

City of Alexandria, Virginia

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9-24-02

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 12, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FOR THE OFFICE ON WOMEN'S SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE AND AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR NOVEMBER 1, 2002 TO OCTOBER 31, 2003.

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a grant application to the Virginia Department of Health in the amount of \$30,192 for the City's Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA) Program's Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Project. Due to time constraints, the grant application has already been submitted to the Virginia Department of Health and is contingent on its approval at the September 24, 2002 meeting of the City Council.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council approve this request, which will result in continuing to fund one .50 FTE Outreach Prevention Specialist for the Office on Women's Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA) Program's Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Project. The Department of Criminal Justice Services currently provides funding for the remaining .50 FTE. The Outreach Prevention Specialist position will continue to be supervised by the Coordinator of the Sexual Assault Response and Awareness Program. This grant-funded position would terminate upon the expiration of the grant and the individual who fills this position would be notified of this condition of employment at the time that they are hired. It should be noted that there are no funds available in the City budget to continue these activities once the grant funds are expired.

In the event City Council wishes to approve this application, the following actions are needed:

- (1) Approve the submission of the grant application to the Virginia Department of Health for funding in the amount of \$30,192 for continued funding of the Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Project;
- (2) Approve the continuation of .50 FTE of a full-time grant-funded Outreach Prevention Specialist position; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: These grant funds are made available through the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which allocated funding to states to develop specific programs addressing prevention and education efforts to reduce the incidence of sexual assault. The Office on Women's Sexual Assault Response and Awareness Program was initially awarded an 18-month grant in the amount of \$50,761 for sexual assault prevention education in FY 1997/1998. During this time, the SARA Program provided sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention education to over 1,500 students. In addition, SARA Program staff developed and distributed posters for a public awareness campaign to increase awareness of sexual assault and SARA Program services. The SARA Program was awarded \$33,008 in FY 1999 and \$46,484 in FY 2000 to continue sexual assault education efforts among middle and high school age youth and has implemented self-defense courses for adults and adolescents. Due to changes in priorities for funding by the Virginia Department of Health from local projects to statewide initiatives, grant awards for rape crisis centers were drastically reduced in FY 2001. Consequently, the SARA Program was only able to apply for part-time funding and received a grant award of \$25,704 in FY 2001 and \$26,797 in FY 2002. In FY 2003, funds remain limited, although the Virginia Department of Health has lifted the cap placed on grant applications. Today, the SARA Program is applying for \$30,192 for the grant cycle that begins on November 1, 2002 and ends October 31, 2003.

DISCUSSION: This application addresses a critical need for prevention education with an emphasis on adolescents and the community. One in four women and one in seven men are raped at some point in her or his lifetime and almost half of the rapes in the United States are committed against victims under the age of 17. Many adolescent rape survivors experience considerable trauma that often results in a variety of psychological problems including depression and eating disorders, which can continue into their adult years. Additionally, young victims often find it difficult to concentrate on their schoolwork and experience feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. This grant, if awarded, would allow the SARA Program to continue to provide sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention education to over 2,000 middle and high school age children in Alexandria. Further, this grant would enable the SARA Program to take a proactive approach by informing the community about sexual violence and its causes in order to work towards a long-term solution.

FISCAL IMPACT: The total budget for this grant is \$30,192 with no matching funds required. The City is responsible for the normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the administering agency, 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 once the grant funds are expended. The grant-funded position would terminate upon the expiration of the grant, and the individual who fills the position would be notified of this condition of employment.

ATTACHMENTS: None. The grant application will be available for review in the Office of Management and Budget, Room 3600, City Hall, during normal business hours.

STAFF:

Melissa Schmisek, Coordinator, Sexual Assault Response and Awareness Program

Lisa Oviatt, Director, Office on Women

Carol Moore, Acting Deputy Director, OMB

Paul Doku, Budget Analyst, OMB