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COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

November 21, 2017

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street – 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

**Re: Department of Social Services Division of Family Independence Early
Developmental Screenings Child Care Provider Training and Referral
Services to Families**

Dear Honorable Members:

The Department of Social Services is requesting authorization to enter into a contract with Olmsted Center for Sight to provide Child Care Provider Training and Referral Services to Families. This program will provide child development and parenting resources to providers, community agencies and families as well as coordinating partnerships to improve services to families.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Social Services Commissioner Al Dirschberger. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark C. Poloncarz".

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/bb
Enclosure

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Social Services – Division of Youth Services
Re: Child Care Provider Training and Referral Services to Families
Date: November 21, 2017

SUMMARY

The Department of Social Services is requesting authorization to enter into a contract with Olmsted Center for Sight to provide early developmental screenings and training, child care provider training and referral services to families.

This program will provide child development and parenting resources to providers, community agencies and families as well as coordinating partnerships to improve services to families.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There was \$500,000 designated in the Department of Environment and Planning budget for Poverty Initiatives. This resolution will transfer a portion of that funding into the Department of Social Services budget. No additional funding is necessary.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Poverty Committee recommended the County implement a program to enhance the system in which children receive early developmental screenings, families are connected to services, and providers receive appropriate training to support at risk children. An initiative was created to help Erie County develop efficient and effective systems for identifying at-risk children in order to help families find community-based programs and services to meet their needs. The mission is to promote the optimal development of our community's young children by providing universal early childhood screenings as well as:

- train county-contracted providers in early childhood development, screenings, and service connections
- train county contracted providers how to use 2-1-1WNY to access services for the families they serve
- train frontline DSS staff in how to access 2-1-1WNY to help their clients get referrals that address basic needs and community resources
- train frontline DSS staff how to access Help Me Grow services for young children and their families through the 2-1-1WNY call center and HMGWNY website
- link families to information and community resources related to child development and parenting
- provide personalized care coordination;
- ensure that low income families are aware of available community resources to assist them with getting out of poverty
- create and facilitate partnerships within the community to improve the availability and quality of services for families.

The focus of the initiative will be focused on, but not exclusive to, families receiving assistance as part of Erie County's child care subsidy program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Olmsted Center for Sight, the operators of 2-1-1 WNY, currently is the centralized referral agency for Help Me Grow WNY. Developmental screenings can assist parents, child care providers, medical professionals, and service agencies in meeting the needs of children. Parents and providers use the information gained from screenings to structure learning opportunities and support the development of the child. The initiative seeks to connect young children at risk of developmental or behavioral problems with existing services in the community.

Currently, only a fraction of our local infant and toddler population receives screenings or services for developmental or emotional disabilities; a large percentage of children who need further attention go undetected. Research has shown that there is a higher prevalence of developmental delays and disabilities—and a lower rate of early detection—among low-income children. A request-for-proposal was issued for the child care provider training and referral services to families and Olmsted Center for Sight was the only respondent.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The County will not be able to proceed with initiating this program.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The County will enter into a contract with Olmsted Center for Sight for this program.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Re: Child Care Provider Training and Referral Services to Families

WHEREAS, there was \$500,000 designated in the 2017 Erie County Budget for Poverty Initiatives; and

WHEREAS, at the direction of the Poverty Committee, an initiative was developed to enhance the system in which children are screened for developmental delays; and

WHEREAS, the initiative will be focused on, but not exclusive to, families receiving assistance as part of Erie County's child care subsidy program; and

WHEREAS, Olmsted Center for Sight, the operators of 2-1-1 WNY, currently are the centralized referral agency for Help Me Grow WNY; and

WHEREAS, a request-for-proposal was issued and Olmsted Center for Sight was the only respondent.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby provided to the Director of Budget and Management to transfer \$200,000 of available funds from Fund Center 1332010 Account 516300 Poverty Initiatives, to Fund Center 120 Social Services, Account 516300 Poverty Initiatives; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the County Executive is hereby authorized to enter into a contract with Olmsted Center for Sight for child care provider training and referral services to families for \$200,000; and be it further

RESOLVED, that authorization is hereby provided to reappropriate 2017 remaining balances of the Poverty Initiative contract funding into 2018 in order to provide uninterrupted family services; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the County Executive, the Division of Budget and Management, the Office of the Comptroller, the Department of Social Services, and the Department of Environment and Planning.