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CITY OF YONKERS
DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

**PERIODIC REPORT OF GRANT FUNDING FOR
COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

To: Mayor Mike Spano
Liam McLaughlin, City Council President
Members of the Yonkers City Council
Vincent Spano, Yonkers City Clerk

From: Brendan J. McGrath, Inspector General 

Re: Grant Inspection and Review Report for
Westchester Disabled on the Move

Date: June 26, 2017

This report is issued in response to City Council Resolution No. 52-2008 which directs the Inspector General to “develop an ongoing oversight program to monitor Community Based Organizations and other entities that receive grant funding from the City of Yonkers” and Resolution No. 94-2008 which directs the Inspector General to “move forward” with the plan that was submitted.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc. (“WDOM”) is a domestic not for profit corporation that provides specialized non-residential housing services for persons of all ages with disabilities within the City of Yonkers, extending to the County of Westchester.¹ Our review of WDOM reveals that adequate financial controls were in place to ensure that the Year 41 Community Development Block Grant² (“CDBG”) was used appropriately and in accordance with the agreement between the City of Yonkers and the WDOM.

¹ See, www.wdom.org. See also, NYS Department of State, Division Of Corporations.

² Funding sources for Community Development Block Grants are received from the United States Government under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Organizational Overview

Incorporated in 1984, WDOM is a domestic not-for-profit corporation and tax exempt organization under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, located at 984 North Broadway, Yonkers, New York 10701. WDOM is a non-residential center dedicated to the independence and civil rights of people with mental, physical, or sensory disabilities. Services/programs provided by the WDOM to its recipients (referred to as “clients” or “consumers” by WDOM staff) include, but are not limited to, assistance with:

- locating affordable and accessible housing opportunities;
- landlord tenant issues;
- home modifications to enhance mobility;
- Obtaining and completing benefits applications;
- Relocating those in institutional settings, such as nursing homes or shelters to more independent settings;
- Employment and training information;
- Advice on gaining access to various benefits.

WDOM is a part of a network of non-residential Independent Living Centers located throughout the State of New York³ committed to providing services to assist those with disabilities to live fully integrated lives by assisting with all aspects of living, learning and earning a living.

According to Melvyn Tanzman, WDOM’s Executive Director, WDOM handles approximately 1,300 housing related matters per year, of which approximately 20% of the clients are from Yonkers. These matters are administered by a staff consisting of 14 employees of which, approximately 10 are full time. Mr. Tanzman indicated that 90% of the clients who use WDOM’s housing advocacy services are either poorly housed or live in conditions that can make their homes virtually inaccessible.

Grant Summary

By contract approved by the City of Yonkers on or about November 19, 2015, WDOM entered into an agreement with the City of Yonkers for a CDBG in the amount of \$7,000.00.

According to figures and documentation provided by Director Tanzman, for fiscal year ending September 30, 2106, funding sources included government grants, fees and contributions which include the \$7,000.00 CDBG through the Yonkers Department of Planning and Development. The CDBG was used to partially pay for the salary and fringe benefits for the position of housing advocate whose responsibility it is to assist consumers with various housing issues. Financial statements provided by WDOM for its fiscal year ending September 2016, reveal total support and revenue in the amount of \$910,000, while expenses totaled almost \$848,000.

³ According to the New York State Department of Education, independent living centers are not-for-profit organizations that provide a variety of services that assist people with disabilities with all aspects of living but do not run residential programs. See, <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/independent-living-centers>.

By request of WDOM to the Yonkers Department of Planning and Development, the City of Yonkers issued payment in the amount of \$7,000 in one check in or about June 2016. Documentation provided by the Yonkers Department of Planning and Development confirmed that the CDBG was used as partial payment for salary and fringe benefits.

Site Visit

On April 13, 2017, this office met with Director Tanzman, Deputy Executive Director Maria Samuels, and the housing advocate. The office appeared neat and orderly, and displayed pamphlets describing the services and programs offered by WDOM.

Program Participants

Pursuant to its contract with the City of Yonkers, the WDOM, as recipient of the CDBG, was to submit regular progress reports. WDOM submitted four progress reports for Year 41 (February 1, 2015 to January 31, 2016) which included descriptions of the income levels of the consumers in attendance and the services provided. Under applicable U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations, programs that receive funding must document that at least 51% of the program participants are have incomes that are described as low to moderate incomes. Accordingly, a review of WDOM's quarterly reports indicates that greater than 51% of clientele who receive and/or take part in the services offered by WDOM fit within the income category as described by WDOM as coming from families with "Extremely Low" to "Low" to "Moderate" incomes. Moreover, HUD guidelines presume that people with disabilities or those who need assistance with activities of daily living, such as getting around inside the home, keeping track of money and bill and preparing meals are low to moderate income recipients, thereby qualifying WDOM for the CDBG.⁴

Internal Controls

This office found that the CDBG was supported by appropriate documentation supplied by WDOM and the Yonkers Department of Planning and Development. A review by this office revealed that sufficient internal controls were in place to ensure that the CDBG was applied to its intended use and in accordance with the Center's contract with the City of Yonkers.

According to Mr. Tanzman, a board of directors is in place to oversee fiscal oversight, strategic planning, and outreach and fundraising. The WDOM Board meets monthly from September to June and during the summer months, if necessary. A designated member of the Board is responsible for co-signing checks above \$1,500, except for checks for rent, health insurance, and payments to a financial officer, the independent contractor retained by WDOM to administer the finances of the corporation.

⁴ See, Basically CDBG (May 2014) 3-9, HUD, Office of Block Grant Assistance, <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Basically-CDBG-Chapter-3-Nat-Obj.pdf>

All other checks are signed by the Executive Director alone. Moreover, WDOM has in place, a personnel procedures manual issued to each employee and a fiscal policies manual.

WDOM retained the services of Lederer, Levine and Associates, LLC, an accounting firm to prepare an annual independent audit, which revealed that as of September 30, 2016, WODM was operating in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Conclusions

Our review indicates that Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc. serves an important role within the Yonkers Community by providing a variety of services for those with disabilities in the City of Yonkers. Based on the foregoing, it is the finding of this office that the \$7,000 grant was used appropriately and in accordance with the agreement between WDOM and the City of Yonkers.