


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 18, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR ONE-TIME FUNDS TO RESTORE THE HEAD START PLAYGROUND AT CORA KELLY MAGNET SCHOOL AND REPLACE BUS RESTRAINTS

ISSUE: Consideration of an application to the federal Department of Health and Human Services for program improvement funds through a competitive grant process to restore the Head Start playground at Cora Kelly Magnet School and purchase seat belt harnesses for the Head Start bus.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of a grant application, due July 10, 2009, not to exceed \$28,000;
- (2) Because of severe budget constraints affirm that no City funds will be available to continue this funding in FY 2010 or future years; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

BACKGROUND: Alexandria Head Start (AHS) is a federally funded program serving 252 children, ages three to five, in the City of Alexandria. The City is the grantee for the program and The Campagna Center (TCC) is the delegate agency. Funds for the program flow from the federal government to the City of Alexandria and then to TCC which is responsible for the day to day operations of the program, including the recruitment and hiring of staff. TCC's governing board is responsible for the governance of the program, with annual reporting to City Council.

As the grantee, the City of Alexandria is responsible to the federal government for the oversight and monitoring of the delegate agency (TCC). This function has been assigned by the City Manager to DHS and includes financial monitoring of the program. At its May 26 legislative meeting, Council approved a plan to shift the program monitoring of AHS to the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The delegate agency has a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ACPS which outlines a collaborative relationship with ACPS regarding facilities use, special education services, curriculum coordination and transitioning of children to

kindergarten. Program monitoring will be added to the MOU, effective with the 2010 program year.

DISCUSSION: AHS proposes to submit an application through a competitive grant process for \$28,000 in one-time funds: 1) \$25,000 to restore a playground at the Cora Kelly site that the children are currently unable to use; and 2) \$3,000 to replace 20 seat belt harnesses on the Head Start bus. Currently, the children use a playground across the street from their classroom because the playground on site is unsafe. Restoring the playground to Head Start specifications will provide the children with easy access to safe, age-appropriate equipment and allow them to extend their learning outdoors. In addition, the use of these funds to purchase new seat belt restraints will allow the program to continue to provide safe and reliable transportation to the children in AHS who receive transportation services.

The federal Department of Health and Human Services is making these one-time program improvement funds available only for items that are non-recurring. Once the playground is restored and the seat belts restraints purchased and installed, there will be no on-going need for funding.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Alexandria Head Start program proposes to apply for \$28,000 in one-time funds which will be used to address safety issues at the Cora Kelly playground and replace worn seat belt restraints on the Head Start bus. The in-kind match of \$6,720 will be provided by ACPS in the form of donated space and services.

STAFF:

Debra R. Collins, Assistant City Manager for Community and Human Services

Bruce Johnson, Chief Financial Officer

Kendel Taylor, Management and Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget