



Planning and Community

Development Department

ONE ROOSEVELT SQUARE
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James Rausse, FAICP, WEDG

Commissioner

Pamela J. Tarlow, Esq.

Deputy Commissioner

February 3, 2026

VIA EMAIL:

Honorable City Council Members
City of Mount Vernon
1 Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

RE: Request for the City Council to enact legislation to authorize the Mayor to execute a First Contract Amendment with Mercy University to extend the program performance period to December 21, 2026 and to incorporate Legacy Planning Services into the Mount Vernon Financial Empowerment Center. For consideration on the agenda at the February 11, 2026, City Council meeting.

Honorable Council President Thompson and Members of the City Council:

I am writing to respectfully request that the City Council enact legislation authorizing the Mayor to sign a contract amendment with Mercy University to extend the Mount Vernon Financial Empowerment Center (MVFEC) program performance period through December 31, 2026, and to add Legacy Planning services to the contract.

The MVFEC, in partnership with Westchester County, officially launched services in December 2024. The two-year service contract with Mercy University was executed in February 2024, and due to the time required for staff hiring and training, the Center opened several months later than the contract start date. As a result, staffing expenditures were realized later than initially projected, creating sufficient funds availability within the approved budget to allow the City and Mercy University to extend the contract performance period without requiring any additional funds from the City of Mount Vernon. The extension will be fully supported using the original contract budget. The Legacy Planning services will be added through \$50,000 in new funding provided by the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund.

With the addition of Legacy Planning services, the MVFEC will become a more comprehensive and resourceful financial empowerment hub for Mount Vernon and Westchester County residents. These services will provide residents with tools to protect their assets and plan for long-term financial security, further strengthening the program's impact and alignment with wealth-building goals.



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For the City Council's review and consideration, we are submitting the First Contract Amendment, the Legacy Planning budget, and the original contract with Mercy University.

Sincerely,

JAMES RAUSSE, FAICP, WEDG

cc: Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard
Comptroller Darren M. Morton
Malcolm Clark, Chief of Staff