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## COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 5, 2017

Erie County Legislature  
92 Franklin Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

**Re: Department of Social Services Employee Education and Training**

Dear Honorable Members:

Since 1986, the Erie County Department of Social Services has operated an Employee Education and Training Program. This program allows employees to obtain degrees from various local colleges and universities and provides for critical in-house professional training. For 2017, the Social Services Department initiated Request for Proposals (RFP) utilizing the traditional model of receiving proposals and subsequently contracting with various local public colleges and universities. In addition, a RFP was issued suggesting a new model that would utilize only one college to assist in coordinating the entire program including allowing employees to attend various colleges or universities.

This proposed resolution requests authorization for the Department of Social Services to utilize SUNY Empire State College to administer the Erie County Department of Social Services Employee Education and Training Program utilizing the new model. There is no fiscal impact to the 2017 Adopted Budget based on this resolution. No additional County local share funds are necessary. The existing appropriation in account 516040, DSS Training and Education, is sufficient to cover this contract.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact the Department of Social Services. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.  
Erie County Executive

MCP/bb  
Enclosure

cc: Al Dirschberger, Department of Social Services

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature  
**From:** Department of Social Services  
**Re:** Employee Education and Training  
**Date:** July 5, 2017

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### **SUMMARY**

Since 1986, the Erie County Department of Social Services has operated an Employee Education and Training Program that allows employees to obtain degrees from various local colleges and universities and provides for critical in-house professional training. The Department has completed its review of its annual Request for Proposals (RFP) and has decided to adopt a new approach to the provision of training which will utilize one college to assist in coordinating the entire program. This proposed resolution requests authorization for the Department of Social Services to utilize SUNY Empire State College to administer the Erie County Department of Social Services Employee Education and Training Program utilizing the new model.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no County fiscal impact. No additional County funds are required. There are sufficient appropriations in the 2017 Adopted Budget of the Department of Social Services in Account 516040, DSS Training and Education, to fund the contract renewals for 2017.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Department would like to initiate a new model for employee training that would utilize one college to assist in coordinating the entire program. This model will still allow employees to pursue degree programs at various local public colleges or universities ranging from bachelor degree programs to master level programs. This model provides for the same level of employee participation in degree programs but also expands in-service training to improve the professional skills of Department staff. These educational programs increase employee knowledge and skills that help maximize the operating level of the Department.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Department has executed contracts in the past for various degree programs and in-service training through area public colleges. The new model will consolidate the program through one contract to improve efficiency and administration of the program while maintaining the same level of degree availability and increasing the funding for in-service training. New York State mandates use of State University of New York (SUNY) schools.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

Department employees will be denied the opportunity to continue in the degree programs and to receive other training to upgrade their professional skills.

**STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Social Services Department will execute contract the with respective institution. Funds will be paid as expenses are invoiced.

**A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

RE: Employee Education and Training

WHEREAS, the Department of Social Services is departing from its traditional approach of contracting individually with colleges and universities for the Employee Education and Training Program and recommending a new model that utilizes one provider to coordinate the degree and in-service training programs; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the RFP bidding process, the Research Foundation of SUNY on behalf of SUNY Empire State College submitted the only bid for the new model which would provide for overall coordination and training for the Erie County Department of Social Services Employee Education and Training Program; and

WHEREAS, this new model reduces administrative expenses by more than \$180,000 while providing the same level of degree programs for employees and increasing the availability of funding for in-service training; and

WHEREAS, this contract will enable employees of the Department of Social Services to upgrade their professional knowledge and skills thereby benefiting departmental operations; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Social Services must have Legislative approval to enter into contract; and

WHEREAS, there is no fiscal impact to the 2017 Adopted Budget based on this resolution and no additional County local share funds are necessary because the existing appropriation in account 516040, DSS Training and Education, is sufficient to cover the cost of entering into contract for 2017.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Executive and/or the Commissioner of Social Services are hereby authorized to enter into contract with the Research Foundation of SUNY on behalf of SUNY Empire State College, to provide educational and training services for the Erie County Department of Social Services Employee Education and Training Program as specified below:

<b>Educational Institution</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Gross Contract</b>	<b>Institution's Contribution</b>	<b>Amount to be Paid</b>
Empire State College Research Foundation (Bachelor's/Associates Degrees in Business/Community and Human Services to reimburse appropriate local degree programs and provide in-service training to DSS employees)	8/1/2017-- 8/31/2018	\$2,159,088	\$647,726	\$1,511,362

and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the Erie County Executive, the Commissioner of Social Services, the Erie County Comptroller, and the Director of the Division of Budget and Management.