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COUNTY OF ALBANY
REGIONAL IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE CENTER
REGION 3- CAPITAL REGION & NORTHERN N.Y.
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January 2, 2020

Honorable Andrew Joyce
Chair, Albany County Legislature
112 State Street, Rm. 710
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Chairman Joyce:

The Office of Immigration Assistance requests an amendment to extend the terms of our contract with the New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services through October 31, 2020.

In 2015, Albany County was awarded \$450,000 per year, for a total of three years, by the New York State Office of Indigent Legal Services to be used for the costs of creating and maintaining the Regional Immigration Assistance Center for Region #3. Our office subsequently opened in April 2016, and since its inception we have been responsible for providing legal support, assistance, training and education to indigent providers within our designated fourteen-county region that improves the overall quality of mandated representation afforded to indigent, noncitizen clients in criminal and family courts.

The Center previously requested and received approval for an amendment for the contract period November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019. I am requesting an amendment to extend the contract period from November 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020.

It is imperative that the Center maintain its operations for a number of reasons:

- (1) The Center continues to conduct trainings at Public Defender offices across Region 3 on the intersection of Immigration, Criminal and Family Law. These trainings are aimed at ensuring continued quality representation of noncitizens in criminal and family court proceedings. We continue to receive training requests to conduct these trainings.

- (2) The Center continues to advise Public Defender offices on numerous open criminal and family court cases affecting non-citizens across Region 3, and therefore, must remain open in order to continue to do this work.
- (3) The Center has partnered with, and continues to develop collaborations with, community partners involved in immigration work in the Capital Region and beyond.
- (4) Due to increased enforcement of immigration laws within Region 3, including courthouse arrests, it is important that the Center remain open to continue offering guidance to (a) court mandated attorneys as they assist their noncitizen clients in criminal and family court, as well as to (b) non-citizens in Albany County who need assistance with immigration-related applications and/or issues.

Should our request for a contract amendment be granted, we do not anticipate any impact to our 2020 budget as there are unused funds from the delay in opening all of the Regional Immigration Assistance Centers. Based on the foregoing, we respectfully request that the Albany County Legislature approve the extension of our contract so we may continue this important work of providing the legal support and assistance that was envisioned when this grant was awarded.

Very truly yours,



Evelyn A. Kinnah, Esq.

Director

Cc: Dennis Feeney, Majority Leader
Frank Mauriello, Minority Leader
Kevin Cannizarro, Majority Counsel
Arnis Zilgme, Minority Counsel