


## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 4, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FOR GRANT SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA) TO FUND FAMILY CENTERED SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT FOR ADOLESCENTS THROUGH THE ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD

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**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of the Alexandria Community Services Board's (CSB) application for and acceptance of grant funds available from the federal Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the amount of \$300,000 per year for a period of three years for an intensive evidence-based substance abuse treatment to an estimated 210 adolescents.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve the grant submission and, if awarded, accept up to \$300,000 in SAMHSA funds per year for three years, beginning in FY 2007; and
- (2) Approve the hiring of 3.0 FTE staff, including one Therapist Supervisor and two Therapist IIs; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** Substance use is a pervasive problem in adolescents. According to the 2001 Monitoring the Future national survey of adolescent drinking and drug use, more than half of all high school seniors used illicit drugs. One in three high school seniors report being drunk at least once in the past month. Many teens need treatment, yet national statistics show that only one in ten youth who need treatment actually receive help. Teens with substance abuse problems are often overlooked. Few programs have been proven to be effective with teens because they tend to be based on adult treatment models. Because substance abuse can effectively derail teens from negotiating critically important developmental tasks, treatment programs must address the challenges of adolescence so that youth can move forward into productive adulthood.

The Alexandria Community Services Board currently offers limited substance abuse treatment for youth. These services include 5.0 FTE full-time mental health clinicians who provide outreach, assessment, psychological evaluations, case management, individual and family treatment, and hospital discharge planning at the CSB's primary site, at the secondary schools and at the Adolescent Health Clinic. The majority of the youth they serve have primary mental health diagnoses. The CSB has a 0.5 FTE who provides substance abuse group treatment for adjudicated Juvenile Court involved youth. Recently, the CSB began hosting a weekly Youth N Recovery Narcotics Anonymous group with an average attendance of 14 youth. In a recent informal CSB survey of City organizations serving youth, more than 300 Alexandria youth indicated that they see substance abuse among their peers as a serious problem. Both youth and stakeholders reported a significant unmet need for targeted substance abuse treatment for teens and their families in Alexandria.

**DISCUSSION:** The CSB reorganized its services for youth in the past year and is researching best practice models. This SAMHSA grant would allow the CSB to implement proven effective treatment protocols that include families as an integral part of the treatment process. These protocols include the Assertive Community Reinforcement Approach coupled with Assertive Continuing Care.

In the Assertive Community Reinforcement Approach (ACRA), therapists teach the adolescents and family members how to find and use reinforcements for staying substance free. The work is done on an outreach basis, meeting the youth and their families where they are. Therapy sessions are conducted with the adolescent individually and jointly with their caregivers. Assertive Continuing Care (ACC) assists the adolescent in developing and maintaining the motivation to stay substance free by engaging in positive social activities, positive relationships with friends and by improving communication with family.

The CSB would use the grant funds to hire three additional full-time substance abuse professionals (one Therapist Supervisor and two Therapist IIs) to provide ACRA/ACC intensive case management services to approximately 210 youth and their families over three years. The SAMHSA grant includes funds for a required evaluation component; George Mason University has agreed to contract with the CSB should the grant be awarded.

The provision of substance abuse treatment services to adolescents is compatible with Goal #5 of City Council's Strategic Plan, which calls for "A Caring Community that is Diverse and Affordable." Objectives of this goal include providing youth with an opportunity to maximize their potential, and increasing the availability of medical and mental health care for the uninsured and underinsured.

It should be noted that the grant application was due on March 29, 2006. Due to the time frame for grant submission, the grant application was submitted contingent upon Council approval at its April 11, 2006 meeting. The grant application is available for review in the CSB administrative offices at 720 N. St. Asaph Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Receipt of up to \$300,000 per year for three years beginning in FY 2007. No City match is required and no City funds are included in the three-year proposed project budget. It should be noted that there are no monies in the City budget to continue these activities once the grant funds are expended. If the need for these services continues after the SAMHSA grant ends, the CSB will pursue other grant opportunities and offer ACRA/ACC as a fee-for-service program.

**STAFF:**

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