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GRANT INSPECTION AND REVIEW

Organization: My Sister's Place, Inc.

Grants: Emergency Shelter Grant: \$20,597
(YR 33) Parks Department Grant: \$15,000

By: Philip A. Zisman, Inspector General

Date: February 6, 2009

Review

Organization Overview

My Sister's Place (MSP) is a non-profit organization founded in 1975, which provides shelter and comprehensive support services to victims of domestic violence and their children throughout Westchester County. MSP has administrative offices in White Plains and in Yonkers on South Broadway, and also operates a shelter in Yonkers that provided services to approximately 67 adults and children annually. MSP's annual budget is approximately \$3.5 million. The budget for the Yonkers shelter is approximately \$450,000. The organization is funded through State, Federal and local grants and through fundraising.

Grant Overview and Budget

In CDBG YR 33, the City of Yonkers provided \$20,597 to MSP in an Emergency Shelter Grant. Grant monies are used to pay a portion of the Yonkers shelter manager's salary and for the services of Westhab, Inc., the housing development agency that MSP has contracted with to manage its shelter facilities. The approved budget was:

\$ 6,000	Salaries and Fringe Benefits
\$ 13,000	Contracted Services
<u>\$ 1,597</u>	Utilities
Total: \$ 20,597	

In addition, the Parks Department provided a Bureau of Youth Services grant in the amount of \$15,000 for a Domestic Violence and Prevention program. Grant monies were used to pay a portion of the salary and fringe benefit costs for the Domestic Violence Education coordinator.

Payments

All payments submitted to the City for reimbursement under the grants were well documented, and consistent with the approved grant contract between the City and MSP.

Administrative Interview

On December 19, 2008, Inspector General Philip Zisman and Senior Investigator Harvey Green meet with MSP’s Director of Finance and Administration Susan Tedesco, and Finance Associate David Fordes-Watkins at the MSP offices at 487 South Broadway. We discussed overall MSP operations, accounting procedures, the City’s emergency shelter grant and the City’s Parks Department Domestic Violence and Prevention Program. We also received a tour of the offices.

Program Participants

Grant recipients are required to submit to the City Quarterly Progress Reports that provide statistical information regarding the ethnicity and income levels of the persons who participated in the grant funded program. We reviewed the documentation for the Emergency Shelter Grant and are satisfied that they meet reporting requirements. The MSP clients who receive shelter in Yonkers tend to be residents from outside of the City who are sheltered in Yonkers in order to ensure their safety. Yonkers residents who require shelter are usually placed in a network of shelters outside Yonkers, in Westchester, Rockland or New York City. Almost all women and children who enter the shelter program are recipients of Department of Social Service grants or assistance, and thus satisfy income requirements.

Internal Controls

MSP is currently in the process of updating its written policies and procedures that according to Ms. Tedesco and Mr. Fordes-Watkins have been in effect for many years.

We discussed MSP's procedures for handling cash receipts, accounts payable, check signatories, and are satisfied that there are adequate internal controls and separation of duties procedures that safeguard the organization's finances.

Conclusions

- Grant funds are being spent in accordance with the approved grant applications.
- All grant fund reimbursements contained proper supporting documentation.
- MSP has appropriate internal controls and accounting procedures in place to ensure that grant funds are properly accounted for and not misappropriated.