


City of Alexandria, Virginia

11-14-06

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT APPLICATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$92,000 TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES FOR A TWO YEAR PROJECT TO ENHANCE SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

ISSUE: Authorization of grant application in the amount of \$92,000 to the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to enhance sexual and domestic violence services.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the grant application to DCJS in the amount of \$92,000; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

DISCUSSION:

The Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA) Program and the Domestic Violence Program (DVP) of the Office on Women (OOW) have applied for a one-time grant to address gaps in sexual and domestic violence services to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI) community in Alexandria. The project would hire a part-time Health and Community Education Specialist (HCS) and would not exceed two years. Staff does not expect to request any additional funding after the two-year period either from the grantor or the City of Alexandria.

Council deferred action on this application at its October 24 legislative meeting and asked that staff provide additional information on the grant. Attached are two letters supporting the application. This memorandum includes additional information about the program.

The goal of this grant as identified by the grantors is to provide or enhance services to victims of sexual and domestic violence. Grant awards are made *only* to organizations who serve sexual and domestic violence victims. DVP and SARA are the City's only existing programs that provide comprehensive services, including advocacy, crisis intervention, therapy, and accompaniment, to victims of sexual and domestic violence. The grantor states that priority will be given to one-time

projects and projects with a special focus on underserved populations, one of which is the LGBTQI population. During the last grant cycle, two projects submitted by sexual assault and domestic violence agencies in other parts of the state addressing the LGBTQI community were funded.

The activities of this project would be to: 1. Develop and convene an Advisory Board made up of community members that will provide oversight for all activities. 2. Review and revise sexual and domestic violence advocacy policies, website, volunteer training curriculum, employee handbooks, brochures, and other materials distributed to the community or to victims of sexual or domestic violence. 3. Research and design curriculum and conduct training for sexual and domestic violence staff and allied professionals on LGBTQI issues. 4. Coordinate and conduct trainings with Police, Sheriff's Office, Commonwealth's Attorneys, Victim-Witness Assistance, Child Protective Services, Inova Alexandria Hospital Emergency Room personnel, Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners and SARA and DVP staff and volunteers. SARA and DVP have cooperative agreements with all of the above agencies in general and also specific to this grant.

Alexandria is home to many people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the City of Alexandria has twice the number of such households as the average city in the United States, although the actual number of persons in these groups in Alexandria is not known. The Alexandria Gay and Lesbian Community Association (AGLCA), a partner in this endeavor, is a vibrant local organization with 300 members that "strives to enhance the quality of life for the local gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community through social activities, political awareness, and community service."

Data from sexual and domestic violence surveys suggests that women and men who identify as LGBTQI suffer sexual and domestic violence proportionally as much as the heterosexual population. Nationally, 25% of all women and nearly 10% of all men have been physically or sexually abused. While the rate of violence is not higher in the LGBTQI community, barriers to seeking help may be greater. Same-sex partners face unique forms of abuse by partners who can use the social marginalization and invisibility of gays and lesbians to increase the victim's isolation. In addition, community members who identify as LGBTQI may not realize that sexual and domestic violence services are here to serve them. In a national study done by the Institute for Child and Family Policy, almost none of the gay men interviewed knew that a rape crisis center was available to serve them if they were victimized.

The Office on Women and other agencies currently strive to provide services and outreach that is inclusive and LGBTQI friendly. (In addition, Office on Women staff identify themselves as advocates from DVP and SARA respectively in order to ensure that men, both gay and straight, feel welcomed.) However, having a part-time individual to focus efforts and provide comprehensive training to domestic and sexual violence responders for an extended period of time will ensure a far more comprehensive effort and result. SARA and DVP do presently serve women, men, boys and girls from the LGBTQI community (an estimated 10% of the victims served each month), as well as women, men, boys and girls from the heterosexual community, but

we believe strongly that enhancing services to become more sensitive to the particular needs of the LGBTQI population and helping to create institutions that are welcoming to all will not only invite more people to seek domestic and sexual violence services but also encourage people to feel more comfortable in identifying to advocates as LGBTQI.

