

18132

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Diane G. Balistreri
Coordinator, Office for Women

DATE: March 30, 2011

SUBJECT: Authority to enter into an agreement with My Sisters' Place, Inc. to provide education, training and domestic violence expert assistance to hospitals, healthcare providers and facilities in the County for an amount not-to-exceed \$62,135 for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011

The attached Resolution, if approved by your Honorable Board, would authorize the County of Westchester (the "County") to enter into an agreement (the "Agreement") with My Sisters' Place, Inc. ("My Sisters' Place") to provide education, training and domestic violence expert assistance to hospitals, healthcare providers and facilities in the County through its Operation Safety program, for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, for an amount not-to-exceed Sixty-Two Thousand One Hundred Thirty-Five Dollars (\$62,135) to be paid quarterly pursuant to an approved budget.

Please be advised that Section 459-c of the New York Social Services Law directs social services districts, such as the County, to offer and provide non-residential services to victims of domestic violence, whether eligible or ineligible for public assistance. Non-residential services programs must have the ability to provide the following services:

- 1) Information and Referral services
- 2) Advocacy
- 3) Counseling
- 4) Community education and outreach activities
- 5) Hotline services

The proposed Agreement will promote the public health, safety and general welfare by assisting victims of domestic violence in various healthcare settings throughout Westchester County to get their health care needs met.

Education and training of professional communities is one of the state-mandated functions of non-residential domestic violence programs. Through the Operation Safety program, healthcare providers gain the proper education and training required to properly respond to the specific needs of domestic violence victims. As a result, victims receive the medical assistance they need as well as obtain vital information about domestic violence services available in Westchester.

The goals and objectives of the proposed Agreement (as more fully described in Schedule A) are for My Sisters' Place to provide 80 presentations, reaching over 800 healthcare providers through its Operation Safety program. During the previous contract term, My Sisters' Place provided 72 presentations, reaching 930 healthcare providers.

The goals and objectives of the proposed Agreement will be tracked and monitored by the Office for Women, which will be responsible for monitoring My Sisters' Place's performance by means of site visits, as well as their monthly statistics and quarterly narratives. The effectiveness of the Operation Safety program will be determined by in-depth evaluation forms distributed to healthcare providers. Outcome results will be measured by participants' knowledge about the dynamics of domestic violence; their skill or comfort level in screening, assessing and/or responding to patients who may be victims of intimate partner violence; and their knowledge about domestic violence services available in Westchester County. For example, in 2010 773 evaluations showed that:

- 98% of trainees had increased knowledge about the dynamics of domestic violence and other forms of victimization
- 97% of trainees were able to relate the importance of domestic violence awareness to their professional or personal lives
- 98% of trainees had increased knowledge about domestic violence services available in Westchester County

The procurement for the Operation Safety program is exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy pursuant to Section 3(a)(ix), which exempts contracts with "teachers, lecturers and other education professionals or experts."

Accordingly, I recommend approval of the attached proposed Resolution.

RESOLUTION

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

RESOLVED, that the County of Westchester is hereby authorized to enter into an agreement (the "Agreement") with My Sisters' Place, Inc., for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, for provision of education, training and domestic violence expert assistance to hospitals, healthcare providers and facilities in the County through its Operation Safety program, for an amount not-to-exceed Sixty-Two Thousand One Hundred Thirty-Five Dollars (\$62,135) to be paid quarterly pursuant to an approved budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Agreement is subject to County appropriations; 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 be and hereby is authorized and empowered to execute any and all documents and take any actions necessary to effectuate the purposes hereof.

Account to be charged/credited:

FUND	DEPT	Major Program, Program & Phase, Or Unit	Object/ Sub-Object	Trust Account	Dollars	Funding Year
101	11	0900	4380	N/A	\$62,135	2011

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

Start Date: 1/1/2011

End Date: 12/31/2011

\$62,135
(must match resolution)

Funding Source: Tax Dollars \$62,135
State Aid _____
Federal Aid _____
Other _____

Schedule A

OPERATION SAFETY

The American Medical Association has referred to intimate partner violence as a major social and public health problem. While it is true that many victims seek safety and assistance from service providers and the judicial system, an overwhelming number either do not know services exist or choose not to access them. However, many of these victims seek medical attention for injuries or illness symptoms that have long been correlated with ongoing domestic or intimate partner violence. Although societal awareness about the scourge of domestic violence has been increasing, most healthcare providers still fail to adequately screen domestic violence victims and may not routinely inquire about or document abuse as the cause of their patients' symptoms. Lack of training domestic violence and its toll on the health of victims/survivors have enabled providers to avoid asking appropriate and potentially lifesaving questions of their patients. At times healthcare professionals feel that it is their responsibility to fix their patients' lives as well as address their medical concerns; this may result in medical professionals exerting pressure on their patients to leave abusive partners, rather than providing support, relevant information, and resources.

The **Operation Safety Program** attempts to address such issues by offering specifically tailored presentations to professional and allied medical staff about domestic and intimate partner violence. These trainings provide information about dynamics and impacts of domestic and intimate partner violence and necessary tools for effectively screening, identifying, and supporting patients who may be victims/survivors. For the 2011 contract year, existing curricula will be revised and updated. Less traditional healthcare providers such as medical & nursing students, home health aides, dentists, and emergency medical technicians will be targeted for outreach. Special efforts will be made to offer series of trainings to a smaller number of professionals, which will provide for an increased knowledge base and improved skills capacity.

Our trainings emphasize that advising victims to leave their relationship is not necessarily an immediate or appropriate goal. Medical providers are encouraged to provide support, information, documentation, and validation of their patients' experiences. Trainings focus on delivering a reasonable, workable model for provider involvement by discussing methods of injury assessment, interviewing techniques, documentation in the healthcare setting. Participants learn to investigate patients' complaints of ambiguous symptoms, recurrent illness and unexplained somatic events and how to appropriately intervene in a sensitive, non-judgmental manner in order to give patients the resources and information necessary for achieving safety.

The Training Coordinator, under supervision of the Deputy Director of Programs, will continue to research, design and implement a wider range of curricula so as to address varied populations,

different types of practitioners and healthcare settings, and types of victimization. Operation Safety literature and materials will be updated with a goal of greatly enhancing distribution, and the responsiveness of providers to scheduling trainings.

As a result of training offered through Operation Safety, the following **outcomes** are expected:

- 85% of attendees will increase their knowledge about the dynamics of domestic violence.
- 85% of attendees will gain or increase skill or comfort level in screening, assessing and/or responding to patients who may be victims of intimate partner violence.
- 85% of attendees will increase their knowledge about domestic violence services available in Westchester County.

These outcomes will be measured through evaluation forms collected at the time of training.

Presentations	Per Month	Per Year
Number of Presentations	6-7	80
Number of Professionals Trained	67	804
Number of Outreach Efforts (meetings, phone calls, e-mails, literature drop)		
	15	180

**Patients are not meant to be the target of trainings.*