

George Latimer
County Executive

Department of Social Services

Kevin M. McGuire
Commissioner

80975

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”) to provide a Host Visitation program to enhance visitation between children in foster care and their families, for the period from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$115,209**

Authorization is requested for the County of Westchester (“County”) 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., (“MHA”) to provide a Host Visitation program to enhance visitation between children in foster care and their parents who are in need of supervised visitation in addition to or in place of visitation provided by Department staff. The proposed agreement will provide training to volunteers who will provide Host Visitation, along with MHA staff, on a weekly basis (at minimum), to approximately 16 to 24 families with children in foster care. This agreement will be for the period from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$115,209 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 increasing the number of visits with family members that children in foster care receive, and the more frequent contact that will be afforded by the Host Visitation Program should reduce the trauma of removal from the home for children and assists them in transitioning to a more permanent setting, whether that is reunification with the family, adoption, independent living, or adult custodial care.

The goals and objectives are in the best interest of the County in terms of public health and safety because the services provided through this contract will enhance visitation of children in foster care and their families. According to the New York City Administration for Children’s Services, Office of Family Visiting, “A Bridge Back Home: Visit Hosts” June 2007, research indicates that for children in foster care, more frequent contact with family, including siblings

and extended family reduces the trauma of removal for children, improves their adjustment to placement, and helps expedite permanency, regardless of whether the goal is reunification, adoption, independent living, or adult custodial care.

The goals and objectives of this agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility in that the Department is able to achieve cost savings when children in foster care are reunified with an identified permanent resource. Through the provision of services, the need for continued foster care placements and the costs associated will be averted. This will result in substantial savings for the County and its taxpayers.

The goals and objectives will be tracked and monitored using the performance measurement indicators developed by the Department. Under the terms of the Agreement, the contractor will provide each family served with a minimum of one (1) visit per week.

Based on the Performance Measurement Indicators, the Department is able to report that from January 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020, the program has served 21 families, exceeding their annual capacity of 16 families and has made a total of 80 visits. Additionally, MHA has submitted 100% of observation forms within 5 business days.

This agreement is exempt from the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures pursuant to Section 3(a) xviii.

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.

RESOLUTION

Upon a communication from the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, be it hereby

RESOLVED, that the County of Westchester (the “County”) acting by and through its Department of Social Services, is hereby authorized to enter into an agreement with The Mental Health Association of Westchester County, Inc., (“MHA”) to provide a Host Visitation program to enhance visitation between children in foster care and their families, for the period from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$115,209 to be paid pursuant to an approved budget; and be it further

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

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

RESOLVED, that the County Executive or his authorized designee is hereby authorized to take such action and execute such documents as may be necessary and proper to effectuate the purposes hereof.

Account to be charged/credited:

	FUND	DEPT	Major Program, Program & Phase, Or Unit	Object/ Sub-Object	Trust Account	Dollars
2021	101	22	8900	5960		\$115,209

Budget Funding Year(s): 2021 **Start Date:** 1/1/2021 **End Date:** 12/31/2021
(must match resolution)

Funding Source: Tax Dollars: 49%
\$115,209 State Aid: 30%
(must match resolution) Federal Aid: 21%