

George Latimer
County Executive

Department of Social Services

Kevin M. McGuire
Commissioner

73181

DATE: December 6, 2019

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Kevin M. McGuire, Commissioner
Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Resolution authorizing the County of Westchester to enter into an agreement with My Sisters' Place, Inc. ("My Sisters' Place") for the purpose of providing advocacy and support services to children and victims of domestic violence, for the period from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 for an amount not to exceed \$364,826.

Authorization is requested for the County of Westchester acting by and through its Department of Social Services ("the Department") to enter into an agreement with My Sisters' Place, Inc. ("My Sisters' Place") for the purpose of providing advocacy and support services to children and victims of domestic violence, for the period from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 for an amount not to exceed \$364,826 to be paid on a monthly basis pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation.

The services to be provided pursuant to this agreement will serve a **public purpose** by promoting the safety of children and families by providing advocacy and intervention services, thereby enabling children and victims of domestic violence to access vital support services such as legal advice and housing. Services provided to children and victims of domestic violence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Counseling
- Safety planning
- Advocacy
- Securing orders of protection
- Securing safe housing/shelter placements
- Post-shelter placement services
- Court accompaniment
- Information and referral
- Networking

The **goals and objectives of this agreement** will be to provide victims of domestic violence and their children services such as crisis intervention, emotional support and life skills necessary to promote long-term financial self-sufficiency. Domestic violence liaisons/counselors will develop safety plans that will help avert the need for foster care placements and their associated costs. The services will provide for the health, safety and protection of children and victims of domestic violence. The ability to provide these services will decrease the risk of the development of severe emotional disorders or negative behaviors which may put others at risk of physical harm. In addition, under the proposed agreement, four domestic violence liaisons/counselors will be located in the County District Offices and a floater liaison/counselor will be available for CPS/domestic violence case coverage as needed anywhere in the County of Westchester.

The **goals and objectives of this Agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of public health** as the services provided by My Sisters' Place assist victims of domestic violence and their children with crisis intervention and emotional support. Children in the families that experience domestic violence are at risk of developing severe emotional disorders or adopting behaviors which may put others at risk of physical harm domestic violence services provided by My Sisters' Place help to decrease the risks associated with exposure to domestic violence. Early intervention can avert the risks posed to children and victims of domestic violence.

The **goals and objectives of this agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of public safety** as they are aimed at the safety and well-being of the children and families of Westchester County. The program under this agreement will provide supportive services that allow families that experience domestic violence to seek lives free of violence and achieve the legal authority to protect their children and themselves from recurrent violence. My Sisters' Place also provides services that assist victims of domestic violence in establishing stable and secure households independent of their abusers. Additionally, My Sisters' Place seeks to make the families safe whenever possible by using legal interventions, family and community resources.

The **goals and objectives of this agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility** in that the Department will be able to diminish the need for foster care placements and the costs associated with such placements. Preventing children from entering the foster care system can result in substantial savings for the County and its taxpayers.

The **goals and objectives will be tracked and monitored using performance measurement indicators developed by the Department.** They include, but are not limited to, the review of periodic reports submitted by the agency and onsite visits. **Based on the Performance Measurement Indicators, the Department is able to report** that from January 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019, My Sisters' Place has served 559 families and 1068 children. In addition, My Sisters' Place has secured orders of protection for 100% of families who required their assistance and 100% of families received safe housing with assistance.

The procurement of this agreement is exempt from the application of the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures pursuant to Section 3(a) xiv as the agreement is for the purposes of providing aid, care and support to persons in need of public assistance.

It should be noted that this agreement is not subject to the competitive procurement requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (formerly, the Grants Management Common Rule) as the federal funding for this program falls under Social Services Block Grant.

Accordingly, the County of Westchester is hereby requesting authority to enter into an agreement with My Sisters' Place, Inc. for the aforesaid purpose.

An appropriate resolution requesting your Honorable Board's approval is attached herewith.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT - 01/09/2020 - LISA MBIJAJ, SECRETARY

