

George Latimer
County Executive

Department of Social Services

Kevin M. McGuire
Commissioner

73184

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 the Westchester Institute for Human Development (“WIHD”) pursuant to which WIHD will provide comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment services at the Children’s Advocacy Center (“CAC”) for potential child victims of severe physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect in a child friendly environment, for the period from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 for an amount not to exceed \$1,007,053

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 the Westchester Institute for Human Development pursuant to which WIHD will provide comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment services at the Children’s Advocacy Center (“CAC”) for potential child victims of severe physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect in a child friendly environment, for the period from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 for an amount not to exceed \$1,007,053 to be paid on a monthly basis pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation.

The CAC at WIHD is a fully accredited member of the National Children’s Alliance (“NCA”) which is the accrediting body for all Children’s Advocacy Centers. By maintaining accreditation with NCA, WIHD establishes that they have met all 10 standards necessary for accreditation and best practices for CACs.

NCA accreditation is required for Tier 1 status with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). WIHD has the only accredited CAC in Westchester County. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this Honorable Board find that WIHD is the sole source provider of this service.

The CAC at WIHD is able to meet the medical standard for CACs because the provider has on staff, a board certified child abuse pediatrician, the only one in Westchester County and one of

only approximately 200 in the country. The child abuse pediatrician is also a recognized expert in court testimony and is the only recognized expert in Westchester County and the surrounding region.

Staff from the CAC and our mental health provider are trained in the Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention and Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – the two leading evidence supported interventions for children who have experienced a traumatic event.

The CAC at WIHD has a child friendly environment in which to conduct forensic interviews and medical assessments in accordance with NCA guidelines.

The CAC at WIHD conducts monthly case review meetings in accordance with the standards set forth by the NCA. The aforesaid facts make WIHD a sole source provider in delivering the required services under the proposed agreement.

The CAC/MDT (Multidisciplinary Team) approach used in the proposed agreement serves a **public purpose** by promoting effective, efficient, multidisciplinary assessments of child victims of severe physical abuse and sexual abuse in a manner that reduces trauma and prevents re-victimization of the child and promotes family and public safety by conducting objective, thorough multi-disciplinary assessments of potential abuse in a child-friendly setting.

The **goals and objectives of this agreement** of the program are to provide the Department with expert, quality, timely and specialized medical assessments for children, who are alleged to be victims of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse to ensure the health, safety and protection of vulnerable children. The Children's Advocacy Center is designed to provide a child friendly location where children and adolescents who may have experienced abuse can receive all necessary components of a multidisciplinary assessment at one time. The multidisciplinary team includes Child Protection, Law Enforcement, Prosecution, Child Abuse Pediatrics medical providers, Mental Health treatment providers, Victim Advocacy and CAC staff. Forensic interviews, conducted by trained team members, can be observed by other members of the team so that children do not have to recount their experiences multiple times to different people. The program provides services 24/7 to all children referred, ranging from ages 0-18 who are suspected victims of serious child physical abuse or child sexual abuse, sexual assault or neglect. WIHD also provides interpretation of reports for appropriate agencies, such as CPS, Law Enforcement, District Attorney and the County Attorney, when appropriate, via telephone or in-person meetings.

The **goals and objectives of this Agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of public health** as they are designed to ensure the safety and physical well-being of the children who are the alleged victims of sexual or physical abuse. Further, the information derived from the assessments of these victims is a key element in the identification and investigation of child abuse cases in Westchester County. The highly specialized WIHD staff respond to queries from local pediatricians and emergency departments in cases where child abuse is suspected; thus providing their expertise to the community-at-large.

The **goals and objectives of this Agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of public safety** as the program is aimed at promoting a safer environment for the children and the public alike by bringing the abusers to justice through court proceedings.

The **goals and objectives of this agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility** as research across the country demonstrates that the CAC approach is a cost savings measure when compared with assessments that do not use a multidisciplinary approach.

The goals and objectives will be tracked and monitored using performance measurement indicators developed by the Department. Based on the Performance Measurement Indicators reported for the period January 1, 2019 through September 30, 2019 the CAC served 190 children and 184 families 100% of the children had only one interview, thus preventing any additional trauma to subject these children. WIHD successfully met benchmarks for timeliness where average time from appointment request date and appointment was 2 days and reports were completed within ten days of WIHD's last contact with the children.

This agreement is exempt from the competitive procurement requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (formerly, the Grants Management Common Rule) pursuant to the Sole Source exemption. This agreement is exempt from the requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy based on the Sole Source exemption.

Accordingly, the County of Westchester is hereby requesting authority to enter into an agreement with Westchester Institute for Human Development for the aforesaid purpose.

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

