

*City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 2, 2001

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 CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES FOR THE OFFICE ON WOMEN'S SEXUAL ASSAULT RESPONSE AND AWARENESS (SARA) PROGRAM

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**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of a two year continuation grant application to the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, in the amount of \$207,926, for funding to the Office on Women's Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA) Program to continue to provide comprehensive direct services to victims of sexual assault during FY 2002 and FY 2003.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council approve this request, which will result in funding for one full time Social Worker I, one .50 FTE Social Worker I, and .50 FTE Outreach Prevention Specialist for the Office on Women's Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA) Program during FY 2002 and FY 2003. 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 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 no longer available.

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 Criminal Justice Services for funding in the amount of \$207,926 for continued funding for the Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA) Program for FY 2002 and FY 2003; and
- (2) Approve the continuation of one full-time grant-funded Social Worker I, one 0.50 FTE Social Worker I, and one .50 FTE Outreach Prevention Specialist; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** These grant funds are made available through the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and state funding designated for sexual assault crisis centers to provide direct services to victims of sexual assaults. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has awarded these funds to the program since October 1999, which until that date were administered by the Virginia Department of Health. This is the first time that DCJS will award grants for sexual assault programs on a two-year funding cycle. This grant application requests continued funding for one full time Social Worker I, .50 FTE of a Social Worker I, and one .50 FTE Outreach Prevention Specialist position to provide direct services to victims of sexual assault.

**DISCUSSION:** Sexual assault remains a pervasive and severely under reported crime in the United States.

The 1992 National Women's Study estimated that 683,000 American women are raped each year. It is also estimated that 12.1 million women have been the victims of rape in their lifetime. Sexual assault often has a devastating impact on the quality of victims' lives. Research indicates that sexual assault survivors can experience considerable psychological trauma which often results in disturbance in sleep patterns, nightmares, impairment in concentration and memory, anxiety, and fear (Foa, Rothman & Steketee, 1993)<sup>1</sup>. The fear and anxiety, loss of self esteem, and physical injury caused by sexual assault can affect every aspect of the victim's life, creating impediments to forming and/or sustaining healthy relationships and interfering with the ability to sustain a healthy and meaningful life. Sexual assault impacts not only the primary victim, but also diminishes the quality of life of parents, coworkers, friends, partners and children. Given the significant potential impact on sexual assault victims, it is essential that comprehensive services are available to assist survivors with healing from sexual trauma.

The SARA Program provided comprehensive services for 588 victims of sexual assault during FY 2000. If funded, this grant will enable the SARA Program to continue to provide direct services to victims of sexual assault including a 24-hour hotline, medical and police accompaniment, court advocacy, information and referral, individual and group counseling. In addition, this grant will provide funding for staff to provide training to allied professionals such as police officers, teachers, mental health counselors, and health care providers on the dynamics of sexual assault and available services.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The budget for this two year continuation grant is \$207,926, 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

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<sup>1</sup> Foa, E., Rothman, B. & Steketee (1993). Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Vol.8, No. 2 1993 256-276, Sage Publications, Inc.

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.

**GRANT PERIOD:** July 1, 2001 - June 30, 2002.  
July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None. The grant application may be reviewed in the Office of Management and Budget, Room 3600, City Hall, during normal business hours.

**STAFF:**

Lisa B. Oviatt, Director, Office on Women

Sara C. Donahue, Coordinator, Sexual Assault Response and Awareness Program

Carol Moore, Acting Deputy Director, OMB

Paul Doku, Analyst, OMB