

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**  
**PROJECT HOME**  
**March 2013**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

New York City's Family Justice Centers (FJCs) provide a wide array of comprehensive services to victims of domestic violence in safe locations with easy access to domestic violence prosecutors and legal and social services. The one-stop model has been demonstrated to effectively address many of the needs of victims. Permanent housing, however, although one of the primary needs expressed by victims of abuse, continues to be an unmet need.

**Project HOME** will provide clients at the Family Justice Centers in Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan with housing training, technical assistance, and link 40 eligible applicants to safe, affordable permanent housing. This program will address a service gap—thereby strengthening the Family Justice Centers and supporting the goal of keeping victims safe and stable.

Project HOME will link domestic violence victims who are FJC clients and are at risk of homelessness with safe, affordable permanent housing in residential projects funded with low-income housing tax credits. Once placed in permanent housing, clients will continue to have access to services at the FJCs, including self-sufficiency activities designed to promote long-term housing stability.

**PROJECT COLLABORATORS & HISTORY OF COLLABORATION**

**New Destiny Housing Corporation** (“New Destiny”) and the New York City Mayor’s Office to Combat Domestic Violence (“OCDV”) are collaborating on a pilot program, **Project HOME**, designed to improve the long-term safety and security of domestic violence victims seeking services at the Family Justice Centers in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx.

**New Destiny** is a New York City nonprofit provider of housing and services to low-income households, with a focus on survivors of domestic violence. New Destiny has developed fourteen residential projects for domestic violence survivors since its inception, and currently has two more projects under development—a 23-unit building in Brooklyn and a 39-unit project in the Bronx.

New Destiny provides on-site support services to tenants of its housing through its Family Support Program that seeks to (1) keep tenants stable in permanent housing, (2) help survivors remain safe and violence-free, and (3) encourage tenants to move toward economic security.

New Destiny also operates HousingLink, New York City's only permanent housing resource center tailored to the needs of domestic violence survivors. Last year, HousingLink conducted 22 training workshops attended by over 790 participants, responded to over 1,800 callers to its Housing HelpLine, and hosted over 30,000 visitors to HousingLink Online.

New Destiny is an active member of the NYC Coalition of Domestic Violence Residential Service Providers as well as other coalitions, and has provided housing development services to a number of domestic violence service providers.

Between 2008 and 2011 New Destiny developed and implemented Project Safe Home, the precursor of the proposed program, which successfully placed 133 homeless families from domestic violence shelters into permanent housing. New Destiny, the lead organization, collaborated with 6 affordable housing developers and 19 emergency and transitional shelters to realize the program.

### **Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence**

The Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, created in 2001 as one of the few government offices in the nation focused on the issue of domestic violence, formulates policies and programs, monitors the delivery of domestic violence services, and works to increase the City's awareness of domestic violence.

One of OCDV's most successful initiatives has been the creation of a network of Family Justice Centers. Three Centers operate in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx; a fourth is under construction in Manhattan. The existing Family Justice Centers serve about 1300 clients a month. The Centers are staffed by representatives from organizations that serve domestic violence victims citywide who offer a wide range of languages and culturally-sensitive services.

New Destiny and OCDV have worked together successfully for a number of years. New Destiny has provided housing training services to the Brooklyn FJC for five years under an MOU. It is currently preparing an application to establish a MOU with the new Manhattan FJC expected to open later this year. New Destiny's HousingLink program has an informal relationship with the Bronx FJC to provide quarterly training workshops and has provided housing information workshops at the Queens FJC. New Destiny has strong working relationships with the shelter and non-residential providers that staff the Family Justice Centers. In addition, in 2007 OCDV was a member of a Task Force on Domestic Violence and Permanent Housing staffed by New Destiny.

## **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTNERS IN THE PROJECT AND APPLICATION**

Both **New Destiny** and **OCDV** have participated in meetings focused on the needs of FJC clients and the program design. New Destiny has also explored the interest of potential funders in the proposed program.

New Destiny will be responsible for preparing the initial application as well as future reports, should the project be awarded funding. **OCDV** will cooperate with New Destiny in providing information and data when requested in a timely fashion and will participate as needed in the preparation of reports and training workshops.

