from the application of the procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with My Sisters' Place, Inc. whereby My Sisters' Place, Inc. will provide legal services in Yonkers for women victims of domestic violence through its non-residential domestic violence program, as well as accept referrals from Legal Services of the Hudson Valley.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 6-24-2010 - JOMARY VIEIRA, SECRETARY