


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

7
10-23-07

DATE: OCTOBER 17, 2007

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR A YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAM ADMINISTRED BY THE COURT SERVICE UNIT

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

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of the grant application (due October 31, 2007), not to exceed \$20,000; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents prior to the grant effective date of January 1, 2008.

BACKGROUND: The Byrne Memorial Justice Association Grant, administered by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, offers renewed funds to continue programs that succeed in preventing crime and delinquency in minority and/or immigrant communities, promote partnerships with law enforcement and other community groups, and improve communities' understanding of their rights and responsibilities within the legal system.

In a 2006 meeting called by Mayor Euille to address issues involving Del Ray and Uptown youth, the participants indicated that a targeted prevention effort would be helpful to end the conflicts between youth in the Old Town and Del Ray neighborhoods. Until the implementation of iMentor in 2007, Alexandria had no evidence-based mentoring programs for preteen, at-risk boys. Of the youths identified in 2006 mentoring program meeting, 90 percent lived with a single mother or grandmother. The need for positive male role models has been evident and 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: The Court Service Unit mirrored its successful mentor program for preteen, at-risk girls, a Space of Her Own (SOHO), to create the iMentor program for at-risk, minority low income sixth grade boys from neighborhoods in Old Town and Del Ray.

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

Adults make a one-year commitment to mentoring youth. Youth that complete the program receive referrals to other appropriate City services and Alexandria City Public Schools provides film classes and clubs throughout the middle and high school years.

Sixteen youth were admitted into the 2007 program. They attended a wilderness trip and continuing participants have each completed two short films. It is anticipated that 85% of program graduates will receive no juvenile criminal charges within two years of program completion.

Partners in the development and implementation of the iMentor program include: the Alexandria Court Service Unit, City parents and teens, the Alexandria City Public Schools, Apple, Inc., 27 adult male volunteers, the City Gang Coordinator, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, and the Police Department.

FISCAL IMPACT: The program budget will include, if awarded, \$20,000 grant fund with a 25 percent cash match, or a maximum \$5,000. The proposed local match will come from the Court Service Unit's private donation account. The program will include 250 service hours to up to 15 at-risk boys, at a cost of under \$8 per hour. No new positions will be created by this grant.

STAFF:

Linda Odell, Director of Alternative Programs

Lillian Brooks, CSU Director

Karen Winey, Grants Coordinator

Kendel Taylor, Management and Budget Analyst