

Robert P. Astorino
County Executive

Department of Social Services
Kevin M. McGuire, Commissioner

55731

DATE: February 7, 2017

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Kevin M. McGuire, Commissioner
Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Request for authority to enter into an agreement with Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. ("WestCOP") to promote, coordinate, and operate the County's six (6) sites for the 2017 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, for a total aggregate amount not to exceed \$90,000 to be paid pursuant to an approved budget, for a term commencing on January 1, 2017 through July 31, 2017.

Authority is respectfully requested from your Honorable Board for the County of Westchester (the "County"), acting by and through its Department of Social Services (the "Department"), to enter into an agreement with WestCOP to promote, coordinate, and operate the County's six (6) tax sites (located in Mt. Vernon, Yonkers, Peekskill, Valhalla, White Plains and Ossining), for the 2017 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for a total aggregate amount not to exceed \$90,000 to be paid pursuant to an approved budget, for a term commencing on January 1, 2017 and continuing through July 31, 2017.

For the past several years, the Department, through a subcontractor, has been managing a group of volunteers who help prepare taxes for Westchester County residents under the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance ("VITA") program in order to help residents take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit ("EITC") and other tax credits. The EITC is a refundable Federal/State tax credit for eligible individuals and families who work and have income that falls below the specified level. The EITC reduces the amount of tax one owes and may result in significant tax refunds for those most in need. In addition to EITC, the program helps qualified families apply for other tax credits such as the Child Tax credit, Education Credits, Elderly credits and Dependent Child Care Credits. To date, this successful program has helped Westchester residents receive \$10.9 million in Federal/State refunds, of which \$4.6 million are much needed tax credits (including EITC, child tax credits and education credits).

In accordance with Sections 6 and 13 of the Westchester County Procurement Policy, on December 1, 2016, the Department, through its Office of Workforce Investment, issued a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) to solicit proposals from public and private non-profit agencies to manage and supervise all of the aforementioned six (6) tax sites under the 2017 VITA Program for the period from January 1, 2017 through July 31, 2017. The RFP was posted on the County and One-Stop websites, was advertised in the Journal News and was emailed to various One Stop partners. The proposal submission due date was December 22, 2016.

Despite these efforts, only two (2) agencies submitted proposals in response to the RFP; WestCOP in the amount of \$80,000 and the Inter-Faith Council for Action (“IFCA”) in the amount of \$20,000. After a careful review of both proposals with reference to the evaluation criteria contained in the RFP, WestCOP was selected based upon the evaluation rating set forth below and satisfactory past performance.

Proposers	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Average Score
Westchester Community Opportunity Program	83	87	83.5	84.5
Inter-Faith Council for Action (IFCA)	79	86	75	80.0

It should be noted that although IFCA submitted a much lower price proposal than WestCOP, the review committee determined that the contract should nevertheless be awarded to WestCOP. This is because the RFP required that the successful vendor would manage and supervise all six (6) of the established tax sites (Mt. Vernon, Yonkers, Peekskill, Valhalla, White Plains and Ossining) as well as propose new tax sites. In its proposal, WestCOP agreed to manage the program at all six (6) of the established sites as well as proposed expanding services to Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry. The IFCA proposal, on the other hand, only offered to manage the Peekskill and Ossining sites. As such, their price proposal reflected the reduced services.

The proposed agreement will serve a public purpose by giving residents the assistance they need in preparing their taxes to avail themselves of the EITC and thereby provide such residents with an income supplement to help them achieve self-sufficiency.

The goals and objectives of the proposed agreement are to prepare 2,650 Federal and State returns for the 2017 tax season (It should be noted that during the 2016 tax season, WestCOP exceeded the goal of preparing 2,300 by preparing 2,369 returns).

The goals and objectives of the proposed agreement are in the best interests of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility because EITC dollars have a significant impact on the lives of low and moderate income families by providing an income supplement to meet the immediate expense of qualifying families, to achieve economic self-sufficiency and break the cycle of poverty.

The goals and objectives of the proposed agreements will be tracked and monitored through reports to be prepared by the selected agency. The agency will report on the number of returns filed, the amount tax refunds and the amount of EITC and other tax credits.

An appropriate resolution is herewith attached for your Honorable Board’s consideration.

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 Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. ("WestCOP") pursuant to which WestCOP will promote, coordinate, and operate the County's six (6) tax sites (Mt. Vernon, Yonkers, Peekskill, Valhalla, White Plains and Ossining) for the 2017 Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for a total aggregate amount not to exceed \$90,000, to be paid pursuant to an approved budget for a term commencing on January 1, 2017 and continuing through July 31, 2017; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Contract 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 is empowered to execute all documents and take all actions necessary to effect the purpose of this resolution.

Account to be Charged/Credited

Fund	Dept	Major Program, Program & Phase Or Unit	Object/ Sub-Object	Trust Account	Dollars
101	22	5000	4420		\$50,000
275	22	4531	835S	T835	\$31,000
275	22	7340	418R	T418	\$9,000

Budget Funding Year(s): 2017 Start Date: 01/01/2017 End Date: 07/31/2017

(Must match resolution)

		<u>4420</u>	<u>T835</u>	<u>T418</u>
Funding Source	Tax Dollars:	42%	0%	0%
	State Aid:	23%	0%	0%
<u>\$90,000</u>	Federal Aid:	35%	100%	100%

(Must match resolution) Other:

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 03/16/2017 - LISA MRIJAJ, SECRETARY