

Robert P. Astorino
County Executive

Office for Women

Camille Failla Murphy
Director

March 30, 2010

To: Board of Acquisition and Contract

From: Camille Failla Murphy
Director, Office for Women

Re: Resolution to exempt from the application of the procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with Victims Assistance Services of the Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. for the provision of two victim advocates at the Family Justice Center at the White Plains Court Complex, for an amount not-to-exceed \$116,000, for the period from April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011

Authority is requested from your Honorable Board to exempt from the application of the procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement between the County of Westchester (the "County") and Victims Assistance Services of the Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. ("VAS"), pursuant to which VAS would provide two victim advocates, one of whom would be bilingual, at the Family Justice Center at the White Plains Court Complex. VAS would also be compensated for travel expenses necessary to accomplish this work.

The proposed agreement will have a term of one year from April 1, 2010 through March 31, 2011, for an amount not-to-exceed \$116,000, to be paid quarterly pursuant to an approved workplan and budget. A separate resolution seeking your Honorable Board's approval of the proposed agreement has been submitted along with this Resolution.

The funding for the proposed agreement would be provided by part of a \$1,000,000 federal grant to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders Program awarded to the County's Office for Women by the Office on Violence Against Women of the U.S. Department of Justice. VAS is one of several partner agencies that will be involved in all three aspects of this federal grant: 1) establishing and implementing a Family Justice Center; 2) installing an automated victim notification of protective orders (VNPO) system; and 3) training police, prosecutors, the judiciary, advocates and service providers.

The proposed agreement will serve a public purpose of promoting the public health, safety and general welfare by enhancing the safety and independence of victims. If victims are

empowered to learn how to develop and maintain their own safety, they are not as likely to return to dependence on their abusers, thereby reducing public safety costs and medical costs. If they are helped to empower themselves to be independent and self-sufficient they are not as likely to be dependent on public assistance.

The goals and objectives of the proposed agreement are for VAS to serve about 1,200 victims per year (100 per month), of which approximately 80% will be assisted with safety planning; 60% will be provided with crisis intervention and/or supportive counseling; 80% will be assisted with Crime Victims Board (CVB) applications; and 100% will be provided with information and referral to follow-up services.

The goals and objectives of the proposed agreement are in the best interests of the County in terms of public health and safety because of the aforementioned anticipated results of enhancing the safety and independence of victims by empowering them to develop and maintain their own safety.

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 VAS' performance under this Agreement by means of site visits, as well as their monthly statistics and quarterly narratives. The effectiveness of this program will be measured by tracking the number of clients who received safety planning and referral information to community mental health services, medical services, and family counseling and support services as needed. Outcomes of trainings will be determined by participants' increased knowledge of specialized topics based on pre- and post-tests and evaluations.

If this resolution were not approved, the safety and security of victims of abuse would be compromised. Without receiving these vital support services, the probability of continued and escalating abuse is substantially increased. This may consequently endanger their lives and the lives of their children.

VAS is unique in its ability to do this work; has developed excellent working relationships with the courts and with its partner agencies; has facilitated the work of the courts, while at the same time providing safety to victims of abuse; and is able to provide very high quality service at low cost. In addition, VAS reduces duplication of services. While victims are assisted, they are assessed by VAS in order to provide services specific to their needs. Without this assessment, victims would likely go to a number of other agencies seeking services based on their individual needs, wasting time and money. Victims are able to receive immediate assistance from VAS, which will ultimately increase their overall safety.

Accordingly, it is proposed that the best interests of the County would be served by exempting from the application of the procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy the agreement between the County and VAS for the provision of two victim advocates at the Family Justice Center at the White Plains Court Complex.

I recommend approval of the attached proposed Resolution.

RESOLUTION

Upon communication from the Director of the Office for Women, be it hereby,

RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 3(a)(xxi) of the Westchester County Procurement Policy, it is determined that application of the procedural requirements contained therein, including the necessity of soliciting proposals, is neither cost effective nor expedient and accordingly not in the best interests of the County, in connection with the procurement of the agreement between the County of Westchester (the "County") and Victims Assistance Services of the Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. ("VAS"), pursuant to which VAS will provide two victim advocates at the Family Justice Center at the White Plains Court Complex, one of whom will be bilingual.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 4-22-2010 - JOMARY VIEIRA, SECRETARY