

George Latimer
County Executive

Department of Social Services

Kevin M. McGuire
Commissioner

80974

DATE: November 24, 2020

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 Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc., (“MHA”) pursuant to which MHA will provide an independent third party review process for the period from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$424,689.**

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 Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc. pursuant to which MHA will provide an independent third party review process for the period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$424,689 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** because they will ensure that the County is in compliance with state regulations, 18 NYCRR, Part 430.12 regarding requirements to hold and document service plan reviews for children in foster care. MHA has provided this service for the County since 2004.

The **goals and objectives of this agreement** are to provide case record reviews and facilitate Service Plan Reviews for children in family foster care and children who are in 1055 Placements. The Service Plan Review conference is required by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regulations, NYCRR 430.12, and is used to monitor compliance with court ordered services in support of permanency planning goals for children and families. MHA has the responsibility of scheduling the conferences on a timely basis as required by State mandate, notifying and inviting all participants and monitoring the conference as a neutral third party. Additionally, MHA provides case specific alerts to safety or planning issues. MHA is able to achieve program goals and objectives through the following:

- Identifying cases due for Service Plan Reviews
- Scheduling required conferences in Connections (NY State system)

- Sending invitation letters to all participants
- Identifying safety issues and making recommendations to the Department
- Identifying cases to be referred to Foster Care Discharge Review and Stage Point of Return (SPOR)
- Reviewing Court Orders

The goals and objectives of this Agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of public safety and public health by reducing the risk of further abuse, neglect and maltreatment of the children of Westchester County. By conducting reviews, the Department has an independent audit of the work that is being performed both by the Department and the parent. Youth are encouraged to attend these meetings to discuss their issues, concerns, and successes. Other parties in attendance can be the child's law guardian, service providers, and educational providers. Record reviews are conducted and any concerns are reported immediately by MHA.

The goals and objectives of this agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility in that they assist the Department to remain in compliance with State mandates, thereby preventing possible sanctions and fines.

The goals and objectives will be tracked and monitored using performance measurement indicators developed by the Department. They include, but are not limited to, reviewing of periodic reports submitted by the vendor and making onsite visits.

Based on the Performance Measurement Indicators, the Department is able to report that MHA is meeting targets and outcomes as stipulated by the contract and is on track to serving 100% contract capacity. As of the end of the third quarter of 2020, MHA has performed 377 service plan reviews and has completed and recorded 100% of Service Plan Reviews within ten days of the event.

This agreement is exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures pursuant to Section 3(a) ix as this agreement falls under the contracts with professionals or experts and also under Section 3(a) xviii as the purpose of this agreement is for the advancement of the moral, physical, mental and social well-being of the youth in Westchester County.

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 the Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc. for the aforesaid purpose.

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