The Alexandria Office on Women submitted this grant application to DCJS to meet its deadline of September 15, 2006, with the understanding that subsequent City Council authorization would be required to accept this grant award.

FISCAL IMPACT: Receipt of up to \$92,000 for the two-year program. No City match is required. The program will end in two years and no additional City funds will be needed to continue the program.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1. AGLCA Letter of Support

Attachment 2. Human Rights Commission Letter of Support

STAFF:

Claire Dunn, DVP Coordinator

Erika Callaway Kleiner, SARA Program Coordinator

Lisa Baker, Director Office on Women

Laura Pettus, Grants Coordinator

Alexandria ▼ GLCA

Alexandria Gay & Lesbian Community Association

October 29, 2006

Honorable Mayor and Members of Council
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and City Council Members,

On behalf of the Alexandria Gay and Lesbian Community Association, I express support for the proposal submitted by the Alexandria Office on Women for the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Victim Fund grant. Representing the Alexandria GLCA board, I consulted with the Domestic Violence Program staff as they prepared the grant proposal under consideration.

Reliable statistics are not available for the incidence of domestic violence among gay and lesbian couples. One can only assume its unfortunate occurrence in all configurations of couples and families. The same shame and fear that impedes heterosexuals seeking help is present for gays and lesbians, along with additional concerns of discrimination. In a nutshell, the grant proposal seeks to inform Alexandria's GLBT community that help exists, that it is inclusive, and that they will be respected in that system.

We are particularly pleased to partner with the Domestic Violence Program on this project. As you may know, the Alexandria GLCA is more vibrant than at any time in its twenty-three year history. We have a thriving membership, active program schedule, and most importantly an effective communication network. We are excited to work with the City of Alexandria, specifically the Office on Women's Domestic Violence Program, to enhance services to GLBT citizens and to utilize our network to raise awareness of those services.

The Alexandria GLCA has agreed to provide a representative to the advisory board for the grant, in the event it is awarded to Alexandria. We lend our support now, and pledge to do so in the future, to the success of this project. Please contact me if I can answer any questions or be of further service to you.

Respectfully,

Karen Gautney
President



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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November 8, 2006

Mayor William D. Euille
Members of City Council
Room 2300, City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Dear Mayor Euille and Members of Council:

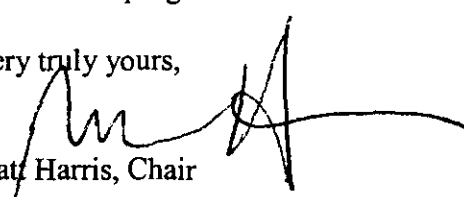
As Chair of the Human Rights Commission, I am writing in support of the Office on Women's grant application to the Department of Criminal Justice Services Victim Fund. I understand the docket item was continued to the November 14 City Council meeting. The Commission will not meet until November 21, so there has not been a public vote endorsing the application.

The Alexandria Human Rights Code, among its provisions, provides protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation to individuals who seek health and human services in the City. Two crucial components of the City's program for enforcement of anti-discrimination laws are outreach and training, designed to explain individual rights and responsibilities and to provide appropriate referrals.

With this grant, the Office on Women's sexual assault and domestic violence programs would extend outreach and services to individuals who may be the victims of same-sex sexual/domestic violence or stalking. In principle, the Human Rights Commission is responsible for ensuring that all protected classes are offered the same access to services.

Commission membership currently includes a member of the Commission for Women and the President of the Alexandria Gay and Lesbian Community Association. I would be pleased to recommend a member of the Commission to serve on the Advisory Board for this new program.

Very truly yours,


Matt Harris, Chair

cc: Jean Kelleher Niebauer, Director, Office of Human Rights
Lisa Baker, Director, Office on Women