



Robert P. Astorino  
County Executive

Kevin M. McGuire  
Department of Social Services  
Commissioner

19189

**Date:** May 17, 2011

**To:** Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition & Contract

**From:** Kevin M. McGuire  
Commissioner, Department of Social Services

**Re: Resolution authorizing the County of Westchester to enter into an agreement with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Inc. to provide trainings and technical assistance to the Division of Child Welfare for the period June 23, 2011 through December 31, 2011 in an amount not to exceed \$103,000 to be paid pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation**

Authorization is requested for the County of Westchester, acting by and through its Department of Social Services ("the Department"), to enter into an agreement with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Inc. to provide trainings and technical assistance to the Division of Child Welfare. The term of the proposed contractual agreement is June 23, 2011 through December 31, 2011. In consideration for services to be rendered, the County will pay an amount not to exceed \$103,000 to be paid pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation.

The Department must continue to build our capacity to be an informed, strong and effective child welfare system providing high quality community based services that are culturally competent, unbiased and accessible to all children and families at risk of abuse, neglect or foster care. New York State has identified the disproportionate minority representation and disparities in the child welfare system as critical issues to be addressed by all county Departments of Social Services. The State defines disproportionality as the over representation and higher rate of foster care placement and disparity in child well-being as compared to the numbers for the general population.

Without the much needed additional training, redirection and program reforms, this Department's child welfare programs will continue to struggle with the phenomenon of a racially disproportionate and inadequate service system. The financial and human cost of long stays in the foster care system is unsustainable and highlights the need to address these issues with an evidence based program that has generated notable results in reduction of these costs. Additionally, if these critical issues remain unaddressed, the Department risks poor outcomes for families, unsustainable financial burdens and potential reduction in NYS funding or reimbursements.

The Department's staff lacks the professional expertise to effectively address these sensitive yet critical issues. Therefore, the Department has identified a nationally recognized organization that has trained child welfare staff and community partners throughout the nation on the issue of race, ethnicity and the disproportionality found in the child welfare population. The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, are trained professionals who specifically address, in a historical context, the issues of race, ethnicity and disparity, and challenge participants to critically view child welfare work in that context.

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB) was chosen because it is highly recommended by Casey Family Programs. Casey Family Programs is the nation's largest operating foundation focused entirely on foster care and improving the child welfare system. PISAB is a training institute used nationally as a model for addressing and improving the knowledge base of child welfare professionals in understanding disproportionality and helping organizations to critically examine practices. The Casey Family Programs brought the PISAB training to the attention of CPS staff and leaders, community partners, and child welfare constituents with its evidence based outcomes. It has professional dedicated veteran trainers.

The services to be provided pursuant to this agreement will serve a **public purpose** as the training offered by PISAB will help staff in the Division of Child Welfare critically review the decision making process within the context of their work. The provision of these trainings for staff in the Division of Child Welfare is a significant part of the Department's effort to reduce the number of children in care and how long they remain in foster care once they are placed.

The **goals and objectives** of this contract are to provide trainings and technical assistance to the Division of Child Welfare in an effort to reduce the disproportionality and disparity in the placement of children of color in foster care and other out of home placements. The trainings are designed to provide valuable information needed by staff in the Division of Child Welfare in order to make decisions that do not lead to the disproportionate placement of children of color. The PISAB training will heighten staff/system awareness, provide a framework, give them tools to understand issues, and improve services that promote safety and permanence for all children and families. These strategies include training on diversity, understanding the impact and effects of bias, disparity, race, class and culture in the various decision-making points throughout the child welfare system.

The **goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of public safety** as the training and technical assistance provided by the PISAB address the critical issues of safety and permanency for children in out of home care. Staff will develop skills to use in addressing disproportionality in placement of children without compromising safety. With training and technical assistance, participants will be more likely to create sustainable solutions to increase safety and prospects of permanency for children in the County of Westchester.

The **goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of public health** of the youth and families of Westchester County because the services provided by the PISAB address the health and well-being of children, while reducing the disproportionate placement of children in foster care and other out of home placements. Data compels this reduction as foster care is intended to protect children from imminent risk of abuse or neglect. Best practices support children need permanency to increase healthy outcomes. New York State Office of Children and Family Services requires that Local Departments of Social Services place children in care only when other family and community based alternatives are not an option. Once a child enters care the Department is charged with achieving timely discharge to safe permanent homes through reunification, discharge to relative, or adoption. Participants in the trainings will be better prepared in engaging parents, guardians and extended family members in the process of developing a safety and permanency plan for children without making decisions that cause disparities in foster care placements.

The **goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility** as the trainings and technical assistance offered by the PISAB are strategically aligned with New York State Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for Westchester. The average annual cost of foster care can be as high as \$205,130 per child. These figures do not even begin to calculate the other costs associated with foster care to other systems such as family court, health and mental health systems. The benefit to the County of Westchester and taxpayers is the cost avoidance of maintaining children in out of home placements.

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 statistics and quarterly performance reports in the format approved by the Department. The Department will be responsible for setting the milestones and tracking the vendor's achievements by reviewing the performance reports submitted by the vendor and making onsite visits.

**Performance Measure Indicators to be tracked by the Department** will include the following:

1. Number of training sessions offered, target 6
2. Number of trainees, target 240
3. Number of technical assistance session, 6 sessions
4. Follow up survey, offered after every session

This agreement is exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures pursuant to Section 3 (a) (ix) as this procurement contracts with teachers, lecturers and other educational professionals or experts.

Accordingly, the County of Westchester is hereby requesting authority to enter into an agreement with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, Inc. for the aforesaid purpose. An appropriate resolution is attached herewith for your Honorable Board's approval.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 06/02/2011 - JOMAR VEIRA, SECRETARY

**RESOLUTION**

Upon a communication from the 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 the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, Inc. to provide trainings and technical assistance for staff in the Division of Child Welfare for the period **June 23, 2011 through December 31, 2011** in an amount not to exceed \$103,000 to be paid 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 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 either to 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 take such action and execute such documents as may be necessary and proper to effectuate the purposes hereof.

Account to be Charged/Credited

	Fund	Dept	Major Program, Program & Phase Or Unit	Object/ Sub-Object	Trust Account	Dollars
2011	101	22	8900	5960	-----	\$80,000
	263	22	996J	4380	T996	\$23,000

Budget Funding Year(s): 2011    Start Date: 6/23/11    End Date: 12/31/11  
 (must match resolution)

Funding Source	<u>5960</u>	<u>4380</u>
	Tax Dollars: 41%	
	State Aid: 30%	100%
	Federal Aid: 29%	
	Other _____	

\$103,000  
 (must match resolution)

APPROVED BOARD OF ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION CONTRACT - 06/23/2011 - SONIA NEWEIRA, SECRETARY