



Robert P. Astorino
County Executive

Department of Social Services

Grant E. Mitchell, M.D.
Acting Commissioner

15930

Date: December 8, 2010

To: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

From: Grant E. Mitchell, M.D.
Acting Commissioner, Department of Social Services

Subject: Resolution authorizing the County of Westchester to enter into an agreement with Veritas Therapeutic Community, Inc. for the provision of comprehensive substance abuse assessment services to parents with children at risk of foster care placement for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011 in an amount not to exceed \$178,752 to be paid on a monthly basis pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation

Authority is requested to enter into an agreement with Veritas Therapeutic Community, Inc. (Veritas) for the provision of comprehensive substance abuse assessment services to parents with children at risk of foster care placement for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, in an amount not to exceed \$178,752 to be paid on a monthly basis pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation. The not-to-exceed amount was increased as a result of the contractor extending services to an additional site: Mount Vernon District Office. Provision of services to the Mt. Vernon District Office was covered under an interdepartmental agreement that was modified to exclude services to this site which results in a cost savings for this program.

The services to be provided pursuant to this agreement will serve a **public purpose** as these services constitute substance abuse evaluation & referral for parents with children at risk of foster care placement. These services increase safety and reduce risk of vulnerable children in Westchester County. The primary population served is parents/guardians listed as the subject on Child Protective Services (CPS) reports. The services rendered by Veritas are also offered to other substance affected families in the child welfare system. Referrals to Veritas will come from the Child Welfare Training Unit and Child Welfare Programs located at the Mount Vernon District Office.

The **goals and objectives** of this contract are to provide substance abuse assessment, referral and placement for parents/guardians of substance affected families. Veritas Therapeutic Community, Inc. will be co-located at the Child Welfare Training Unit and the Mt. Vernon District Office. The Substance Abuse Specialists conduct home visits and provide community outreach on behalf of the families. Veritas provides on-the-spot substance abuse testing. This eliminates the need to wait for results of drug tests before the Department can determine a service plan for a family with children at high risk of abuse, neglect and foster care placement. The Veritas Substance Abuse Specialists will provide training, education, case consultation, comprehensive substance abuse assessments, referrals to substance abuse treatment and follow-up on referrals for up to 90 days. The Specialists will be part of a casework team offering substance abuse treatment services seamlessly with the other casework services.

The **goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of public safety** in that the services provided by Veritas Therapeutic Community, Inc. are aimed at reducing abuse and neglect of children and reducing the need to place children in foster care. Because Veritas specialists are co-located, early and convenient access to substance abuse services are available and this, in turn, allows the Department to determine the appropriate safety interventions for vulnerable children.

The **goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of public health** in that the services provided hereunder are for ensuring the health and well being of children and families of Westchester County. It has been widely recognized that children in substance affected families also need substance abuse supportive services. Prenatal and interpersonal exposure from parental alcohol and drug use can affect a child's social and psychological development through adulthood (*Substance Abuse: Information for School Counselors, Social Workers, Therapists, and Counselors*, Fisher & Harrison, 2009). Early identification of substance abuse is imperative to the health and well-being of children. Veritas matches the substance abusing parent/guardian with the appropriate treatment provider while also taking into consideration the unique needs of the entire family. The services provided pursuant to this program promote healthy family functioning.

The **goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility** as the program is designed to prevent foster care placement of children living in substance affected families. The diversion of foster care of children would result in substantial savings for the County and taxpayers.

- **Family Foster Care cost annualized per child** - The cost of foster care in a family foster setting can range from \$17.10 to \$58.65 per day per child depending on the age and level of care provided. That translates into an **annualized foster care cost from \$6,241.50 to \$21,407.25 per child.**
- **Residential Foster Care cost annualized per child** - The cost of residential foster care costs can range from \$50.22 up to \$562 per day per child. That translates into an **annualized cost for residential care from \$18,330.30 to \$205,130 per child.**
- **Veritas Therapeutic Community cost annualized per child** – The substance abuse assessment, referral and linkage services provided by Veritas has an annualized program cost of \$178,752. The program expects to perform 382 assessments for the Child Welfare Training Unit and Mt. Vernon District Office. That translates into an **annual cost of \$467.94 per family, regardless of the number of children.**

The **goals and objectives will be tracked and monitored using the performance measurement indicators** developed by the department and approved by the County Budget Office. The vendor will submit monthly and quarterly statistical reports in a format approved by the Department. The reports will allow the Department to evaluate the success of the services rendered by the vendor. Other monitoring efforts will include periodic review of records and site visits.

Based on the Performance Measure Indicators, the Department is able to report that Veritas Therapeutic Community has satisfactorily met the performance goals for the first nine months of 2010. As of the end of September 2010, Veritas has performed 115 substance abuse assessments and referred 38 parents to treatment. Of the 38 parents linked to the appropriate treatment program, 79% have successfully attended treatment in accordance with their substance abuse treatment plan.

This agreement is exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures pursuant to Section 3 (a) xvii as this procurement is for treatment, counseling and referral of those suffering from the disease of alcoholism or substance abuse.

Accordingly, the County of Westchester is hereby requesting authority to enter into an agreement with Veritas Therapeutic Community, Inc. for the aforesaid purpose.

An appropriate resolution is attached herewith for your Honorable Board's approval.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACTING
SEP 30 2010
SUMRY VIEIRA, SECRETARY

RESOLUTION

Upon a communication from the Acting Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, be it hereby

RESOLVED, that the County of Westchester is hereby authorized to enter into an agreement with Veritas Therapeutic Community, Inc. for the provision of comprehensive substance abuse assessment services to parents with children at risk of foster care placement for the period from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011 in an amount not to exceed \$178,752 to be paid on a monthly basis pursuant to an approved budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this contract is subject to County Appropriation; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Agreement is also subject to further financial analysis of the impact of any New York State Budget (the "State Budget") proposed and adopted during the term of this Agreement. The County shall retain the right, upon the occurrence of any release by the Governor of a proposed State Budget and/or the adoption of a State Budget or any amendments thereto, and for a reasonable period of time after such release(s) or adoption(s), to conduct an analysis of the impacts of any such State Budget on County finances. After such analysis, the County shall retain the right to either terminate this Agreement or to renegotiate the amounts and rates approved herein. If the County subsequently offers to pay a reduced amount to the Contractor, then the Contractor shall have the right to terminate this Agreement upon reasonable prior written notice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the County Executive, or his duly authorized designee is hereby authorized to execute any and all documents and to take all actions necessary and appropriate on behalf of the County of Westchester to effectuate the purposes hereof.

Account to be
Charged/Credited

2011

Fund	Dept	Major Program, Program & Phase Or Unit	Object/ Sub- Object	Trust Account	Dollars
101	22	8900	5960	_____	\$178,752

Budget Funding Year(s) 2011
(must match resolution)

Start Date: 1/1/11

End Date: 12/31/11

Funding Source

Tax Dollars: 30 %

State Aid: 41%

Federal Aid: 29%

Other _____

\$178,752

(must match resolution)