

83902

DATE: March 30, 2021

TO: Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Norma V. Drummond
Commissioner of Planning

SUBJECT: Resolution authorizing an Agreement between the County of Westchester and Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc., for Fair Housing Education and Asset Building Programs

The attached resolution authorizes the County of Westchester to enter into an agreement with Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc., (“WRO”) for a program to provide Fair Housing Education and Asset Building/Individual Development Account programs in Westchester County. The amount of the agreement shall not exceed \$32,621.00, pursuant to an approved budget, and the term of the agreement is January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

The agreement will provide for two programs. One program will be an education program on fair housing and discrimination aimed specifically to realtors, and condominium and cooperative boards. WRO is a HUD certified housing counseling agency that provides education on equal housing opportunities in Westchester County. It is anticipated that WRO will provide comprehensive training to realtors, condominium and cooperative boards/management companies during this contract period using materials on fair housing laws. The second program will be the implementation of an Asset Building Program for prospective homebuyers. WRO will assist families with incomes between 45% and 80% of median income through their Individual Development Account programs. They will also provide a first-time home-buying counseling program and home-buyers workshops and refer all appropriate households who are seeking apartment listings or home-ownership opportunities to the County’s “Homeseeker” website. They will assist in organizing the annual Affordable Housing Expo held at the County Center. WRO will conduct one-on-one home buyer education and counseling, provide fair housing information, establish a regular saving plan for potential home buyers, and conduct a financial literacy workshop. WRO has added a new goal to assist families with closing cost and/or down payment after they have participated in the First Time Homebuyers program.

WRO was unable to meet all of their goals in 2020. The goal of educating first time buyers about co-ops was not met as many of their clients were not Westchester County residents and due to

the COVID pandemic restrictions. The annual Home Expo held at the County Center was cancelled due to the pandemic. All other goals were met during this contract period. We anticipate WRO will accomplish all service goals established for this year.

WRO offers extensive housing programs in Westchester County that assist the needs of low to moderate income families. For a number of years, WRO has assisted the County in its effort to secure decent affordable housing for residents. WRO has expanded housing choices for all minority groups, promoted integration for all client groups served by the organization, provided housing counseling services to the most fragile and needy population including, but not limited to, senior citizens, psychiatrically and physically disabled persons and homeless families and individuals, and assisted low and moderate-income persons to reside in decent, safe and sanitary housing. WRO has been deemed to possess the requisite skills and experiences to meet the needs of those in our community who require these services.

The unique services provided by WRO are necessary to fulfill the County's housing goals. The program will be monitored by Department of Planning staff, who will review all payment requests to make sure all contractual requirements are met.

Authority to exempt this agreement from the requirements of the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures pursuant to Section 3(a) xxi thereof, has been requested by your Honorable Board in accordance with a separate resolution of even date herewith.

I recommend approval of this Agreement.

NVD/cp
Attachment

RESOLUTION

UPON A COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF PLANNING, BE IT HEREBY

RESOLVED, that the County of Westchester is hereby authorized to enter into an agreement with Westchester Residential Opportunities, Inc., for Fair Housing Education and Asset Building Programs, in an amount not to exceed \$32,621.00, to be paid pursuant to an approved budget, for the term January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 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 the 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 duly authorized designee is authorized to execute any documents and take any actions necessary to effectuate purposes hereof.

Account to be Charged/Credited

		Major Program, Program & Phase	Object/	Trust	
Fund	Dept	Or Unit	Sub Object	Account	Dollars
101	19	0100	4420	N/A	\$ 32,621.00

Budget Funding Year(s)
(must match resolution)

FY 2021

Start Date January 1, 2021

End Date

December 31, 2021

Funding Source

Tax Dollars \$32,621.00

State Aid _____

\$32,621.00
(must match resolution)

Federal Aid _____

Other _____