

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 16, 2009
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: JAMES HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *J*
SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A GRANT APPLICATION GRANT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2010 TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE OFFICE ON WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAM

ISSUE: Consideration of a grant application to the Virginia Department of Social Services for the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Programs for FY 2010.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of a grant application to the Virginia Department of Social Services (due April 6, 2009) for funding, in the amount of \$174,760 for Fiscal Year 2010;
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all the necessary documents for the grant that may be required, and
- (3) Because of severe City budget constraints, affirm that no additional City funds would be available to fund this program in FY 2010 or future years.

BACKGROUND: The Office on Women received notification of this grant on February 13, 2009. Staff attended the pre-proposal application meeting in Richmond on March 4, 2009. The completed grant application is due on April 6, 2009. The grant period for Fiscal Year 2010 is from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

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. Through this program, the Office on Women has established a presence in the City's Spanish-speaking communities, enabling staff to coordinate services with existing Hispanic organizations.

In 2000, the Virginia General Assembly designated additional monies from TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) to be provided as grants to local domestic violence programs for 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. These additional monies are provided as grants to local domestic violence programs for services to victims of domestic violence, including 24-hour hotlines, emergency shelter, emergency transportation and other crisis services.

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 19% of the total hotline calls and 19% of the shelter residents. In FY 2008, the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program provided: emergency shelter to 13 Hispanic women and their children; 2,500 hours of individual counseling and advocacy to 375 Hispanic victims of domestic abuse in the community; court accompaniment to 400 Hispanic women and men; and educational presentations on domestic violence in Spanish to more than 600 individuals in the community.

Additionally, the Hispanic Outreach Services Social Worker 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. Many 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 anger.

In Fiscal Year 2008, the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program provided: 590 hours of advocacy and counseling to 100 children in the Battered Women's Shelter and in the community; presentations on dating violence and domestic violence to 1,000 students in the City's schools; and, 48 group counseling sessions with 75 children. The Children's Social Worker also participates on the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Model Court Core Group, SCAN Allies in Prevention Coordinating Council, Family Group Conferencing Advisory Board, Alexandria Domestic Violence Intervention Project 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 to its day-to-day operations. 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 2008, volunteers provided 5,021 hours of service (which is comparable to 2.50 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, bilingual volunteers are on stand-by evenings and weekends to translate when Spanish-speaking staff are unavailable. They contribute another valuable service at no cost to the program.

Finally, an existing part-time Social Worker I position (.75 FTE) was upgraded to full-time with these grant funds in Fiscal Year 2001. Twenty-five per cent 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 Services Social Worker position; to continue the current full-time Social Worker I position (Children's Program); to continue the current part-time Volunteer Developer; and continue partial funding of the existing City-funded Social Worker position (.75 City/.25 grant).

FISCAL IMPACT: The FY 2010 grant will support the Domestic Violence program, which is staffed by 3.0 FTEs. The total cost of the four positions for FY 2010 (one part-time Social Worker I-\$17,756; one full-time Social Worker I-Hispanic Outreach Prevention Specialist-\$82,696; one full-time Children's Social Worker I-\$73,270; and one part-time Volunteer Developer-\$44,900) is \$218,622. The grant funding supports 78 percent of the cost of these positions. The General Fund contributes the remaining \$47,288.

The grant renewal application includes a request of \$174,760, which represents a 2 percent increase over the FY 2009 award. The actual amount of the FY 2010 award will be reported in the next Supplemental Appropriations Ordinance. In FY 2006, the grant award was \$143,066; in FY 2007 the amount was \$168,907; in FY 2008 the total was \$166,829; and in FY 2009 the total was \$171,334. In addition, OOW was awarded a one-time amount of \$12,000 in FY 2009 to enhance children's services.

The City is responsible for the normal administrative costs associated with this grant. The grant requires the City to provide a 20 percent match (\$43,690), in the form of in-kind services, which is provided through volunteer hours.

It should be noted that there are no monies available in the City budget to continue these activities

once the grant funds are expended or if the grant funds do not keep up with the costs of the positions. The grant-funded positions would terminate upon the expiration of the grant or the hours would be reduced if grant funds are not sufficient to cover the budgeted cost of the positions. The individuals who fill the positions would be notified of this condition of employment.

STAFF:

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