

13869

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Diane G. Balistreri
Coordinator, Office for Women

DATE: September 16, 2010

SUBJECT: Authority to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an Agreement with Hope's Door, Inc. to provide counseling and support services for immigrant women and their children who are victims of domestic violence, pursuant to Section 3(a)xxi of the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures

Authority is hereby requested from your Honorable Board to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with Hope's Door, Inc. ("Hope's Door"), pursuant to which Hope's Door would provide counseling and support services for immigrant women and their children who are victims of domestic violence pursuant to Section 3(a)xxi of the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures.

The amount of the agreement would not exceed \$51,500 for the period October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011.

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

This agreement is necessary to maintain Hope's Door's non-residential services in accordance with the Department of Social Services Consolidated Services Plan Amendment for Non-Residential Services for Victims of Domestic Violence.

The proposed agreement will serve a public purpose by enhancing the safety and independence of abused women. If abused women are helped to be safe they are not as likely to return to dependence on their abusers, thereby reducing public safety costs and medical costs. If they are enabled to be independent and self-sufficient they are not as likely to be dependent on public assistance. In many cases immigrant domestic violence victims face extra pressure from abusers due to language and cultural barriers vis-à-vis using the courts, the legal system, the social services system and government and community-based organizations, in addition to threats concerning their immigration status or threats to kidnap their children back to their countries of origin.

The goals and objectives of the proposed Agreement are for Hope's Door to provide assistance to an average of 50 victims per month, a conference addressing the needs of immigrant or bicultural victims of abuse, and 48 outreach programs targeted to immigrant or bicultural communities and other diverse groups during the proposed term.

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 abused women.

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 Hope's Door's performance under this Agreement by means of site visits, as well as their monthly statistics and quarterly narratives. The effectiveness of this program as well as client satisfaction will be determined by assessments conducted of a diverse cross-section of clients at varying stages of their involvement; and multi-lingual focus groups will be held along with client satisfaction surveys and follow-up questionnaires. The following are examples of outcome results from the previous contract term:

- 100% of clients were helped to break the silence about the abuse in their lives
- 100% of clients know more ways to plan for their safety
- 94% of clients know more about community resources
- 100% of clients feel safer than when they first went to Hope's Door

Under the Westchester County Procurement Policy Section 3(a) xxi, your Honorable Board may determine "by resolution passed prior to commencing procurement, that compliance with the Procurement Policy would not be in the best interests of the County." Hope's Door began providing services to victims in 1980, and has since assisted clients in nearly 2,000 cases annually, including battered immigrant women and their children. It has more than proven its worth by exceeding the goals set forth in their agreements to provide counseling, advocacy and immigration-related services. There is a growing immigrant population in northern Westchester, particularly in Ossining, Peekskill, Bedford, Mount Kisco and Yorktown. Because

of its distinctive location, Hope's Door is the only agency in northern Westchester that has the capability of providing these services to the immigrant population in those highly concentrated areas. These are isolated towns for victims with minimal transportation capacity. Hope's Door also uses locations of Victims Assistance Services such as Elmsford, Peekskill, Mount Vernon, White Plains and Yonkers which allows for direct access to sexual assault counselors and S.A.N.E. nurses in response to collateral consequences of domestic violence. Due to these factors, Hope's Door's advocacy/counseling program for this population is superior compared to other agencies. In addition, it has a strong relationship with the Ossining Police Department and receives numerous referrals to provide these services to immigrant women. As Hope's Door has successfully provided these essential services for the County under previous contracts since 2006, and in the interest of maintaining this already effective arrangement and not disrupt the current quality of services being provided, I ask that your Honorable Board make the determination that it is in the best interests of the County to exempt from the application of the procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy the proposed agreement with Hope's Door.

I respectfully request and recommend the Board's approval of the attached Resolution.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 9-30-2010 - JIMMY VIERA SECRETARY

RESOLUTION

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

RESOLVED, that pursuant to Section 3(a)xxi of the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures, it is hereby determined that application of the procedural requirements contained therein, including the necessity of soliciting written price quotations, is neither cost effective nor expedient, and accordingly, not in the best interests of the County in connection with the procurement of counseling and support services for immigrant women and their children who are victims of domestic violence from Hope's Door, Inc.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 9-30-2010 - JOMARY VIEIRA, SECRETARY