

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 20, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: MATCHING FEDERAL FUNDS TO ESTABLISH A FULL TIME CHILD WELFARE TRAINING COORDINATOR

ISSUE: City Council consideration of an allocation of \$11,300 from FY 2005 contingent reserves to provide the required 25% local match for federal Title IV-E funds that are available to the Department of Human Services to provide an additional position to conduct best practice training for child welfare social workers.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve an allocation of \$11,300 from FY 2005 contingent reserves to provide the 25% local match required to obtain \$33,900 in Title IV-E grant money, to support the implementation of a structured training and staff development program in Child Welfare Services. In FY 2006, the full-year costs to the City of this grant match would be \$18,088; and
- (2) Approve the establishment of a full time training coordinator position within Child Welfare Services.

DISCUSSION: Following legislative changes to the Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1998 and the Code of Virginia, the Virginia Department of Social Services approved federal Title IV-E funds to promote local coordinated, best practices training of child welfare social workers whose job includes the implementation of new federal regulations. The Federal Child and Family Services Review, conducted in Virginia in 2003, identified additional standards of practice that reiterated the need for more and improved training of child welfare workers.

The Alexandria Division of Social Services has developed a new worker training that involves numerous community partners and a wide range of information dissemination for new child welfare workers. This training program is currently carried out by a training committee of three supervisors, is conducted over a 14-week period, and is offered two times a year. However, as this program has become more detailed and complex, the establishment of a dedicated position to coordinate, monitor, offer and evaluate the training has become increasingly important.

Moreover, the Department of Human Services' goal is to bring the agency's overall training program into compliance with standards of the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Incorporated, and to focus the program on improved consumer outcomes and continuous improvement of performance. A dedicated staff resource will facilitate this improvement of the training program.

The proposed dedicated Child Welfare Training Coordinator would:

- manage the new worker orientation and training,
- coordinate the agency umbrella training plan,
- track employee training throughout the year,
- develop an evaluation plan to evaluate the outcomes of these efforts,
- conduct IV-E case reviews to assure that training is being applied, and
- coordinate the use of student interns and serve as the liaison with local university graduate programs.

Coordinated, challenging training and ongoing staff development have been shown to correlate with staff retention and job satisfaction. In addition, highly trained staff will contribute to improved state outcomes on the next Federal Child and Family Services Review, which will occur in 2006.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Training Coordinator position will be classified as a Social Worker II, Grade 20, at a total annual cost of \$72,350. The Title VI-E Pass Through Training Grant will cover 75% of this cost, or \$54,263. The remaining annual costs, \$18,088, will need to be provided from City general funds. Because this position would not be filled until mid-November at the earliest, the FY 2005 City costs are pro-rated to 62.5% of the annual costs, or \$11,300.

STAFF:

Bruce Johnson, Director, OMB

Carol Moore, Acting Deputy Director, OMB

Debra R. Collins, Director, Human Services

Marcie Kavanaugh, Director, DHS Operations

Suzanne Chis, Director, DSS

Vicky Primer, Chief of Services, DSS