


9-11-07

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 4, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FOR GRANT SUBMISSION TO THE U. S.
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO EXPAND
TREATMENT SERVICES IN THE FAMILY DRUG TREATMENT COURT

ISSUE: Expansion of treatment services in the Family Drug Treatment Court.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council authorize the grant submission and, if awarded, accept up to \$500,000 per year from the federal Department of Health and Human Services for a five-year period beginning October 2007. These funds would be used to increase the capacity of Alexandria's Family Drug Treatment Court ("AFDTC" or "Drug Court") by 100%, and expand services to children of Drug Court participants.

BACKGROUND: An expansion of the Drug Court, a collaborative effort with the Alexandria Department of Human Services, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, 18th Judicial District, Alexandria Public School System, City Attorney's Office, and the Office on Women, is proposed. These City partners developed the Drug Court in 2001 in response to the growth in the number of abused and neglected children of substance abusing parents. These parents are court-ordered to participate in a structured five-phase program that lasts about 15 months depending on the progress of each participant. The hallmarks of the Drug Court are increased accountability, easy access to treatment services, intensive care coordination, and individualized treatment for the child and family.

Despite operating at full capacity with 15 parents and approximately 34 children at any one time, unmet needs for Drug Court services persist. Currently 212 children are in foster care, and the Alexandria Department of Social Services estimates that 159 of these children have parents who are substance abusers. This grant would allow Alexandria to double its Drug Court capacity to accommodate 30 parents with approximately 65 children at any one time.

DISCUSSION: Drug Court is a program with positive results. From January 2006 through April 2007, 26 parents and 57 children received services through Drug Court. Of these, 71% of parents successfully completed the program, and 73% of the children were living either at home or with relatives. Only two children remained in foster care at the time of program completion. This opportunity to apply for federal funds, if successful, would allow for significantly more parents and children to have positive outcomes and healthier lives.

If awarded, these funds would support the following new staff: 1) two full-time licensed or licensed-eligible mental health and substance abuse professionals (Therapist III), 2) two full-time case managers with a bachelor's degree (Therapist I), 3) two part-time peer outreach workers (Drug Court graduates), 4) one full-time administrative officer, 5) one part-time CASA supervisor, and 6) allow funding to upgrade the existing Drug Court Coordinator to a Therapist Supervisor. The Supreme Court of Virginia's Drug Court Office would conduct, free of charge, an extensive outcome evaluation analysis. It should be noted that there are no monies currently in the City budget to continue these activities once the grant funds are expended. At the end of the grant period, the positions would be eliminated, or City funding would need to be provided.

Objectives of this proposal include:

- Evaluation and treatment of all children of Drug Court participants.
- Timely access to individualized treatment for all Drug Court participants.
- Completion of *Celebrating Families!* Parenting curriculum by all participants.
- Increase in protective factors related to child maltreatment.
- Decrease in risk factors related to child maltreatment.
- Cross-training of child welfare workers and substance abuse treatment providers.
- Independent evaluation by the staff of the Supreme Court of Virginia..

The Alexandria CSB, in conjunction with the Alexandria Department of Human Services, submitted this grant application to ACF in July 2007 in order to meet the deadline of July 3, 2007, with the understanding that subsequent Council authorization would be required to accept this grant award. The grant application is available for review in the CSB's administrative offices at 720 N. St. Asaph Street (703) 838-4455, x166.

FISCAL IMPACT: Receipt of up to \$500,000 per year for a period of five years, beginning in October 2007. No City match is required.

STAFF:

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