


**City of Alexandria, Virginia**

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 26, 2008

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR REBUILDING TOGETHER ALEXANDRIA

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a request from Rebuilding Together Alexandria (RTA) for \$35,000 in Housing Trust Fund (HTF) monies for RTA activities in FY2009.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Approve a grant of \$35,000 in Housing Trust Fund (HTF) monies to Rebuilding Together Alexandria (RTA) to fund its activities in FY 2009; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents and agreements.

**BACKGROUND:** Rebuilding Together Alexandria, (RTA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that renovates and repairs the homes of elderly, disabled and low-income homeowners who reside in the City of Alexandria to help them maintain safety, security and independence. RTA also helps repair non-profit facilities which serve Alexandria residents in need. RTA is predominantly a volunteer-supported organization.

National Rebuilding Day is an annual one-day repair and renovation program that uses volunteer labor to provide no-cost home repair/renovation services for income-eligible City owner-occupants and no-cost facilities repair/renovation for City non-profits. This program is supported by donations of time and labor from volunteers (including skilled laborers) and by donations of supplies and grant money from local businesses, churches and other sponsors. Applicants are screened on the basis of need and on the work that can be accomplished by RTA volunteers in one day. National Rebuilding Day is the major focus for RTA, the organization now provides these services throughout the year. RTA also has a weatherization program which includes an energy audit along with corrective actions such as weather stripping, programmable thermostats, low flow shower heads and fluorescent light bulbs.

**DISCUSSION:** RTA is requesting a total of \$35,000 in grant funding from the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) for its FY 2009 program. Seventy-five percent of the grant amount would go toward

the purchase of supplies and materials, and 25% would be allocated for professional labor, as needed. Supplies and materials purchased will be used for a weatherization effort (over 30 homes) planned for fall and winter and for repair and modification of homes on National Rebuilding Day in the spring of 2009. The estimated average cost to purchase supplies and complete repairs and renovations at any given Alexandria address will be from \$2,700 to \$3,000 per household. RTA plans to assist over 75 Alexandria resident homes with home repairs, as well as some non-profit agencies, serving more than 125 persons in homes, and hundreds more served in the non-profit facilities.

RTA has received \$35,000 of HTF annually since FY2004, with the exception of FY 2008, when it received \$42,000. The additional \$7,000 RTA received covered the costs of home renovation and accessibility-based renovation, which was requested by one household that did not qualify for the Office of Housing's standard Home Rehabilitation Loan Program. The average household income of beneficiaries in FY 2008 was \$21,027, the average household size was 1.5 persons, and the average age of head of household was 73 years. Of the \$42,000 received, 21% was used for skilled labor and 79% percent was spent on materials. Also in FY 2008, RTA mailed more than 1,000 applications to potential clients, and a total of 800 volunteers donated more than \$311,000 in manual labor and materials. HTF funding accounted for 9% of RTA's total funding in FY 2008.

The gap of \$35,000 to be filled by HTF will constitute 9% of RTA's FY 2009 projected revenue and is consistent with the prior year's HTF percent of budget allocations. Receiving full funding will enhance RTA's ability to address an increasing number of applications and help the organization provide a broader scope of work, as needed, at any given home. RTA proposes to leverage \$9.94 in community donations and volunteer labor for every \$1 in HTF grant funds. In keeping with past practice, staff recommends that the allocation of \$35,000 be granted to RTA so it can continue its mission of preserving and revitalizing homes and communities, assuring that Alexandria's low-income homeowners live in warmth with safety and independence.

On November 6, 2008, the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) considered and approved a staff recommendation to allocate \$35,000 to RTA recognizing the ongoing contribution of the RTA program toward the achievement of the City's strategic goal of providing a "caring community that is diverse and affordable." The City's approved budget for FY 2009 does not include a specific allocation for RTA, based on the principle that any organization seeking funding must submit an application for consideration during the year. However, based on annual applications received in the past from RTA, staff and AHAC anticipated another funding allocation of \$35,000 to that organization.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Approval of this request will result in the expenditure of \$35,000 in grant monies from the City's Housing Trust Fund.

**STAFF:**

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