

#21579

Voice of the People of Westchester County for over 300 years

Date: March 28, 2011

To: Honorable Board of Acquisition and Contract

From: Hon. Kenneth W. Jenkins, Chairman
Westchester County Board of LegislatorsRe: **Authority to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with the Women's Enterprise Development Center, Inc. ("WEDC") to provide micro-enterprise training and assistance to poor and minority women, for a period of one year commencing January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011 in an amount not to exceed \$40,000.00**

Authority is hereby requested from your Board to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement (the "Agreement") with the Women's Enterprise Development Center, Inc. (the "Center"), to provide micro-enterprise training and assistance to poor and minority women to assist them in reaching economic self-sufficiency, for a term of one year commencing January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011 in an amount not to exceed \$40,000.00.

Ordinarily under Section 5(b) of the Westchester County Procurement Policy, the County is required to solicit written quotations from no fewer than 3 entities customarily providing the requested services. However, the Center is uniquely qualified to run this kind of program. While there are other micro-enterprise programs in the County, no other entrepreneurial training program in Westchester County focuses specifically on women, although needs assessment research has shown that women face greater obstacles in setting up and maintaining businesses. The need for this training for women is great. Self-employment through entrepreneurship provides low-income women with the opportunity to step out of poverty, to supplement low wages earned in the job market, to capitalize on talents and experience, to remove themselves from the welfare rolls, and to become self-sufficient.

The Center provides a program consisting of recruitment and assessment; 60+ hours of entrepreneurial training; life skills seminars, and paired work with a volunteer mentor from the women's business community. The Center also provides post-training seminars, ongoing technical assistance, and access to capital.

Since 2001, the program has produced over 700 graduates, all of them socially and economically disadvantaged women, displaced homemakers, Latina women, and child-care providers. Of these graduates, two-thirds successfully started businesses. The Center has performed this service under contract with Westchester County since the beginning of 2001. In the years that the Center has been funded through the Office for Women, your Board has determined that it was in the best interests of the County to exempt those contracts from the Procurement Policy requirements because of its unique focus.

Pursuant to Section 3(a)(xxi), the Westchester County Procurement Policy is not applicable to any procurement for which the Board determines, by resolution passed prior to commencing such procurement, that compliance with the Policy would not be in the best interests of the County. For the reasons set forth above, it is proposed that the best interests of the County would be served by entering into this Agreement.

Accordingly, I recommend that your Honorable Board make the determination that it is in the best interests of the County to exempt this contract from the application of procedural requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy. An appropriate resolution is attached herewith.

KWJ/mlg

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 12/01/2011 - JOMARY VIEIRA, SECRETARY

RESOLUTION

Upon a communication from the Chairman of the Westchester County Board of Legislators, 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 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 micro-enterprise training and assistance to poor and minority women to assist them in reaching economic self-sufficiency, with the Women's Enterprise Development Center, Inc., 707 Westchester Avenue, Suite 213 White Plains, New York 10604.

RESOLVED, that the Agreement is subject to County appropriations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 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 the Agreement or to renegotiate the amounts and rates approved herein. If the County subsequently offers to pay a reduced amount to the Service Provider, then the Service Provider shall have the right to terminate the Agreement upon reasonable prior written notice; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Chairman of the Westchester County Board of Legislators, or his authorized designee, is hereby authorized to execute any documents and take any actions reasonably necessary and appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this Resolution.