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**DEPARTMENT OF
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TO: Chuck Lesnick, City Council President
All City Council Members

CC: Philip A. Amicone, Mayor
Louis Kirven, Commissioner, Department of Planning and Development
Angela Ascolillo, Executive Director, North Yonkers Preservation and Development Corp.

FROM: Dan Schorr, Inspector General 

SUBJECT: Grant Inspection and Review Report for North Yonkers Preservation and Development Corp.
CDBG YR 35: \$29,000 – Senior Transportation Program
\$10,500 – Homework Help After School Program

DATE: June 11, 2010

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

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

North Yonkers Preservation and Development Corp. (“NYPDC”) provides helpful assistance to low-income senior citizens and school-age children in the northwest Yonkers community and has adequate financial controls in place to ensure that grant funds are utilized appropriately and consistent with the approved grant.

Organizational Overview

NYPDC, incorporated in 1979 as a not-for-profit organization, has as its primary purpose neighborhood preservation. The organization provides various programs for residents of the community. These programs include the Homework Help After School Program; the Crime Prevention – McGruff “Just Say No to Drugs” program for children in pre-kindergarten to fourth grade; senior transportation; and a tenant assistance program which helps seniors with tenant organizing, legal representation in housing court, and other legal referrals.

Grant Summary

In year 35 of the CDBG program (February 1, 2009 – January 31, 2010), NYPDC received two grants totaling \$39,500. A grant of \$29,000 helped fund a senior transportation program, and an additional grant of \$10,500 supported the Homework Help After School Program. The two programs had a total combined budget of \$79,000.

NYPDC has been providing a senior transportation program for thirty-two years and currently provides daily (Monday to Friday) door-to-door shuttle service to stores within the Lake Avenue business district and, by prior arrangement, door-to-door transportation to and from physicians, hospitals, nutrition centers, community events, grocery stores, shopping malls, and other recreational locations. There is no charge for seniors utilizing this service. It is available in northwest Yonkers for nine different locations and also for seniors living in private homes.

The Homework Help After School Program (previously called Latchkey) has been active for the past twenty years. The forty-week program coincides with the Yonkers Public Schools calendar and provides a safe, structured environment for twenty-five at risk youths age five to twelve. Currently there is a waiting list of ten to twelve children. To qualify for the program, the parent(s) must be working and unable to provide after school supervision and homework help, and the child/children must reside in Yonkers and attend school for the duration of the program. The suggested fee for the program is fifty dollars per week per child, payable by check only. NYPDC is registered with the NYS Office of Children and Family Services to operate a school-age child care program for twenty-five children.

The City funds were budgeted as follows:

Homework Help Center

\$ 8,645	Salaries
\$ 700	Fringe Benefits
\$ 500	Program Supplies
\$ 100	Office Supplies
\$ 165	Telephone
\$ 40	Postage
<u>\$ 350</u>	Utilities

Total: \$ 10,500

Senior Transportation

\$ 17,680	Salaries
\$ 1,570	Fringe Benefits
\$ 1,608	Program Supplies
\$ 100	Office Supplies
\$ 1,000	Telephone
\$ 42	Postage
\$ 500	Maintenance & Repair of Equip.
<u>\$ 6,500</u>	Liability Insurance

Total: \$ 29,000

Site Visit

On May 25, 2010, Inspector General Dan Schorr, Deputy Inspector General Ed Benes, and Senior Investigator Harvey Green met with Angela Ascolillo, Executive Director of NYPDC, at its building located at 219 Ridge Avenue in Yonkers. Ms. Ascolillo said she became Executive Director about ten years ago, and that she previously ran the Latchkey program, which she started approximately twenty years ago.

According to Ms. Ascolillo, the building was donated to the NYPDC over twenty years ago. The facility contains two small offices, a kitchen/utility area, and a single large room located in the rear of the building that is used for the Homework Help After School program, senior citizen gatherings, community meetings, and other events related to the mission of the NYPDC. In addition, in conjunction with the City's Office of the Aging, effective June 14, 2010, NYPDC will be hosting the nutrition site formally located at Sacred Heart High School.

Ms. Ascolillo said the NYPDC has a twenty-four seat bus that it uses for the senior citizen transportation program. The bus runs Monday thru Friday to the Lake Avenue business district, and each day it also includes a different additional destination, such as A&P, Shoprite, Stew Leonard's, and the Cross County Shopping Center. It also runs special monthly trips to different locations, such as the Palisades Center Shopping Mall, Empire City at Yonkers Raceway, and Danbury Mall.

Payments

All payments submitted for reimbursement were documented and consistent with the approved grant contract between the City and NYPDC. The salary and fringe benefits payments were supported by payroll schedules and cancelled checks. All other payments were supported by invoices or other documentation that satisfied the policy and practice of the Department of Planning and Development for approval of CDBG claims for reimbursement.

Program Participants

Grant recipients are required to submit "Quarterly Progress Reports" to the City that provide statistical information regarding the ethnicity and income levels of people who participated in grant funded programs. Under applicable HUD regulations, programs that receive funding must document that at least 51% of the program participants are from families with low to moderate incomes. At the time of our audit, for the grant year of February 1, 2009 through January 31, 2010, NYPDC had submitted four progress reports for each of their two grants.

The reports for the Homework Help After School Program showed that for the relevant grant period it enrolled a total of thirty-three youths, covering two different school years. Of the thirty-three youths, eleven were classified as extremely low income, eight were classified as low income, and fourteen were classified as moderate income.

The reports for the senior transportation program indicated that 264 seniors used the program during the grant period. The seniors were classified as 249 extremely low income, ten low income,

and five moderate income. Ms. Ascolillo explained that the majority of the seniors using their bus reside in either Section 8 or senior citizen housing complexes within the City.

We reviewed a sample of participant files, intake sheets, and driver reports for Grant Year 35 and determined that NYPDC was properly documenting applicants' income and status, which satisfies HUD requirements.

Internal Controls

Due to the fact that the NYPDC currently has only a two-person staff, there isn't the separation of duties and cash controls that would be present in a larger organization. To compensate for this lack of separation of duties, NYPDC has instituted the following internal controls:

- Retained the services of an accountant to do quarterly reviews of their financial records and prepare required quarterly tax returns
- Retained the services of an independent certified public accountant to conduct the year-end audit of the financial books and records of the organization

We also found that NYPDC had appropriate written policies and procedures.

Conclusions

NYPDC runs valuable programs that benefit Yonkers residents and utilizes grant money appropriately and consistent with their approved grants. Specifically, we note:

- NYPDC spent Year 35 CDBG funds in accordance with the two approved grant budgets. There was proper documentation submitted for CBDG reimbursement claims in support of payments under the grants.
- NYPDC's Quarterly Progress Reports were detailed and provided statistics to show how the programs were serving the community and meeting the specific objectives of their programs.