


City of Alexandria, Virginia

43
6-24-08

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 19, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF PROVIDING INTERIM CITY FUNDING FOR THE GANG INTERVENTION PREVENTION/EDUCATION PROGRAM

ISSUE: Provision of interim City funding to maintain the Gang Intervention Prevention/ Education Program.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council allocate \$20,400 from the contingent reserve account to the Court Service Unit to provide funding for the Gang Intervention Prevention/Education Program for the period of June 14 through September 30, 2008.

BACKGROUND: In 2007, a federal earmark grant was awarded to the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force to help to prevent and curtail gang activity in Alexandria, Falls Church, Arlington, Fairfax County, Loudoun and Prince William. This grant included funds for Gang Intervention Prevention/Education (IPE) outreach counselors. After a competitive bidding process, the Center for Multicultural Human Services was awarded a contract to provide this service. The program began in April 2007 with 7.5 positions divided among the six jurisdictions; Alexandria received two part-time IPE counselors. Mike Mackey, the City's Gang Intervention/Prevention Coordinator, was assigned to oversee the work of the IPE counselors in Alexandria.

DISCUSSION: The IPE counselors have provided outreach services using research-based methods recommended by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention. These services are provided to youth who are at-risk of gang involvement or to members of a gang who need intervention to end their involvement. IPE counselors have received extensive training and are responsible for assessing youth and families, providing gang education, and linking program participants with support services such as counseling, job placement, recreational activities and mentoring.

After the program began, over 70 Alexandria young people and their families were referred to the program by Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), the non-profit sector, and a number of City departments and offices (including the Police Department; the Sheriff's Office; the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse; the Court Service Unit; the Department Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; the Health Department; the Department

of Human Services; the Office of Public Defender; and the Office on Women). The number of referrals for Alexandria represents roughly 40 percent of all referrals to the IPE program in Northern Virginia.

In May 2008 the Regional Gang Steering Committee, which is part of the Regional Gang Task Force, was informed that Northern Virginia Family Services was assuming all operations of the Center for Multicultural Human Services, including the IPE program. Northern Virginia Family Services also told the Regional Gang Steering Committee that federal grant money for this program would run out on June 13, 2008, and would not be available again until October 1, 2008, leaving participants without services for three and one-half months. Fairfax County has allocated \$121,000 to continue the IPE program for Fairfax youth. The cost of interim funding for the Alexandria program (June 14 through September 30) is estimated at \$25,000.

The Alexandria program currently has 30 participants, and 20 more on a waiting list. This gap in services greatly concerns ACPS, school resource officers, and other City staff who have come to depend on the program. At the June 11, 2008, Alexandria Gang Task Force meeting, NVFS staff presented an evaluation that demonstrates the IPE program's impressive outcomes for Alexandria participants:

- One hundred percent had no gang-related crimes;
- Forty-nine percent improved their social competence;
- Forty-four percent improved family relations;
- Forty-two percent showed better school attendance; and
- Fifty-nine percent made better use of community resources.

Councilman Ludwig Gaines and Councilmember Timothy Lovain, who are members and co-chairs of the Alexandria Gang Prevention Community Task Force, agreed that this program is having an enormously positive impact on the City's youth and should be continued without interruption in services if possible. They asked that the Court Service Unit bring this matter to City Council for consideration of interim funding from the City.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Department of Human Services has provided \$4,600 to IPE from unused funds that were designated to Northern Virginia Family Services for another program. The remaining funding needed to keep the IPE program running through September 30 is \$20,400, to pay salaries for two part-time IPE counselors. If approved, these funds will be allocated from the contingent reserves account to the Court Service Unit.

STAFF:

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

Lillian Brooks, Director, Court Service Unit

Bruce Johnson, Director, OMB

Michael Mackey, Gang Prevention/Intervention Coordinator

Kendel Taylor, Budget Analyst, OMB