



Robert P. Astorino
County Executive

Department of Social Services

Kevin McGuire
Commissioner

37701

Date: January 6, 2014

To: The Honorable Board of Acquisition and Contract

From: Kevin M. McGuire
Commissioner of Social Services

Subject: **Resolution authorizing the County of Westchester to enter into an agreement with The Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc. (“MHA”) pursuant to which MHA will provide a Host Visitation Program to enhance visitation between children in foster care and their families for the period January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014 for an amount not to exceed \$90,000**

Authority 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 Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc. (“MHA”)** pursuant to which MHA will provide a Host Visitation Program to enhance visitation between children in foster care and their parents who are involved in substance abuse treatment for the period January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014 for an amount not to exceed \$90,000 to be paid monthly pursuant to an approved budget (the “Agreement”) and subject to appropriations. The proposed Agreement will provide training to Court Appointed Special Advocates as volunteers who will provide host visitation along with MHA staff, at a minimum, on a weekly basis, to approximately 16 to 24 families with children in foster care.

The services provided through this Agreement will serve a **public purpose** by increasing the number of visits with family members that children in foster care receive, and the more frequent contact that will be afforded by the Host Visitation Program should reduce the trauma of removal from the home for children and assists them in transitioning to a more permanent setting, whether that is reunification with the family, adoption, independent living, or adult custodial care.

The **goals and objectives** of this Agreement will provide more frequent contact between children in out of home placement and their parent/caretaker, thereby reducing the length of time to achieve permanency.

The **goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of public health and safety** because the services provided through this contract will enhance visitation of children in foster care and their families. According to the New York City Administration for Children's Services, Office of Family Visiting, "A Bridge Back Home: Visit Hosts" June 2007, research indicates that for children in foster care, more frequent contact with family, including siblings and extended family reduces the trauma of removal for children, improves their adjustment to placement, and helps expedite permanency, regardless of whether the goal is reunification, adoption, independent living, or adult custodial care.

The **goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility** in that the Department will be able to achieve cost savings when children in foster care are reunified with an identified permanent resource. Through the provision of services, the need for continued foster care placements and the costs associated will be averted. This will result in substantial savings for the County.

The **goals and objectives of the agreement will be tracked and monitored** using the performance measurement indicators developed by the Department and approved by the County Budget Office. The program office will be responsible for setting the milestones/targets and tracking the achievements by reviewing the performance reports submitted by the vendor. Under the terms of the Agreement, the vendor will provide each family served with a minimum of one (1) visit per week.

This agreement is exempt from the requirements of the Common Grant Rule as it falls under the Social Services Block Grant category. This contract is exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy pursuant to Section 3(a) xviii thereof.

Accordingly, approval of the attached resolution authorizing the County to enter into an agreement with The Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc. for the above stated purpose is respectfully requested.

RESOLUTION

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

RESOLVED, that the County of Westchester (the "County"), acting by and through its Department of Social Services, is hereby authorized to enter into an agreement with The Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc. ("MHA") pursuant to which MHA will provide a Host Visitation Program to enhance visitation between children in foster care and their families for the period January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014 for an amount not to exceed \$90,000 to be paid on a monthly basis pursuant to an approved budget (the "Agreement"); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 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 ("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 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 impact of any such budget(s) 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 the Agreement upon reasonable prior written notice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the County Executive or his authorized designee is empowered to execute any and all documents 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
2014	101	22	8900	5960	-----	\$90,000

Budget Funding Year(s): 2014
(must match resolution)

Start Date: 01/01/14 End Date: 12/31/14

Funding Source

Tax Dollars: 32%

State Aid: 47%

\$90,000

(must match resolution)

Federal Aid: 21%

Other: _____