


City of Alexandria, Virginia

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11-19-08

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AN APPLICATION TO RENEW A GRANT TO FUND A MENTORING PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE ALEXANDRIA COURT SERVICE UNIT

ISSUE: Consideration of an application to renew a grant to fund a mentoring program administered by the Alexandria Court Service Unit (CSU).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of a grant application in the amount of \$18,100 (the grant application is actually being submitted on November 17 (the grant deadline), contingent on Council approval, since notification of the grant opportunity came too late for prior approval); and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents for the grant.

BACKGROUND: The Byrne Memorial Justice Association Grant, administered by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, is offering funds (grant renewals) to continue programs that succeed in preventing crime and delinquency in minority and immigrant communities; promote partnerships with law enforcement and other community groups; and improve communities' understanding of their rights and responsibilities within the legal system. The Court Service Unit was notified of the opportunity to renew this grant on November 4, 2008.

DISCUSSION: In 2007, the Court Service Unit used its successful mentor program model for at-risk girls to create the iMovie Mentors program for at-risk minority 6th grade boys from low-income neighborhoods in Old Town and Del Ray.

Guidance counselors at George Washington Middle School surveyed students and found significant interest in film production. iMentor matches adult male mentors with at-risk boys (who have been identified by police officers and school administrators) to work together in film production. Teams of mentors and mentees receive technical training in filmmaking from Apple, Inc., and the mentees also receive training in social skills, anger management, and legal rights and responsibilities. The program uses evidence-based curricula, performance measures, and nationally standardized tests.

Adults make a one-year commitment to mentoring these boys. Boys who complete the program receive referrals to other appropriate City services.

Fifteen boys have completed the iMovie Mentors program. Each participant, with assistance from his mentor, completed two short films and a crime-prevention public service announcement. A film festival showing this year's productions will be held on December 9, 2008, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., at the Old Town Theater located on 815 King Street. One of the goals of the program is to keep participants out of the juvenile justice system after they have completed the mentoring program. Participants will be tracked for two years after program completion to see if they have been charged with any criminal offenses.

Partners in the iMentor program include the Alexandria Court Service Unit, mentees and their parents, Alexandria City Public Schools, thirty adult male volunteer mentors, the City Gang Prevention Coordinator, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, the Police Department, and Apple, Inc.

FISCAL IMPACT: The program budget is \$18,100, with federal pass-through funds in the amount of \$13,575 and a required 25 percent cash match of \$4,525. The cash match will come from the Court Service Unit's private donation account. The program will provide 250 service hours for up to 15 at-risk boys, at a cost of less than \$8 per hour. No new positions will be created by this grant.

STAFF:

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