

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 4, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007 TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE OFFICE ON WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a grant application to the Virginia Department of Social Services, for continuation funding in the amount of \$168,907 for the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program for Fiscal Year 2007. This funding will enable the program to continue to provide crisis intervention and prevention services to the Hispanic community and to children who witness family abuse; and specialized domestic violence services to TANF recipients and to continue its Volunteer Program.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council authorize the City Manager to:

- (1) Submit the grant application to the Virginia Department of Social Services for funding, in the amount of \$168,907 for Fiscal Year 2007.
- (2) Approve continued funding for the existing grant-funded, full-time Social Worker I position (1.00 FTE); approve continued funding for the existing grant-funded full-time Outreach/Prevention Specialist position (1.00 FTE); approve the continued funding for the existing part-time Social Worker I position (.75 FTE City/.25 grant) which was increased to full-time with grant funds; and approve continued funding for the part-time (.75 FTE) Volunteer Developer. It should be noted that there are no monies available in the City budget to continue these activities once the grant funds are expended. These grant-funded positions would terminate upon the expiration of the grant and the individuals who fill these positions would be notified of this condition of employment.
- (3) Execute all documents that may be required.

It should be noted the grant application was due April 11, 2006. Due to the constrained time line for grant submission, staff submitted the grant application contingent upon City Council approval.

BACKGROUND: Since FY 1993, the Office on Women has received funding from the Virginia Department of Social Services to conduct outreach and prevention activities for Spanish-speaking residents to address the problem of domestic violence in the City's Hispanic community. The City was awarded a grant of \$12,500 to hire a part-time (15 hours per week) Outreach Prevention Specialist to work with the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program and for administrative costs associated with the program (printing, photocopying, rental cost for a pager and mileage). In FY 1994, the grant was increased and the City received \$35,229 to continue these services; the existing part-time position was expanded to a full-time position. In FY 1995, the funding was reduced to \$29,223 which resulted in the reduction of the Outreach Prevention Specialist to a part-time (.75 FTE) position with the balance of the funds used for the administrative costs of the program (office supplies, printing, photocopying). The FY 1995 contract was continued in FY 1996 with an increase of 9 percent to \$32,010. The additional funds provided for a social worker/child specialist for six hours per week. In FY 1997, the grant was increased to \$55,000, which resulted in the Outreach Prevention Specialist position increasing to full-time, and the social worker/child specialist position increasing to 10 hours per week.

In FY 1998, the grant funding increased substantially to \$85,501 to continue funding for the full-time Outreach Prevention Specialist and provide funding for a full-time Social Worker, specifically for children's services. Since FY 1998, we have received continued funding for both positions through contract renewals.

In 2000, the Virginia General Assembly designated \$2,000,000 in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funds and \$500,000 in General Funds for the biennium to provide crisis and core services to victims of domestic violence. The Virginia Department of Social Services administered these additional funds as part of its existing Virginia Family Violence Prevention Program (VFPVPP). In 2002, the General Assembly re-appropriated the funds to continue services and contracts were renewed for Fiscal Years 2003 - 2004. These additional monies are provided as grants to local domestic violence programs for purchase of crisis and core services for victims of domestic violence, including 24-hour hotlines, emergency shelter, emergency transportation and other crisis services as a first priority.

The Office on Women was awarded the TANF grant funding to hire a full time Volunteer Developer for the Domestic Violence Program and to increase an existing part-time Social Worker I position (.75 FTE City/.25 grant) to full-time. Twenty-five percent of this individual's time is devoted to delivering services to TANF-eligible clients in the Domestic Violence Program. Due to cuts in the TANF budget, the Volunteer Developer position was reduced to part-time (.75 FTE) for FY 2004.

DISCUSSION: *Hispanic Outreach Services:* As a result of continuous funding, the Office on Women has been able to provide on-going domestic violence intervention services targeted to the City's Hispanic residents. These services have included individual and group counseling to Hispanic victims of domestic violence and assistance through the court/legal systems in obtaining protective orders, prosecuting abusers and pursuing child custody. Through this program, the

Office on Women has established a presence in the City's Spanish speaking communities, which enables staff to coordinate services with existing Hispanic organizations. Calls from Hispanic women to the hotline for crisis intervention and counseling comprise 13 percent of the total hotline calls and 27 percent of the shelter residents. In FY 2005, the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program provided the following services: emergency shelter to 21 Hispanic women and children; 1,500 hours of individual counseling and advocacy to 256 Hispanic victims of domestic abuse in the community; court accompaniment to 144 Hispanic women; and educational presentations on domestic violence in Spanish to more than 900 individuals in the community.

