

George Latimer
County Executive

Department of Social Services

John Befus
Acting Commissioner

82259

DATE: January 25, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: John Befus, Acting Commissioner
Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: **Resolution authorizing the County of Westchester to enter into an agreement with Westchester Institute for Human Development (“WIHD”) for the provision of professional and technical services necessary to maintain and update the on-line Child Welfare DSS Manual for the period from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$115,995.**

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 Westchester Institute for Human Development (“WIHD”) for the provision of professional and technical services necessary to maintain and update the on-line Child Welfare DSS Manual for the period from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$115,995 to be paid on a monthly basis pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation.

The Manual is a comprehensive, online document that gives direct instruction to DSS Child Welfare staff and enables them to immediately access protocols and “best practice” procedures, thereby improving their ability to care for children and families. This in turn minimizes liability and helps ensure that the standards of practice are met universally across all program areas and all field offices

The services to be provided pursuant to this agreement will serve a **public purpose** as the Manual allows all levels of DSS staff to get immediate access to an integrated and centralized resource for all policies and directives set forth by federal, state, and local authorities that enable them to provide timely and effective services to the families and children of Westchester County.

The goals and objectives of this agreement are to continue providing professional and technical services necessary to maintain and update the on-line Child Welfare DSS Manual. The goals and objectives for the Manual have evolved over time. While initial goals focused on synthesizing and elucidating a wealth of information from many sources, the present goals take into account the fact that the earlier goals have largely been achieved. Thus, current goals aim to

maintain the high quality of the site and keep it current. This requires daily work, since new directives are handed down from all levels of government, including changes to local policy, procedures and practice, on an ongoing basis, and Manual staff must write and integrate that material into the website and add supporting links, text, and forms to make the new material immediately accessible to DSS staff. Not continuing this service would mean that the Manual would become an obsolete resource.

The goals and objectives of this agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility as the Manual, with its thorough and easily understood text, allows caseworkers to independently research questions on their own, reducing costly time spent in supervision. Families, individuals and children benefit from having caseworkers who are more knowledgeable regarding Department policies and procedures and who can speedily complete the necessary paperwork that documents and supports their important work with families. The 500+ online forms currently on the Manual also promote efficiency, for these forms can be completed, saved, e-mailed, and printed without the user having to leave his/her desk. New forms are formatted and uploaded to the site on a regular basis.

The goals and objectives will be tracked and monitored using performance measurement indicators developed by the Department. Based on the Performance Measurement Indicators, the Department is able to report that from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, 1,909 (unduplicated) users accessed a total of 55,884 pages of text. Additionally, approximately 18 online fillable forms were created.

A resolution exempting this agreement from the operation of the Westchester County Procurement Policy has been submitted under separate cover pursuant to Section 3(a) xxi of said policy.

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 WIHD for the aforesaid purpose.

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

