


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 3, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR STIMULUS FUNDS TO TEMPORARILY EXPAND THE ALEXANDRIA HEAD START PROGRAM

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of an application to the federal department of Health and Human Services for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds through a competitive grant process to temporarily expand the Alexandria Head Start program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of a grant application, due June 23, 2009, not to exceed \$400,000, for start-up costs and staff salaries and benefits; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

**BACKGROUND:** Alexandria Head Start (AHS) is a federally funded program serving 252 children, ages three to five, in the City of Alexandria. The City is the grantee for the program and The Campagna Center (TCC) is the delegate agency. Funds for the program flow from the federal government to the City of Alexandria and then to TCC which is responsible for the day to day operations of the program, including the recruitment and hiring of staff. TCC's governing board is responsible for the governance of the program, with annual reporting to City Council.

As the grantee, the City of Alexandria is responsible to the federal government for the oversight and monitoring of the delegate agency (TCC). This function has been assigned by the City Manager to DHS and includes financial monitoring of the program. At the May 26 meeting, City Council approved a plan to shift the program monitoring of AHS to the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). The delegate agency has a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ACPS which outlines a collaborative relationship with ACPS regarding facilities use, special education services, curriculum coordination and transitioning of children to kindergarten. Program monitoring will be added to the MOU, effective with the 2010 program year.

**DISCUSSION:** AHS proposes to submit an application through a competitive grant process for one-time ARRA funds to serve an additional 54 children in the Head Start program located at sites throughout the community. ACPS currently provides in-kind space for 14 Head Start classrooms at seven sites and Northern Virginia Community College provides in-kind space for one classroom. The current AHS grant funds only 252 children. However, existing Head Start classrooms have a capacity 306. Therefore, AHS proposes to seek funding to serve 54 additional children, which would fill the classrooms to capacity. AHS administrators have met with ACPS management to discuss the proposed expansion and the school system concurs with the plan to expand within existing classroom space because there is little additional space available beyond that which has already been dedicated to Head Start. The current Head Start waiting list stands at more than 200 plus there are extensive waiting lists at other programs. The need for services for low-income children, age three to five, is also confirmed by data from the program’s annual community assessment. The recommended expansion plan is included in the following table:

Current Head Start Capacity and Enrollment Expansion Recommendations				
Site	# Classrooms	Capacity	Current Enrollment	Recommended Expansion
John Adams	3	51	51	0
Patrick Henry	3	60	51	9
No. Va. Community College	1	20	20	0
TC Williams	1	20	20	0
Jefferson Houston	3	80	69	11
George Washington	2	24	16	8
Mt. Vernon	2	34	17	17
Cora Kelly	1	17	8	9
Totals	15	306	252	54

In Virginia, \$1.8 million in ARRA Head Start expansion funding is available for a period of two years only, beginning on September 1, 2009 and ending on August 31, 2011. It is clearly understood that if additional funds are not made available through the federal Head Start appropriations process for continuation of this expansion, the authorized capacity of AHS will return to the 252 children funded by the 2009/10 base allocation. All staff funded through this expansion grant will be hired for a two year period ending August 31, 2011, to be continued only if federal Head Start funding is made available.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The Alexandria Head Start program proposes to apply for up to \$400,000 in stimulus funds which will include start-up funds of \$28,500 plus salaries and benefits of teachers, assistant teachers, administrative support and family service staff. The actual budget details are still in the process of being developed but will not exceed \$400,000. ACPS will provide an in-kind match of \$86,442 in the form of donated space and services. ARRA funds will have a different grant number and will be tracked separately from the on-going appropriation. It is intended, because of severe City budget constraints, that no City funds will

supplement this program in future years if the funding does not 100% support all costs of this initiative.

**STAFF:**

Debra R. Collins, Assistant City Manager for Community and Human Services

Bruce Johnson, Chief Financial Officer

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