Additionally, the Domestic Violence Program's Outreach Prevention Specialist has coordinated all Office on Women services to the Hispanic community, translating all brochures and educational materials into Spanish and recruiting and training Spanish speaking volunteers who are on call 24 hours a day to serve as interpreters for the domestic violence program.

Children's Program: Currently, this grant also provides funding for a full-time Social Worker I position to provide intervention and prevention services to children exposed to domestic violence in their homes. The impact of family violence produces serious and long-lasting effects on children. Domestic violence has severe psychological effects on children even when the children themselves are not being physically abused. Children who witness the abuse of their mother often feel fear, confusion, and helplessness. They learn that anger equals violence and violence is normal behavior. Children who come to the battered women's shelter with their mothers exhibit low self-esteem, poor impulse control, a short attention span, and an inability to control their anger.

In FY 2005, the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program provided the following services: 501 hours of advocacy and counseling to 106 children in the battered women's shelter and in the community; 40 presentations on dating violence and domestic violence to 833 students in the City's schools; and, 48 group counseling sessions with 99 children. The Children's Social Worker also participates on the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Model Court Core Group, SCAN Allies in Prevention Coordinating Council, Head Start Advisory Board, Alexandria Alliance Against Domestic Violence and several City workgroups.

Volunteer Program: The Office on Women is also requesting continued funding through this proposal for the part-time Volunteer Developer in the Domestic Violence Program. Since the Domestic Violence Program is a 24 hour/7 day per week operation, a stable corps of volunteers is vital. Volunteers staff the battered women's shelter and 24 hour crisis hotline during weekend hours from Friday evening through Sunday evening, and during holidays. In FY 2005, volunteers provided 12,583 hours of service (which is comparable to 6.00 FTE's). When a weekend or holiday volunteer shift is unfilled, program staff must work the shift. This resulted in more than \$7,000 of overtime pay from the Office on Women's General Fund to Domestic Violence Program staff prior to this grant funding. A position specifically devoted to volunteer coordination has eliminated the overtime needed for staff filling shifts on weekends and holidays, and provides for recruitment, training, scheduling, and supervision of a professional volunteer corps.

Additionally, TANF funds are to be used specifically for service provision to TANF recipients and those deemed eligible by the grant guidelines. An innovative mentoring program was developed which matches TANF clients in the battered women's shelter and non-residential Domestic Violence Program clients with a volunteer mentor to assist with job preparation, employment issues and self-sufficiency. An existing part-time Social Worker I position (.75 FTE) was upgraded to full-time with grant funds in Fiscal Year 2001. Twenty-five percent of this individuals' time is devoted to delivering services to TANF-eligible clients in the Domestic Violence Program.

The City's grant application requests funds to continue the current full-time Hispanic Outreach Prevention Specialist position in the amount of \$59,729 for salary and benefits; to continue the current full-time Social Worker I position (Children's Program) in the amount of \$57,052 for salary and benefits; to continue the current part-time Volunteer Developer position in the amount of \$35,222 for salary and benefits; and continue partial funding of the existing City-funded Social Worker position (.75 City/.25 grant) in the amount of \$16,904.

GRANT PERIOD: July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007.

FISCAL IMPACT: To apply for this grant of \$168,907 the City must provide a match of \$42,227 in either in-kind services or a cash match. The City's match will be in the form of in-kind services to be provided by 3,519 volunteer hours at \$12 per hour.

The Virginia Department of Social Services will provide a grant of \$168,907 for services to victims of domestic violence and their families for a total budget of \$211,134 (including the in-kind match of \$42,227).

In addition, the City is responsible for the normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the Office on Women, 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 positions would terminate upon the expiration of the grant, and the individuals who fill the positions would be notified of this condition of employment.

STAFF:

Lisa Baker, Director, Office on Women
Claire Dunn, Coordinator, Domestic Violence Program
Elisabeth Wheel, Budget Analyst, OMB
Bruce Johnson, Director, OMB