

17603

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Diane G. Balistreri
Coordinator, Office for Women

DATE: March 8, 2011

SUBJECT: Authority to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with Victims Assistance Services of Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. to provide safety planning education, orientation and advocacy services to victims seeking Orders of Protection in the Family Court Legal Center in Yonkers pursuant to Section 3(a)(xxi) of the Westchester County Procurement Policy

Authority is hereby requested from your Honorable Board to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with Victims Assistance Services of Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc. ("VAS") for the provision of safety planning education, orientation, and advocacy services to domestic violence victims seeking Orders of Protection in the Yonkers Family Court for the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, for an amount not-to-exceed Forty-Six Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Eight Dollars (\$46,828).

VAS has been providing these services since 2009, and has satisfactorily carried out its responsibilities under previous contracts. The services it provides, as well as the number of clients that are served, reflect the ability VAS has to meet the performance goals and perform for Westchester taxpayers. The quality and quantity of service that VAS can offer has already been demonstrated over the past two years.

The proposed agreement will serve a public purpose by enhancing the safety and independence of victims of domestic violence. If victims 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. One of the main ways this program will save taxpayer dollars is by reducing duplication of services. While victims are assisted, they will be assessed by VAS in order to provide services specific to their needs. Such services may include safety planning, referrals, or help through the court process. Without this assessment, victims would likely go to a number

of other agencies seeking services, wasting time and money. Victims will be able to receive immediate assistance from VAS, which will ultimately increase their overall safety.

The goals and objectives of the proposed agreement are for VAS to serve 460 victims in the Yonkers Family Court during the proposed contract term.

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. Also, to be tracked and monitored are the number of men and women served, total couple violence, clients referred to Pace or Probation, and how many clients were accompanied to court. For example, in 2010:

- 66% of clients were assisted with safety planning
- 74% of clients were provided with crisis intervention and/or supportive counseling
- 94% of clients were provided with information and referrals to follow-up services

Under the Westchester County Procurement Policy Section 3(a)(xxi), your Honorable Board may determine "by resolution passed prior to commencing such procurement, that compliance with this policy would not be in the best interests of the County." VAS has proven their ability to successfully provide these services. During the past two contract terms, it assisted 2,004 individuals, providing safety planning to 1,184 victims and crisis intervention counseling to 1,079 victims. I therefore 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 VAS.

Accordingly, a resolution to exempt the procurement of the proposed agreement with VAS is hereby submitted for your Honorable Board's consideration.

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, 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 an agreement for safety planning education, orientation, and advocacy services to domestic violence victims seeking Orders of Protection in the Yonkers Family Court, with Victims Assistance Services of Westchester Community Opportunity Program, Inc., 2269 Saw Mill River Road, Building 3, Elmsford, New York 10523.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 3-31-2011 - JOMARY VIEIRA, SECRETARY