

MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Inter-Office Memorandum

DATE: September 24, 2012

TO: Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Héctor Colón, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by: Geri Lyday, Administrator, Disabilities Services Division

SUBJECT: Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting authorization to enter into a contract with NRS Services, LLC for the provision of Crisis Respite Home services in the Disabilities Services Division for the period November 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012 in the amount of \$83,333

Issue

Section 46.09 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances requires County Board approval for the purchase of human services from nongovernmental vendors. Per Section 46.09, the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is requesting authorization to enter into a contract with NRS Services, LLC for the provision of Crisis Respite Home services in the Disabilities Services Division (DSD) for the period November 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012 in the amount of \$83,333.

Background and Rationale

In December 2011, the County Board authorized a 2012 purchase of service contract for six months to Phoenix Care Systems, Inc. to provide Crisis Respite Home services. A six-month agreement was recommended because the current location providing Crisis Respite Home services was not fully accessible. The 2012 Request for Proposals (RFP) stated that the County wanted an accessible location. The current provider was to either find a fully accessible location in six months or other providers would be solicited to operate the crisis respite home that were fully accessible. Past efforts to acquire an alternate location to meet this requirement have not been successful.

In its June 2012 report to the Committee on Health and Human Needs, DSD reported that the existing vendor providing Crisis Respite Home services was not able to provide an accessible option for this program. Therefore, DSD indicated its intention to issue an RFP to seek an alternative for Crisis Respite Home services that would be fully accessible.

Current Respite Home Services

As indicated in the June 2012 report to the County Board, DSD continues to utilize the Crisis Respite Home as a less restrictive service alternative for individuals with intellectual, physical disabilities or with co-occurring mental health and intellectual disabilities who live in the community and need short-term crisis intervention. Individuals in crisis need alternatives to being admitted to units at the Behavioral Health Division (BHD). The source of referrals include community residential providers, DSD's Adult Protective Services Unit, families, BHD's Psychiatric Crisis Services and the Care Management Organizations (CMO's).

Due to the complex needs individuals exhibit when residing at the Crisis Respite Home, careful planning must go into developing and implementing successful return to permanent living arrangements. It is therefore imperative that services are provided by sophisticated clinical staff and highly trained and experienced direct care staff. Typically, individuals have funding for their long term support needs through one of the Family Care options available and can utilize that resource to help identify living alternatives as they transition from the Crisis Respite Home.

Additional Capacity/BHD Hilltop Downsizing

DSD continues to work in conjunction with BHD on the downsizing initiative for its Hilltop facility for individuals with co-occurring mental illness and intellectual disabilities. It is anticipated that up to 24 individuals who are currently residing at the Hilltop facility will be moving to community-based living arrangements by July 2013.

Individuals currently residing at Hilltop have been assessed as to what behavioral supports might be required as they transition to a new community-based living arrangement. Many of these individuals experience periodic increases in support needs and some may need occasional Crisis Respite Home services. This is believed to be a better alternative than admitting an individual to the BHD Psychiatric Crisis Service when he or she needs to have a temporary alternative living arrangement to diffuse a crisis situation because of behavioral challenges or other circumstances. This alternative is also more cost-effective and clinically appropriate since individuals will have access to special services from staff who have experience working with co-occurring mental illness and intellectual disabilities.

The DSD Crisis Respite Home RFP is seeking expansion of the existing capacity from four to eight beds. It is anticipated that the additional capacity will be utilized to support those individuals who will transition through the BHD Hilltop downsizing initiative. This is an integral part of the downsizing initiative and will also be a beneficial service to all individuals with intellectual disabilities who experience short-term crisis situations and are in need of brief crisis respite services.

The additional funding for this initiative will be available from the Mental Health Community Investment funding.

Request For Proposals

An RFP was issued in July 2012 by DHHS DSD and a review panel was convened to review the proposals that were submitted. The process resulted in two proposals being received. One of the proposals did not score favorably with the review panel. The other application scored very well and therefore, the review panel's recommendation was to award the contract to NRS Services, LLC. This vendor is known to DSD and has provided innovative residential services, targeted case management services and has developed highly specialized residential options for individuals who experience co-occurring behavioral challenges. This relatively new agency was formed by several well-respected residential providers as a new organization that would specialize in supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities who also experience significant behavioral challenges and/or co-occurring mental health issues.

According to the proposal submitted, NRS Services, LLC has acquired two four-bed locations that will provide fully accessible Crisis Respite Home services. It is also anticipated that the site(s) will be fully licensed by the State by November 1 which will allow DSD to bill for anticipated Medicaid revenue under DHS Chapter 34. The two four-bed sites are recommended to provide a smaller setting which tends to be more conducive to working with individuals presenting more aggressive and challenging behaviors.

DSD is therefore recommending a contract with NRS Services, LLC to be effective November 1, 2012 to provide Crisis Respite Home Services. DSD will also conclude its current contract with Phoenix Care Systems, Inc. effective October 31, 2012.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the County Board authorize the Director, DHHS or his designee to enter into a contract with NRS Services, LLC for the provision of Crisis Respite Home services in the Disabilities Services Division (DSD) for the period November 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012 in the amount of \$83,333.

Fiscal Effect

Funding for this contract is already budgeted in the 2012 DSD budget. There is no additional tax levy required. A fiscal note form is attached.

Respectfully Submitted,



Héctor Colón, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

cc: Chris Abele, County Executive
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