



**Planning and Community
Development Department**
ONE ROOSEVELT SQUARE
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James Rausse, FAICP, WEDG
Commissioner

Pamela J. Tarlow, Esq.
Deputy Commissioner

April 14, 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 retroactively enact legislation to authorize the Mayor to execute a First Contract Amendment with Mercy University to establish a transition period for the continued operation of the Mount Vernon Financial Empowerment Center (MVFEC) while the City identifies a new service provider. For consideration on the agenda for the April 22, 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 execute a contract amendment with Mercy University to establish a transition period for the continued operation of the Mount Vernon Financial Empowerment Center (MVFEC) while the City conducts a process to identify a new provider to operate the program.

This transition period has been mutually agreed upon by both the City of Mount Vernon and Mercy University to ensure continuity of services for residents while allowing sufficient time for the City to conduct a thoughtful and competitive procurement process. Under the terms of the amendment, Mercy University will continue to operate the MVFEC through September 30, 2026, at an agreed-upon monthly rate of \$25,000, ensuring that residents continue to have uninterrupted access to financial counseling and related services. The total cost of \$150,000 for this transition period will be covered by the previously approved MVFEC budget.

The MVFEC, in partnership with Westchester County, officially launched services in December 2024 and has since become an important resource for residents seeking to improve financial stability, reduce debt, and access pathways to economic opportunity. Maintaining operations during this transition period is critical to preserving the progress achieved to date and sustaining engagement with program participants.

This amendment reflects a collaborative approach between the City and Mercy University to support a smooth and responsible transition. It also positions the City to evaluate and select a provider that can build on the program's success and align with the City's long-term vision for financial empowerment services.



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For the City Council's review and consideration, we are submitting the proposed contract amendment, along with the original agreement with Mercy University.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

JAMES RAUSSE, FAICP, WEDG

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