

**65154**

**TO:** Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

**FROM:** Robin Schlaff  
Director, Office for Women

**DATE:** September 20, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Request for authority to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement between the County of Westchester (the "County") and with Michelle James-Walker, pursuant to which Ms. James-Walker would serve as Director of the Westchester County Family Justice Center, for a term commencing on December 3, 2018 and continuing through September 30, 2019, for an amount not to exceed \$90,500

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By a resolution approved on September 13, 2018, your Honorable Board authorized the County, acting by and through its Office for Women, to enter into a grant agreement with the New York State Office of Victim Services ("OVS") pursuant to which the County will accept a grant awarded to it by OVS under OVS' Victim and Witness Assistance Grant Program (the "Grant"), in the amount of \$821,157.00. Pursuant to the terms of the Grant, the County is required to contribute 25% in matching funds in order to operate the Westchester County Family Justice Center ("FJC), for the period from October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019 (the "Grant Agreement").

Recently, the County solicited qualifications from qualified individuals for a contract for professional services to serve as Director of the FJC. From the responses received, two (2) candidates were determined to be qualified and were interviewed as part of the County's evaluation. Based on the responses and the interviews, Michelle James-Walker was determined to be best qualified respondent to the solicitation of qualifications.

In addition to her supervisory and managerial duties, Ms. James-Walker has been providing services for crime victims and their families for the past 16 years. Such services have included filing compensation claims, advocacy within the court systems, training rape crisis helpline volunteers on the effects of crime in our community and how to navigate the criminal justice system, collaboration on programs for victims, and conducting community presentations. She has also coordinated and managed data collection for various work sites and services, as well as monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual reports for funders, including OVS.

Ms. James-Walker has extensive experience providing services for victims of crime, has managerial knowledge, and has experience supervising staff at the FJC. Her familiarity with OVS grant implementation would also be beneficial for Grant compliance.

Accordingly, authority is now respectfully requested from your Honorable Board to exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy an agreement with Michelle James-Walker, pursuant to which Ms. James-Walker would serve as Director of the FJC, for a term from December 3, 2018 through September 30, 2019, for an amount not to exceed Ninety Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$90,500.00), 100% of which is grant funded, payable monthly, pursuant to an approved budget.

The proposed agreement will serve a public purpose by providing a director to supervise the daily operations of the FJC, which enhances the safety and independence of victims of abuse. If victims are empowered at the FJC 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 by the FJC to become independent and self-sufficient they are not as likely to be dependent on public assistance.

The goal and objective of the proposed agreement is to provide a director for the FJC and thereby ensure the overall sustainability of the FJC and ensure that the FJC provides services to victims.

The goal and objective of the proposed agreement is in the best interests of the County in terms of the public health, safety and general welfare, as providing a director the FJC and thereby ensuring the overall sustainability of the FJC and ensuring that the FJC provides services will ultimately enhance the safety and independence of victims of abuse.

The goal and objective of the proposed agreement will be tracked and monitored by the Office for Women.

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." For the reasons set forth above, it is proposed that the best interests of the County would be served by entering into this agreement.

Attached for your consideration is a proposed Resolution.

## RESOLUTION

Upon a 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 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 with Michelle James-Walker to serve as Director of the Westchester County Family Justice Center for a term from December 3, 2018 through September 30, 2019.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 11/08/2018 - LISA M. JAMES SECRETARY