

City of Alexandria, Virginia

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6-26-01

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 21, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUEST BY THE ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD TO TRANSFER A GRANT FUNDED ALEXANDRIA HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA PROJECT FULL-TIME LAB AIDE POSITION FROM THE STATE TO THE CITY

ISSUE: City Council consideration of the transfer of a full-time Lab Aide from the State to the City to oversee the operations of the Alexandria High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) urinalysis drug testing laboratory located at the Alexandria Probation and Parole Office.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council approve the transfer of a lab aide position from the State to the City using existing federal funds from the Office of National Drug Control Policy which currently support the Alexandria HIDTA program, as well as charge back funds from the City and State agencies who use the urinalysis testing laboratory.

The person in the Lab Aide position would be employed by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse. This grant-funded position would terminate upon the expiration of the HIDTA grant funds, and the individual who fills the position would be notified of this condition of employment.

BACKGROUND: In February, 1994 the Office of National Drug Control Policy identified the Washington-Baltimore area as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and authorized funding for the region for treatment, enforcement and prevention efforts. Alexandria currently receives \$109,069 in HIDTA funding. The primary goal of the Washington-Baltimore HIDTA is to reduce criminal behavior associated with hard core drug use.

DISCUSSION: In June 1996, the Alexandria HIDTA Project was awarded additional grant funds from the Washington-Baltimore HIDTA to purchase equipment, materials and supplies to implement a computerized urinalysis drug testing services for clients of the Alexandria Community Services Board, Adult Probation and Parole, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office and the Court Services Unit (Juvenile Probation Office.) Since that time, the Alexandria Community Justice Services Office has joined the Alexandria HIDTA urinalysis drug testing system, as part

of its pretrial program. On behalf of the Alexandria Adult Probation and Parole Office and the Alexandria HIDTA project, the Virginia Department of Corrections contracted with Behring Diagnostic, Inc. for a computerized drug testing machine and reagents for the project. The drug testing machine is located at the Adult Probation and Parole Office.

Alexandria Adult Probation and Parole received permission from the Virginia Department of Corrections to hire a Lab Aide to operate the computerized drug testing machine. This State Lab Aide position has been funded primarily through Alexandria HIDTA grant funds awarded to the Community Services Board. The position is now currently vacant with a Probation and Parole Office employee serving in an acting capacity.

Since the State of Virginia currently has a hiring freeze on this position, Adult Probation and Parole will not be able to hire a lab aide to operate the computerized drug testing machine. In order to continue this important program, we recommend that the position be transferred to the City. The position would be funded with the \$15,333 from the requested FY 2002 Alexandria HIDTA budget designated for urinalysis testing, in addition to charge back funds from the agencies participating in the Alexandria drug testing system project. The Alexandria HIDTA project participating agencies will be assessed a \$1.05 charge back cost for each urinalysis test provided to one of their clients. The \$1.05 cost per test is significantly less costly than the price of a test at a private lab. In addition, this computerized drug testing system provides rapid results, and permits appropriate sharing of information among the Alexandria HIDTA project agencies.

FISCAL IMPACT: The lab aide position will cost \$33,477 a year. Funding for the requested Lab Aide position will consist of \$15,333 in ongoing Alexandria Community Services Board HIDTA grant funds from Office of National Drug Control Policy, in addition to \$18,144 collected by charging HIDTA project agencies for each urinalysis test.

ATTACHMENT: None

STAFF:

Dr. William Claiborn, Director, Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse

Lori Godwin, Assistant City Manager