



# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

April 27, 2021

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

**Re: Authorization to Contract with Mt. Olive Development Corp.**

Dear Honorable Members:

The Department of Social Services is requesting authorization to enter into an agreement with Mt. Olive Development Corp as the provider of COVID-19 Community Outreach Services in the amount not to exceed \$5 million.

Requirements for issuing a Request for Proposal were followed in the issuance of RFP 2021-15VF To provide COVID-19 Community Response Services. Mt. Olive Development Corp was the only respondent organization, and the proposal was found to adequately meet the requested service needs in a comprehensive manner.

As new cascading consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to unfold, the scope of services detailed in RFP 2021-015VF needed to be expanded to include certified Community Health Worker training and deployment of "boots on the ground" services. As a result of the necessary nature of these services and the immediate need of the community, the Department of Social Services is requesting that the Erie County Legislature waive Erie County Administrative Code Section 26.08 to the extent it may require the issuance of a new Request for Proposal given the expansion of the scope of services as described above.

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 Poloncarz  
County Executive

MCP/mmk  
Enclosure

cc: Commissioner of Social Services Marie A. Cannon

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature  
**From:** Erie County Department of Social Services  
**Re:** Authorization to Contract with Mt. Olive Development Corp.  
**Date:** April 27, 2021

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### **SUMMARY**

In compliance with Erie County Administrative Code Section 26.08, Mt. Olive Development Corp. was selected to operate a COVID-19 Community Response Project to provide a comprehensive safety net for community members in the midst of the pandemic and ensure no one is left behind. Mt. Olive Development Corp. has assembled a wide array of service locations to ensure services are accessible from urban to rural areas across the county.

As a result of the necessary nature of these services and the immediate need of the community, the Department of Social Services is requesting authorization to enter into an agreement with Mt. Olive Development Corp. for the contemplated services and further requests that the Erie County Legislature waive Erie County Administrative Code Section 26.08 to the extent it may require the issuance of a new Request for Proposal given the expansion of the scope of services to include subcontracting of services that include an expanded community health worker model training and deployment of additional services to respond to needs resulting from the Coronavirus Pandemic.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

This contract will use up to \$5,000,000 of Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) awarded by the Federal Government. Approximately \$23 million in CRF funding remains at this time.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Mt. Olive Development Corp. operated a first phase and second phase version of this project for Erie County from May 5, 2020 through January 31, 2021. Approval of this project would expand the project to help Erie County address rising community needs for information, connection to health and human services programs, and meet public outreach obligations during the pandemic emergency.

As a result of the necessary nature of these services and the immediate need of the community, the Department of Social Services is requesting that the Erie County Legislature approve a Section 26.08 waiver to allow for the expansion of services under the RFP to include subcontracting of services that include an expanded community health worker model training and deployment of additional services to respond to needs resulting from the Coronavirus Pandemic.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A Request-for-Proposal to Provide COVID-19 Community Response Services was issued on February 5, 2021. Mt. Olive Development Corp was the only respondent to the issued RFP, and demonstrated required expertise and experience to provide the requested professional services.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

Services to be provided in this resolution are not accounted for in the budget and are necessary expenditures to avoid overwhelming the normal function of Erie County's human services programs. Negative action would leave vulnerable populations without a support network to connect them to new and existing programs to address the negative impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

## **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

A contract will be issued to Mt. Olive Development Corp. for professional services.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

RE: Authorization to Contract with Mt. Olive  
Development Corp.

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corporation partnered with Erie County in the early days of the pandemic to provide large-scale community outreach services throughout the County from May 2020-January 2021; and

WHEREAS, under their previous contract with Erie County, Mt. Olive Development Corporation made approximately 570,000 phone calls and connected with thousands of residents to educate them about COVID-19, assist them in getting tested, evaluate them for food, housing, and transportation needs, as well as perform general mental health and wellness checks; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corporation made 1,100 weekly food deliveries to families with an average of 5.9 persons; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corporation delivered PPE and household disinfectants to 450 families weekly; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corporation served an average of 5.7 persons weekly with behavioral services; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corporation was instrumental in ensuring the Federal Coronavirus Relief Funds that Erie County dedicated to housing assistance went to those families most in need; and

WHEREAS, because of this previous experience, Mt. Olive Development Corp. possesses the expertise to provide ongoing countywide COVID-19 community outreach services to residents; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corp. has assembled a wide array of service locations to ensure services are accessible from urban to rural areas across the county; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corp. was the only respondent to RFP 2021-15VF; and

WHEREAS, these community outreach services are based in 25 community sites equipped with cloud-based contact system to ensure concentration and outreach into disparate communities; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corp uses the call center to contact 25,000- 50,000 residents of Erie County per month to inquire about their welfare, social wellbeing, mental well-being, basic necessity needs, and food security; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corp. includes a focus on persons with disabilities, older adults, Veterans, and persons in need of program navigation assistance for members of the community who may otherwise never reach new and existing programs; and

WHEREAS, the pandemic has highlighted existing food insecurity in Erie County and caused the same for families that were previously doing well, Mt. Olive Development Corp.'s community outreach service will provide direct assistance to 500 families with weekly delivery of fresh produce and heart healthy food staples, to supplement food pantry supplies; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive provides direct fresh produce food delivery to nine (9) operating pantries, including Akron/Newstead and Rural Outreach Center which serves a total of 900 families weekly; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive provides direct referral and access of behavioral health services, as the COVID Pandemic has caused increased trauma, increased opioid over dose, behavioral health concerns and mental health decline; and,

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive utilizes the PHQ-9 screening questionnaire to assess mental health depression supplies and PPE, COVID-19 Vaccination Education, existing social services programs; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive will provide PPE supplies (masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and basic household disinfectants) to persons requesting the supplies and health education on the proper use of the supplies via telephone and will provide written instructions in the language they understand; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corp. will provide vaccination education and outreach services as directed by the Erie County Department of Health,

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corp, will utilize its call center to provide outreach and education of resources that Erie County residents that are impacted by COVID 19 can access, i.e. the Rental Assistance Program that is coming online, and other special projects directed by Erie County Department of Social Services; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corp utilizes a trauma informed approach to engage with the 25,000-50,000 Erie County residents per month; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corp, will engage Dr. Susan Grinslade of the UB School of Nursing and Dr. Heather Orom of the UB School of Public Health and Health Professions to assist in developing an assessment tool that will be used for evaluation of the program; and

WHEREAS, Mt. Olive Development Corporation will partner with the Community Health Worker Network to provide training to their outreach specialists and community outreach workers as certified Community Health Workers through a curriculum developed by D'Youville College; and

WHEREAS, these are necessary expenditures due to the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

WHEREAS, resources for these services were not accounted for in the most recent budget; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to expand the services originally contemplated by RFP 2021-15VF to ensure the immediate availability of expanded outreach services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT.

RESOLVED, that the County Executive is authorized to enter into a contract with Mt. Olive Development Corp to provide countywide COVID-19 community outreach services to residents; and be it further

RESOLVED, that to the extent applicable, this honorable body waives the procedures set forth in Section 26.08 of the Erie County Administrative Code so that the scope of services contemplated in RFP 2021-15VF may be expanded to include a community health worker model training and deployment of additional services to respond to needs resulting from the Coronavirus Pandemic without issuing a new Request for Proposal; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Comptroller's Office be authorized to make payments to Mt. Olive Development Corp from Fund 252 for an amount not to exceed \$5,000,000; 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 County Attorney's Office, and the Department of Social Services.