

City of Alexandria, Virginia

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5-13-03

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 24, 2003

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER ^{PS}

SUBJECT: RECEIPT OF A FEDERAL GRANT FOR A PROGRAM TO SERVE COURT-INVOLVED YOUTH

ISSUE: Approval to receive \$198,700 in federal grant funding from the Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention to operate a program for court-involved youth.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council approve receipt of federal funding for a program for court-involved youth to be managed by the Court Services Unit.

BACKGROUND: For 2003 an appropriation earmark in the amount of \$198,700 to operate a program for court-involved youth was approved by Congress. The earmarking of grant funds was the result of efforts by the Alexandria Seaport Foundation, whose apprenticeship programs for difficult youth impressed Congressman Moran and Congressman Wolf.

DISCUSSION: The Alexandria Seaport Foundation operates a boat building apprenticeship program for at-risk youth, youth who are school drop-outs or are on long term school suspension and court-involved youth. The apprenticeship program is designed to offer troubled youth an opportunity to learn job skills and the work ethic through the boat building experience. The program also includes a group life skills class which is conducted once a week by a licensed social worker. This grant would permit the program to expand to serve a greater number of youth, provide GED programs and support, substance abuse treatment groups and enhanced job placement services and follow-up.

The grant funds would come directly to the City and the Court Services Unit would manage the funds. It is anticipated that the funds would be ready for distribution on July 1, 2003 and the funding would terminate by June 31, 2005. After that time, it is hoped that the program would be able to sustain itself from the profits gained by the sale of boats built by the youth apprentices.

Several improvements would be made to the current boat building program as a result of the grant. First of all, the current location of the Seaport Foundation is insufficient to accommodate more youth in the program. The property of the Gumpers Building on Madison and Pitt Streets would be rented to house an area large enough for two concurrent boat building projects. The

grant would pay the rental costs and other overhead. The area of the Gumpers Building is also large enough for ongoing life skills and substance abuse groups which would provide support to the youth.

Second, the program would go from the current 6 slots in the program to 10 slots of full-time youth apprentices. After-school slots which average 2 hours per weekday would go from the current 4 slots to 6 slots per day. This would allow two teams of boatbuilders at one time to receive simultaneous instruction. A six month turnover in the apprenticeship program is anticipated. The grant would fund four classes of 16 slots in the two year period of the grant. While one group is in the job placement and follow-up stage, another would be starting the apprenticeship program.

The apprenticeship program receives referrals from the schools, the Police Department and the Court Service Unit. The Court Service Unit intends to use the expansion of the program to serve young parolees who are returning to the community from correctional institutions. This program would also service older youth (ages 16 to 18) who are doing poorly at school and could benefit from a vocational skill and a GED.

It is also planned that approximately \$6,200 of grant funds will be used for the toy boat entrepreneurship program for younger youth (ages 13 to 15). This program began last summer by the Court Service Unit and was located at the Marina. This program has youth experience the basic principals of a small business by selling unassembled wooden boats of varying size and helping the children purchasing the boats to assemble and decorate them. The boats are then allowed to float in a small wading pool. The youth learn what it takes to run a small business by taking on specific functions such as sales, marketing and basic business accounting. The youth also explain maritime history of Alexandria to buyers of the boats which attracts tourist interest.

In order to access the funds, the City will need to submit an application to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. When the program and budget are approved, the money will be released to the City on or about July 1, 2003. The grant will run for 18 months and terminate on December 31, 2004.

FISCAL IMPACT: The City would receive \$198,700 from federal earmarked grant funds administered by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The Court Services Unit would manage the grant for the City and intends to subcontract with the Seaport Foundation to operate an expanded version of the boat building apprenticeship program. A total of \$6,200 would be used to fund the toy boat entrepreneurship program operated by the Court Services Unit.

There is no City money required with this grant. Administrative costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the Office of Management and Budget and the Finance Department.

It should be noted that there are no monies available in the City budget to continue these activities after the grant period. The Alexandria Seaport Foundation will be notified of this condition of the grant.

STAFF:

Lillian Brooks, Director of Court Services

Carol Moore, Acting Deputy Director, OMB