



George Latimer, County Executive
Leonard G. Townes, Commissioner
Department of Social Services

110027

DATE: November 25, 2024

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Acquisition and Contract

FROM: Leonard G. Townes, Commissioner
Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Resolution authorizing the County of Westchester to enter into an agreement with Family Ties of Westchester, Inc. for the provision of the "Family Team Decision Meetings - Child Safety Conference" program, to implement conferences and plans in situations where children are at high risk of removal from their families due to safety concerns, or who have already experienced an emergency removal, for the period from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, for an amount not to exceed \$475,338.

Authorization is requested for the County of Westchester acting by and through its Department of Social Services (the "Department" or "DSS") to enter into an agreement (DSS6018-25; the "Agreement") with Family Ties of Westchester, Inc. ("Family Ties"), for the provision of the "Family Team Decision Meetings - Child Safety Conference" program (the "FTDM-CSC Program") to implement conferences and plans in situations where children are deemed at high risk of removal from their families due to safety concerns, or who have already experienced an emergency removal, for the period from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, for an amount not to exceed \$475,338, to be paid on a monthly basis pursuant to an approved budget and subject to appropriation.

By way of background, on June 1, 2021, DSS implemented a new policy requiring that Child Welfare Staff convene a variety of Family Team Decision Meetings (the "FTDM") at key decision-making points within a Child Welfare case that include the family, the family's support network, as well as service providers working with the family, as necessary.

The FTDM-CSC Program is one form amongst the various FTDM model forms that DSS offers, and often the first to be called when a family becomes known to Child Protective Services. The goal of the FTDM-CSC Program is to prevent a child's placement in foster care, by engaging the family to address the high risk and safety concerns identified. However, if it is determined that foster care is needed, efforts are made to utilize extended family/kin as much as possible, and a plan is developed with the parents that seeks to reduce the length of stay and safely return children to the caregiver or discharged to other

resources as soon as possible. Under the FTDM-CSC Program, families take part in an immediate, facilitated conversation to determine how best to ensure a child's safety, whether at home or by temporarily separating children from caregivers.

The FTDM-CSC Program facilitator will bring together all parties including, caregivers, children/youth aged 10 and over as appropriate, extended family and supports identified by the caregivers, service providers, and DSS representatives to work collaboratively in the development of a plan that is tailored to the individual needs of the child and caregiver. All perspectives will be heard in order to develop a consensus meant to protect the child, maintain family connections, build on family strengths and divert the child from entering the foster care system. In the case of emergency foster care placements, DSS will make a referral to a FTDM-CSC facilitator to collaboratively develop a plan that would shorten the child(ren)'s length of stay in foster care, with the goal of safe reunification to the caregiver or another permanent resource.

This proposed Agreement serves a public purpose because it promotes safety, permanency and well-being for children and families. In addition to the long-term familial and societal benefits, the FTDM-CSC Program reduces foster care placements, which represents financial savings to the County.

The goals and objectives of this proposed Agreement is for families to take part in an immediate, facilitated conversation to determine how best to ensure a child's safety, whether at home or by temporarily separating children from caregivers. Increasingly, experts believe that the most effective way to help children and their families improve safety, permanency and well-being is to involve children and families, their support networks and professionals in all decisions relating to the child's placement.

The goals and objectives of this proposed Agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of public health because the services provided will protect the children, maintain family connections, build on family strengths and divert the child from entering the foster care system

The goals and objectives of this proposed Agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of public safety as the program reduces the recidivism rate of Child Protective Services' intervention and improves family functioning as well as provide a resource for the families even after their case is closed. Services through the program address family system dysfunctions, which without intervention, would lead to further abuse and maltreatment of children.

The goals and objectives of this agreement are in the best interest of the County in terms of fiscal responsibility in that it reduces foster care placements, which represents financial savings to the County and its taxpayers.

This program has a yearly capacity of 360 unduplicated families. Based on the Performance Measurement Indicators, the Department can report that from January 1, 2024, through September 30, 2024, the program has served 273 Unduplicated Families. 61 out of 273 referrals had two meetings due to Order of Protections which is 22% of unduplicated referrals. 59% of the families were referred to Preventive Services after the FDTM-CSC meeting. 15% families had the outcome of Kingship placements, 7% families had the outcome of placement in Foster Care, and 34% accepted community-based services. During this period, having an outsider contract facilitator has helped DSS to have an open floor of communication for participants to brainstorm other ways to help the family and to keep the children safe with the biological parents, family members, fictive kingship, and/or within their communities.

The procurement of this proposed Agreement is exempt from the application of the Westchester County Procurement Policy and Procedures pursuant to Section 3(a) xviii thereof, which exempts contracts for the creation and support of recreation projects and other appropriate programs for the prevention of delinquency and youth crime and the advancement of the well-being of the youth of 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 the proposed Agreement for the aforesaid purpose.

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

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION
JAN 2024
PATRICIA SCULKA, SECRETARY

RESOLUTION

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

RESOLVED, that the County of Westchester (the "County") is authorized to enter into an agreement (DSS6018-25) with Family Ties of Westchester, Inc., for the provision of the Family Team Decision Meetings - Child Safety Conference program to implement conferences and plans in situations where children are deemed at high risk of removal from their families due to safety concerns, or who have already experienced an emergency removal, for the period from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, for an amount not to exceed \$475,338, to be paid on a monthly basis 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 Family Ties, then Family Ties 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.

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITIONS CONTRACT NUMBER 2024 - RAYMOND S. DUKAKIS, SECRETARY

1. Account to be Charged/Credited:

Fund	Dept.	Major Program, Program & Phase Or Unit	Object/ Sub- Object	Trust Account	Dollars
101	22	8900	5960		\$475,338

2. Budget Funding Year(s): 2025

Start Date: January 1, 2025 End Date: December 31, 2025

(must match resolution)

3. Funding Source:

Federal	35%	CFDA#(s)	93.556		
State	30%	State ID#(s)	N/A		
Operating/ Tax Levy	35%				
Capital	N/A				

4.Total NTE: \$475,338

(must match resolution)

APPROVED BOARD OF ACQUISITION & CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION
RAYMOND SCULKY, SECRETARY