



Robert P. Astorino  
County Executive

Department of Social Services

Kevin McGuire  
Commissioner

Philippe Gille  
First Deputy Commissioner

57771

**Date:** June 26, 2017

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

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

**Re:** Resolution authorizing the County of Westchester to amend an agreement with Congregations Linked in Urban Strategy to Effect Renewal, Inc. (CLUSTER) whereby CLUSTER will provide homelessness prevention and eviction intervention assistance and other related mediation services between tenants and landlords at the Yonkers and Mount Vernon District Offices of the Department of Social Services ("DSS") for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 in an amount not to exceed \$375,440 to be paid in monthly installments pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation by; 1) extending the end date of the agreement to December 31, 2017 and, 2) increasing the not to exceed amount by \$187,720 to a new total not to exceed amount of \$563,160 to be paid monthly pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriations.

---

Through a resolution approved by your Honorable Board on July 21, 2016, the Department entered into aforesaid agreement with Congregations Linked in Urban Strategy to Effect Renewal, Inc. (CLUSTER), whereby CLUSTER provided homelessness prevention and eviction intervention assistance and other related mediation services between tenants and landlords at the Yonkers and Mount Vernon District Offices of DSS for the period from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 in an amount not to

exceed \$375,440 to be paid in monthly installments pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation. This Agreement was subsequently executed.

Authority is now requested to amend the Agreement by extending the end date to December 31, 2017 and increasing the not to exceed by \$187,720 from an amount not to exceed \$375,440 to a new total not to exceed amount of \$563,160. The Department is in the process of modifying the Eviction Prevention Program to provide Eviction Prevention Services co-located within each District Office of the Department of Social Services. The Department is in the process of preparing a Request for Proposal (the "RFP") to select a new vendor to manage the Eviction Prevention Program for the Department of Social Services.

Congregations Linked in Urban Strategy to Effect Renewal, Inc. has a longstanding relationship with the Mount Vernon and Yonkers communities. They have served the community for the past several years. Since 1989, this agency has been providing eviction prevention and other services to the County. In the past, the agency's programs have been successful in meeting the County's desired objectives. In addition to eviction prevention, CLUSTER provides a broad range of Dispute Resolution Services that address family issues.

The services provided pursuant to this contract serve a **public purpose** by ensuring adequate protection for those people who are in danger of becoming homeless as a result of eviction or those in imminent danger of losing their homes.

**The goals and objectives of this agreement are as follows:**

- Perform intervention to maintain existing housing arrangements
- Secure suitable replacement permanent housing, if necessary
- Provide a Telephone Housing Counseling Hotline
- Perform a risk assessment and service plan for each family
- Conduct Credit/Money Management counseling and workshops
- Provide linkages to other fiscal resources available in the community
- Assist customers in completing applications for Section 8 vouchers and public housing
- Advocate on the customer's behalf in housing courts to resolve conflicts to lease disputes, rent arrears, code violations, eviction proceedings, rent overcharges, rent increases and recovery of security deposits

**The goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of health and safety.** Individuals will benefit from living in apartments that are stable, safe places in which to reside. Children especially will benefit as the result of avoiding the trauma of a displaced shelter life. The foundation and stability of a private apartment will also help to nourish family life and thus make it more likely that families may successfully move toward or maintain self-sufficiency and better lives in general. The provision of these services at the Yonkers and Mount Vernon district offices will also result in stability for families. These services will also provide access to otherwise often unavailable resources which, in turn, will improve the lives of multiple generations.

**The goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility** as they involve the provision of services which aid in the prevention of homelessness. This, in turn, reduces the taxpayer's participation in caring for and supporting the homeless population in the County.

**The goals and objectives will be monitored** using the performance measurement indicators developed by the Department. Monthly performance reports and narratives will also be submitted to the Department. These reports detail the accomplishments relative to the contract's objectives. There are also phone contacts with the vendor regarding any issues that may arise. Based on documented contract performance from July, 2016 through May 2017, the Department is able to report the following statistics for the Westchester Mediation Center and the Housing Resource Center:

**Eviction Prevention Category:**

Number of cases Served:	1315
Number of Existing housing maintained:	164
Number of Issues Resolved:	192

<b>Housing Counseling Hotline</b>	266
---------------------------------------	-----

**Eviction Prevention Intervention/  
Advocacy Services Category:**

Number of cases served:	104
Number of existing housing maintained:	14
Number of cases Resolved:	33
Number of Shelter Placements:	0
Secured Permanent Housing:	12

The last category of assistance (Eviction Prevention Intervention/Advocacy) comes directly from the Housing Counseling Hotline total amount served. The 104 cases were in need of additional assistance due to the nature of the situation. Some level of intervention and or advocacy was needed in order to resolve the immediate need of that household.

The proposed agreement is exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy pursuant to Section 3(a) (xiv) thereof as this is an agreement with a not-for-profit organization for the purpose of providing aid, care and support to persons in need of public assistance. This contract is not subject to the competitive procurement requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (formerly, the Grants Management Common Rule) as the federal funding for this program falls under Social Service Block Grant.

Except as specifically amended hereby, all other terms and conditions of the original agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

Accordingly, the County of Westchester, acting by and through its Department of Social Services, is requesting authorization from your Honorable Board to amend a

contract with the Congregations Linked in Urban Strategy to Effect Renewal, Inc (CLUSTER) to provide the aforesaid services.

A resolution requesting the same is attached for your Honorable Board's approval.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 07/20/2017 - LISA MRIJAJ, SECRETARY

## RESOLUTION

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

**RESOLVED**, that the County of Westchester, acting by and through its Department of Social Services, is hereby authorized to amend an agreement with Congregations Linked in Urban Strategy to Effect Renewal, Inc. (CLUSTER) whereby CLUSTER will provide homelessness prevention and eviction intervention assistance and other related mediation services between tenants and landlords at the Yonkers and Mount Vernon District Offices of the Department of Social Services ("DSS") for the period July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 in an amount not to exceed \$375,440 to be paid in monthly installments pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation by; 1) extending the end date of the agreement to December 31, 2017 and, 2) increasing the not to exceed amount by \$187,720 to a new total not to exceed amount of \$563,160 to be paid monthly pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriations; 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 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 except as specifically amended hereby, all other terms and conditions of the original agreement shall remain in full force and effect; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the County Executive or his duly authorized designee is hereby authorized to execute any documents and take any actions reasonably necessary and appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this Resolution.

Original Agreements: \$375,440

First Amendment: \$187,720

TOTAL: \$563,160

Account to be  
Charged/Credited

	Fund	Dept	Major Program, Program & Phase Or Unit	Object/ Sub- Object	Trust Account	Dollars
2017	101	22	8900	5960	-----	\$187,720

Budget Funding Year(s): 2017  
(must match resolution)

Start Date: N/A

End Date: 12/31/17

Funding Source

**\$187,720**  
(must match resolution)

Tax Dollars: 33%  
State Aid: 44%  
Federal Aid: 23%  
Other:

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 07/20/2017 - LISA MRIJAJ, SECRETARY