

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 21, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT APPLICATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$475,000 TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA'S DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL RETARDATION AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES TO PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO PREVENT OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

ISSUE: Consideration of grant application by the Alexandria Community Services Board's (CSB) for grant funds available through the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) in the amount of \$475,000 per year in ongoing funds to provide mental health and substance abuse services to children and youth to prevent out-of-home placements. No City match is required.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the grant application to DMHMRSAS in the amount of \$475,000; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

BACKGROUND: The DMHMRSAS is engaged in a major transformation of its mental health system that is focused on implementing a vision that includes consumer-and family-driven services that promote resilience in children and the highest possible level of participation in community life including school, work, family and other meaningful relationships. The system of care concept of serving children and their families is an approach that effectively supports this vision. While progress has been made, the children's service system is fragmented, and there are gaps in services, including an over-reliance on residential care and insufficient community services to help parents keep their children at home. The DMHMRSAS will fund two projects that create a capacity to serve youth in the most natural setting possible and that demonstrate a commitment to provide services using evidence-based practices for serving youth with behavioral health needs.

The City of Alexandria makes a considerable investment in residential care for children with serious emotional disturbance. This proposed project will serve 60-75 at risk children per year.

The Alexandria Community Policy and Management Team (ACPMT) supports this grant opportunity. This grant meets an enormous need in our community and would address a major gap in our service delivery.

DISCUSSION: Partners in the system of care (DHS, ACPS, CSU, Health, CSB, and private providers) agreed to target mandated and non-mandated youth aged 11-18 and their families in the following groups:

- 1) Children who will be maintained in the community or returned from residential care with appropriate community services funded by this demonstration project; and
- 2) Children who have co-occurring mental health and substance abuse problems; and
- 3) Children with serious emotional disturbance who are involved in the juvenile justice system.

With these funds the following services would be offered: (1) Wraparound case management to support reintegration to the community and independent living skills for youth coming out of residential placement, (2) Functional Family Therapy, a culturally sensitive, family-based treatment system, and (3) Parent advocacy to support and create activities that will increase parent involvement and opportunity to provide support to their children.

Staffing would include: one full-time Therapist Supervisor, two full-time licensed Therapist IIIs, one full-time Therapist I, and two part-time (.5) Parent Advocates/Mental Health Technician Is (total of 5 FTEs).

The goals of this demonstration project are to reduce the community's dependence on residential care, reduce antisocial behavior and involvement in the juvenile justice system, reduce substance abuse and improve home and school functioning. The project will support parents in supporting their children with achieving these goals. Although we have a system of care for children with serious emotional problems in place in Alexandria through ACPMT, all stakeholders agree that it has gaps and needs strengthening.

If approved by Council and if awarded by DMHMRSAS, funding would begin July 1, 2006, (contingent on the passing of the Commonwealth's budget) and be funded on an ongoing basis. The ACPMT will provide oversight, and the CSB will manage the project.

The Alexandria CSB submitted this grant application to DMHMRSAS in order to meet the deadline of May 19, 2006, with the understanding that subsequent City Council authorization would be required to accept this grant award. The grant is competitive. The grant application is available for review in the CSB administrative offices at 720 N. St. Asaph Street (703) 838-4455, ext. 166.

FISCAL IMPACT: Receipt of up to \$475,000 per year on an ongoing basis beginning in FY 2007. No City match is required.

STAFF:

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