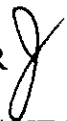


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2006

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY FOR A GRANT TO FUND A YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE ALEXANDRIA COURT SERVICE UNIT

ISSUE: City Council authorization to apply for grant to fund a youth mentoring program administered by the Alexandria Court Service Unit.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of the grant application in the amount of \$23,520; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents.

BACKGROUND: The Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant, administered by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, is offering funds to create and implement programs that prevent crime and delinquency in minority and/or immigrant communities, promote partnerships with law enforcement and other community groups, and improve these communities' understanding of their rights and responsibilities within the legal system.

Overrepresentation of minorities in the criminal justice system is a national concern. Alexandria is experiencing the same issues as what is seen on a national level. In 2005, adolescent males were arrested for 66 percent of juvenile criminal activity in the City. Since 2002, juvenile criminal charges for males have increased by 3 percent, while those for females have decreased by 3 percent.

In a recent meeting called by Mayor Euille to address issues involving youth in Del Ray and Uptown, the participants indicated that a targeted prevention effort would be helpful to end the conflicts between youth in the Uptown and Del Ray neighborhoods. Alexandria currently has no evidence-based mentoring program that target preteen, at-risk boys. Big Brothers of America exists in the City, but has a long waiting list of boys to be mentored and not enough male mentors. Of the youth identified as involved in the

Uptown and Del Ray neighborhood issues, 90 percent live with a single mother or grandmother. The need for positive male role models is evident and having a male role model has been proven to prevent juvenile criminal activity. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has identified mentoring as highly effective in promoting behavior adjustment in youth.

DISCUSSION: For the past four years the Alexandria Court Service Unit has administered a mentoring program, SOHO—Space Of Her Own, for at-risk girls in Alexandria. As an outcome measure of the success of 95 percent of participants in this recognized program have not become court-involved. The Urban Institute is currently evaluating SOHO outcomes to help promote its best-practice program strategies in other jurisdictions.

The Court Service Unit would like to use the successful SOHO mentoring model to develop and administer a mentoring program for boys, targeting at-risk African American sixth-grade boys from low-income neighborhoods in Old Town and Del Ray.

Guidance counselors at George Washington Middle School surveyed students and found a high interest in film production. The proposed mentoring program will match African American adult male mentors with at-risk boys, identified by police officers and school administrators, to work together to do film production. Mentor/mentee teams will receive technical training in filmmaking, and youth will receive social skills and anger management training and legal education. The program plan utilizes evidence-based curricula, performance measures, and nationally standardized pre and post-tests.

It is the goal of this program that 100 percent of program participants will receive referrals to other appropriate City services, during or after completion of the program. The program will demonstrate success if 85 percent of participants receive no juvenile criminal charges within two years of program completion.

Partners in the development and implementation of this program plan include: Alexandria Court Service Unit, City parents and teens, City Gang Coordinator, Alexandria City Public Schools, Apple Store, Old Town Theater, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, and the Police Department.

FISCAL IMPACT: The program budget will be \$31,360, with federal pass-through funds in the amount of \$23,520 and a required local match of \$7,840. The proposed local match will come from the Court Service Unit's private donation account. The program will provide 250 service hours to up to 15 at-risk boys, at a cost of under \$10 per hour. No new positions will be created by this grant.

According to the terms of the grant, if program evaluation is favorable, it will be eligible for ongoing State funding. If it is not favorably evaluated, or if the State does not provide ongoing funding, the program will be terminated.

The grant paperwork was submitted, in order to meet the deadline of October 31, 2006, with the understanding that subsequent City Council approval would be required to accept this grant award.

STAFF:

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