

**HOUSING AUTHORITY OF NEW ORLEANS  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 16, 2013**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2013-16**

**WHEREAS**, the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) has drafted and adopted a groundbreaking new Criminal Background Policy for housing admissions and employment; and

**WHEREAS**, HANO required professional consulting services to review the full implications of the policy, as well as ongoing services to refine the policy and create procedures for its implementation; and

**WHEREAS**, as a component of implementation, HANO will develop objective criteria to assess the risk that a convicted felon may pose in both the housing and employment contexts, and create a sound decision-making process for admissions and employment of convicted felons for HANO housing and jobs; and

**WHEREAS**, upon review of firms in New Orleans, HANO determined that a competitive procurement for these services was not feasible, and identified the Vera Institute of Justice ("Vera Institute"), which had recently designed a pretrial services program in collaboration with New Orleans criminal justice systems stakeholders, to assist it in that effort; and

**WHEREAS**, the Vera Institute combines expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, the Vera Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit center for justice policy and practice; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to the pretrial services program in New Orleans, for which they created a risk assessment instrument, they are currently working with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to design a pilot re-entry program which looks at the agency's criminal background policy and practices; and

**WHEREAS**, the Vera Institute has demonstrated their expertise to design risk assessment tools relating to criminal backgrounds and the criminal justice system in New Orleans, as well as to advise on, refine, and implement a criminal background policy related to a public housing authority, which are critical to the success of HANO's Criminal Background Policy implementation; and

**WHEREAS**, the HANO Administrative Receiver, who is also the Contracting Officer, determined that it is in the best interest of HANO to directly engage the services of the Vera Institute to refine and implement its Criminal Background Policy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Vera Institute will assist HANO in designing effective protocols and practices for implementing the new criminal background policy; train HANO staff and key stakeholders on new protocols and practices; build community, stakeholder, and government input and support for the new policies and their implementation; and develop an evaluation plan to assess whether the new policies meet their stated goals; and

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**WHEREAS**, the use of the noncompetitive procurement is justified by the unique experience of the Vera Institute and the nature of the services provided; and

**WHEREAS**, the Vera Institute submitted a proposed scope and cost proposal establishing an not to exceed amount of \$180,000, and proposed hourly rates and travel allowances for the provision of the required services; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposal submitted was reviewed, and the fees were determined to be fair and reasonable based on a comparison of the rates for comparable services; and

**WHEREAS**, the Administrative Receiver on behalf of HANO executed this contract with the Vera Institute in order to expedite the refinement of the draft Criminal Background Policy, which was adopted in final form at the March 26, 2013 HANO Board meeting.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of New Orleans hereby ratifies the actions of the Administrative Receiver in executing a contract with the Vera Institute of Justice in an amount not to exceed \$180,000 to provide HANO with services related to the refinement and implementation of its new Criminal Background Policy.

Executed this 16<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2013

APPROVAL:

  
**DAVIS GILMORE**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE RECEIVER**  
**CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



April 16, 2013

**MEMORANDUM**

**To: David Gilmore  
Administrative Receiver  
Chairman, Board of Commissioners**

**From: Maggie Merrill  
Senior Advisor to the Administrative Receiver**

**Re: Ratification of Contract for Vera Institute of Justice – Services to Refine  
and Implement HANO Criminal Background Policy**

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The scope of work for this contract provides for consulting services to the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) to refine and implement its new Criminal Background Policy. This procurement was conducted using the noncompetitive procurement method, in accordance with 24 CFR 85.36(d)(4)(i)(A-D), and HANO's Procurement Policy, which allows for procurements using the noncompetitive method in instances where the item (or service) is only available from a single source, public exigency will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation, or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate. The contract was executed by the Administrative Receiver on March 20, 2013 and by the Vera Institute for Justice on March 28, 2013.

The Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) issued a Draft Criminal Background Policy on January 8, 2013 and held a special public hearing on January 22, 2013 to receive comments and hear testimony of the proposed policy statement. HANO received many thoughtful and constructive comments from local and national groups at that hearing. It became apparent that HANO would require professional consulting services to review the full implications of the policy and the comments received, as well as ongoing services to refine the policy and create procedures for its implementation. As a component of implementation, HANO would need to develop objective criteria to assess the risk that a convicted felon may pose in both the housing and employment contexts, and create a sound decision-making process for admissions and employment of convicted felons for HANO housing and jobs.

Upon review of firms in New Orleans, HANO determined that a competitive procurement for these services was not feasible, and identified the Vera Institute of Justice ("Vera Institute"), which had recently designed a pretrial services program in collaboration with New Orleans criminal justice systems stakeholders, to assist it in that effort. The Vera Institute combines expertise in research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety. The Vera Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit center for justice policy and practice. In addition to the pretrial services program in New Orleans, for which they created a risk assessment instrument, they are currently working with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) to design a pilot re-entry program which looks at the agency's criminal background policy and practices. The Vera Institute has demonstrated their exclusive expertise to design

risk assessment tools relating to criminal backgrounds and the criminal justice system in New Orleans, as well as to advise on, refine, and implement a criminal background policy related to a public housing authority, which are critical to the success of HANO's Criminal Background Policy implementation.

The HANO Administrative Receiver, who is also the Contracting Officer, has therefore decided that it is in the best interest of HANO to directly engage the services of the Vera Institute. The Vera Institute will assist HANO in designing effective protocols and practices for implementing the new criminal background policy; train HANO staff and key stakeholders on new protocols and practices; build community, stakeholder, and government input and support for the new policies and their implementation; and develop an evaluation plan to assess whether the new policies meet their stated goals.

The Vera Institute submitted a proposed scope and cost proposal establishing a not to exceed amount of \$180,000, with proposed hourly rates and travel allowances for the provision of the required services. The proposal submitted was reviewed, and the fees were determined to be fair and reasonable. This determination was based on a comparison of the rates for comparable services.

A due diligence review has been conducted on the Vera Institute. The review consisted of reference verifications. Additionally, the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non Procurement Programs was checked to ensure that the firm is not debarred from participation in federally funded contracts. Results from the due diligence review indicate that the contractor is responsible.

HANO executed this contract with the Vera Institute in order to expedite the refinement of the draft Criminal Background Policy, which was adopted in final form at the March 26, 2013 HANO Board meeting. It is hereby requested that the Board of Commissioners ratify the actions of the Administrative Receiver in executing the contract with the Vera Institute in an amount not to exceed \$180,000 to provide HANO with services related to the refinement and implementation of its groundbreaking new Criminal Background Policy.