

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 14, 2003

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 PROGRAM

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**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of a two year grant application (FY2004 and FY2005) to the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, in the amount of \$212,296 for the Office on Women's Sexual Assault Response & Awareness Program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the submission of the grant application to the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for funding in the amount of \$212,296 that would result in the continued funding of the Office on Women's Sexual Assault Response & Awareness (SARA) Program;
- (2) Approve the continuation of one full time Social Worker, one part-time Volunteer Developer and one part-time Outreach and Prevention Specialist for the Office on Women's SARA Program. 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, and would sign an agreement of understanding with regard to this condition. It should be noted that there are no funds available in the City budget to continue these activities once the grant funds expire; 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 rape crisis centers to provide direct services for victims of sexual violence. The Request for Proposals is for a two year funding period. In 1999, the administration of these grants was reorganized at the state level between the Virginia Department of Health and the Department of Criminal Justice Services. The Virginia Department of Health transferred the administration of some of the funding for sexual assault programs to the Department of Criminal Justice Services. Today, DCJS is responsible for administering and monitoring grants with the intent of improving direct services to victims of

sexual violence. DCJS moved to a two year grant cycle in FY 2002 in order to reduce the amount of administrative work on the state and local level.

This grant application requests funding for one full-time Social Worker I, one part-time Volunteer Developer and one part-time Outreach and Prevention Specialist to provide direct services to victims of sexual assault.

The Office on Women's Sexual Assault Response & Awareness Program is currently the only program providing comprehensive services to victims of sexual violence in the City of Alexandria. The initial grant was awarded in 1999 to fund one full-time Program Coordinator and one 0.25 Social Worker I. In 2000, modifications were made to the grant application that allowed the Program Coordinator to receive full-time funding from the City of Alexandria and enabled the SARA Program to use DCJS grant resources to fund a full-time Social Worker, a part-time Volunteer Developer and a part-time Outreach and Prevention Specialist.

**DISCUSSION:** Sexual assault remains a pervasive and severely under reported crime in the United States. According to the National Women's Study (1992), it is 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 victim's lives. Research indicates that sexual assault survivors can experience considerable psychological trauma that often results in depression, suicide attempts, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, and feelings of helplessness and powerlessness (Levy, 1991). 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 victims, it is essential that comprehensive services are available to assist survivors with healing from sexual trauma.

The Sexual Assault Response & Awareness (SARA) Program provided comprehensive services for 697 victims of sexual assault during FY 2002. If funded, this grant would 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, and individual and group counseling. In addition, this grant would 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 violence and available services.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The budget for this two-year grant is \$212,296, 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 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.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None. The grant application may be reviewed in the Office of Management and Budget, Room 3600, City Hall, after March 28, 2003.

**STAFF:**

Lisa Baker, Director, Office on Women  
Melissa Schmisek, Coordinator, SARA Program  
Carol Moore, Acting Deputy Director, OMB  
Paul Doku, Budget Analyst, OMB