

36412

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Robin Schlaff
Director, Office for Women

DATE: October 10, 2013

SUBJECT: Authority to enter into a new agreement with My Sisters' Place, Inc. to provide counseling services for children who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence for an amount not-to-exceed \$30,000 for the period October 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013

The attached Resolution, if approved by your Honorable Board, would authorize the County of Westchester (the "County") to enter into a new agreement (the "Agreement") with My Sisters' Place, Inc. ("My Sisters' Place") to provide counseling services for children who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence for an amount not-to-exceed Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) pursuant to an approved budget for the period October 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013.

The proposed Agreement will serve a public purpose by supporting state-mandated non-residential domestic violence services for victims of abuse. Studies have shown that children exposed to domestic violence are at greater risk for behavioral, social, and emotional problems; cognitive deficiencies, and increased risks as adults for depression and symptoms of trauma, as well as involvement in abusive relationships.

The goals and objectives of the proposed Agreement are for My Sisters' Place to provide individual counseling to approximately 25 children per month and facilitate one weekly support group for children ages 8-12 who have witnessed domestic violence in an effort to reduce the likelihood of emotional and behavioral patterns.

The goals and objectives of the proposed Agreement will be tracked and monitored by the Westchester County Office for Women, which will be responsible for monitoring My Sisters' Place's performance by means of monthly statistics and narratives. The effectiveness of these services will be determined by voluntary surveys distributed to parents.

This agreement is exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy pursuant to Section 3(a)(xviii), which exempts contracts for the “advancement of the moral, physical, mental and social well being of the youth of Westchester County.”

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

Accordingly, I recommend approval of the attached proposed Resolution.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 10/31/2013 - JOMARY MERRY SECRETARY

RESOLUTION

Upon a communication from the Director 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 October 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013, for provision of counseling services for children who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in consideration for services to be rendered, My Sisters' Place, Inc. shall be paid an amount not-to-exceed Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) 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	52	M004		N/A	\$30,000	2013

Budget Funding Year(s) 2013 Start Date: 10/1/2013 End Date: 12/31/2013
 (must match resolution)

\$30,000
 (must match resolution)

Funding Source: Tax Dollars \$30,000
 State Aid _____
 Federal Aid _____

Schedule A

My Sisters' Place, Inc. Expansion of Children's Counseling

In 2012, My Sisters' Place ("MSP") received 71 new referrals for individual counseling for children residing in the community who have witnessed or experience domestic violence ("DV"). To date in 2013 (January-September), MSP has received 106 new child counseling referrals, putting the agency on target for receiving double the number of requests for this vital service in a single year. Approximately 20-25% of these referrals come from Westchester County Child Protective Services, in cases which may be considered higher risk, where both DV and some aspect of child abuse or maltreatment may be present. MSP currently has one full-time Master's level Children's Counselor, and although her caseload has risen steadily over the past three years, she is simply unable to provide individual and/or group counseling to all of the children referred to MSP to receive services specialized for children traumatized by witnessing or experiencing this type of abuse in the home.

Through ongoing support and guidance from the Westchester County Office for Women, My Sisters' Place will be able to support the work of an additional part time (20 hours per week) Master's level (equivalent to a master's degree in social work, counseling, mental health counseling, marriage and family therapy, or a related field) Children's Counselor to provide individual and group counseling to child clients ages 3-16 who have been impacted by DV. In particular, this counselor will accept and seek out referrals identified by MSP's colleagues from Westchester County Child Protective Services (CPS).

This counselor will provide individual counseling to approximately 25 children per month, and facilitate one (1) weekly support group for children ages 8-12 who have witnessed DV in an effort to reduce the likelihood of emotional and behavioral patterns.

The part time Children's Counselor will report directly to MSP's full time Manager of the Children's Program, and can be based out of MSP's White Plains or Yonkers office as needed. The flexibility of location will allow clients referred from the four CPS district offices throughout Westchester County (White Plains, Mount Vernon, Yonkers, and Peekskill) to have access to these critical services. These services are currently only offered in MSP's Yonkers office, which presents a barrier for many of their clients from other parts of Westchester County.

Staff members in the MSP Children's Counseling Program will continue to distribute anonymous parent/guardian satisfaction surveys in order to obtain feedback on the quality of individual and group counseling provided.