**New Destiny** will provide the following services, among others:

- 1) Identify potential permanent housing providers.
- 2) Determine the tenant eligibility requirements of landlords.
- 3) Provide training and technical assistance on permanent housing and applying for tax-credit units to FJC staff and clients.
- 4) Order credit reports for appropriate applicants, help analyze those reports, and refer housing applicants, if necessary, to credit counseling bureaus.
- 5) Screen applicants to ensure that they are safe and appropriate for permanent housing prior to submitting those individuals' applications to property managers of tax credit projects.
- 6) Follow up with landlords and City agencies to track the progress of housing applications.
- 7) Determine the necessary amount and length of financial assistance (up to a maximum of 12 months) for applicants to obtain housing.
- 8) Encourage clients placed in permanent housing to continue engagement with self-sufficiency activities provided at the FJCs or to enroll in appropriate outside job training programs.
- 9) Follow up with clients placed in housing at 3 month intervals for a period of at least one year.
- 10) Refer clients placed in permanent housing to services at the FJCs if appropriate.

**OCDV** will be responsible for providing the following services in connection with Project HOME:

- 1) Identify and refer appropriate applicants for available housing to New Destiny.

- 2) Provide holistic, confidential and culturally sensitive services in a safe environment to abused victims seeking permanent housing.
- 3) Work collaboratively with New Destiny to provide appropriate and effective housing clinics, training workshops, and one-on-one counseling to FJC clients.
- 4) Develop a menu of job training programs, with input from New Destiny, to which FJC clients housed by Project HOME can be referred.
- 5) Provide Project HOME clients with access to FJC services.
- 6) Attempt to engage, or continue to engage, clients placed in housing in the FJCs' self-sufficiency programs.
- 7) Provide child care services as appropriate for FJC clients during housing counseling sessions and workshops held at the Centers.

New Destiny's HousingLink Director Catherine Trapani and the Directors of the Family Justice Centers in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx will be the central points of contact for New Destiny and OCDV respectively.

## **PROJECT FUNDING**

Project HOME is requesting \$300,000, over a three-year period, to be used primarily for rental assistance, including first month's rent and security, for FJC clients. Fifteen thousand dollars of the proposed grant will be used for training, technical assistance, and travel to conferences in compliance with the program requirements.

New Destiny's staff for this project – a full-time Project HOME Director and a 60% Project HOME case manager—will be paid from foundation and corporate funding raised by New Destiny. Almost \$200,000 of funding from the Oak Foundation has already been secured by New Destiny for 2014 and 2015. The Avon and the Fifth and Pacific Foundations have also indicated strong interest in providing grant support to the project should Project HOME be successful in obtaining funding for rental subsidy from OVW. In addition, New Destiny will reach out to corporations and foundations (e.g., the New York Community Trust, Mizuho, Capital One, and United Way of NYC) that supported its previous pilot program – Project Safe Home.

New Destiny's staff will be co-located at the Family Justice Centers in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx. OCDV will provide in-kind support for the collaboration in the form of office space, client referrals, staff support, and access to services and providers at the FJCs.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF COLLABORATORS

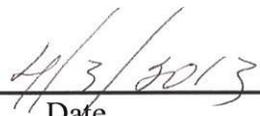
New Destiny brings to Project HOME almost twenty years of developing and operating housing for previously homeless families headed by domestic violence survivors. New Destiny understands the perspective of landlords who operate rental properties as well as the needs of low-income domestic violence victims at risk of homelessness. Not only has New Destiny developed housing with on-site services appropriate for homeless domestic violence survivors, it has also helped survivors link to existing housing through its HousingLink program and a 3-year pilot called Project Safe Home.

OCDV is one of the few government offices in the United States focused solely on the issue of domestic violence. Since its creation in 2001, OCDV has established a network of highly-respected Family Justice Centers that serve thousands of New York City domestic violence victims each year. In partnership with the District Attorneys of Kings, Queens, the Bronx, and New York Counties, OCDV has set up one-stop centers that provide a comprehensive array of services in a safe, culturally-sensitive environment with on-site children's spaces. The NYPD and the District Attorney's office are in close proximity as are counseling services, benefits advice, legal information on family law, immigration and divorce, and self-sufficiency services.

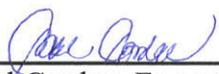
Each party to this collaborative effort—New Destiny and OCDV—makes a commitment to work together to plan and successfully implement Project HOME. By signing this agreement, all parties approve the proposed budget as presented in the OVW Transitional Housing Grant application.

AGREED TO BY: NYC Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Yolanda Jiménez, Commissioner

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

AGREED TO BY: New Destiny Housing Corporation

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carol Corden, Executive Director

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date