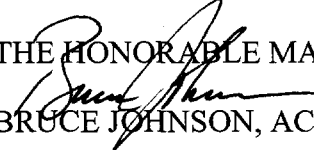


City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 8, 2011

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM:  BRUCE JOHNSON, ACTING CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF RELEASE OF FUNDS FROM FY 2012 CONTINGENT RESERVE FOR THE GANG INTERVENTION PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAM AND ALEXANDRIA MENTORING PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR

ISSUE: Consideration of release of funds in the amount of \$74,339 from FY 2012 Contingent Reserves to continue the Gang Intervention Prevention Education (IPE) and Alexandria Mentoring Partnership Coordinator (AMP) programs through June 30, 2012.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council allocate \$74,339 of the \$150,000 in the FY 2012 Contingent Reserves that was previously set aside to continue the IPE program and the AMP Mentoring Coordinator programs through June 30, 2012.

BACKGROUND: As part of the FY 2012 budget, Council set aside \$150,000 in Contingent Reserves to continue funding two gang prevention initiatives because grant funding for the programs will be exhausted in FY 2012. The two programs are the Intervention Prevention Education (IPE) and the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership (AMP). In order to continue both programs through the balance of FY 2012, a total amount of \$74,339 of the \$150,000 will be needed for this purpose.

DISCUSSION: The Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force was awarded a federal earmark grant in 2007. The purpose of the grant was to curtail and prevent gang activity in Northern Virginia. Grant monies were provided to fund Gang Intervention Prevention Education (IPE) counselors for each of the area jurisdictions that participate in the Gang Task Force. Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) has been providing this service. Of the 7.5 positions divided among the six jurisdictions in the Regional Gang Task Force, Alexandria received the equivalent of 1.5 positions to work with the high volume of youth referrals from the school, police, social services, court services and other city and non-profit agencies.

The IPE program has served 369 City youth and families. The program provides specific gang intervention services using research-based methods recommended by the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). IPE Counselors are highly trained in the specific

field of gang intervention and are tasked with working with complicated family dynamics and assessing and implementing a gang intervention plan for gang deterrence or for youth to exit gangs. IPE Counselors provide an array of other services such as: crisis intervention and safety planning, relocation services and gang awareness. They connect youth and their families to City support services such as mental health and substance abuse counseling, job placement, recreational activities and mentoring; NVFS staff are uniquely qualified for this work and are considered subject matter experts in gang prevention and intervention. NVFS has developed best practice case management standards to deliver a unique and highly effective service model.

Among youth in the IPE program who admitted or were known to be gang involved, 75% demonstrated a reduction or elimination of gang involvement after participating in IPE. Other metrics of the program demonstrate that 86% of participants improved their school performance measured by grades; 94% became involved in pro-social and recreational activities and 81% increased the level of positive family communication in the home.

The IPE program will end on December 31, 2011 if no other funding is provided. Contingent Reserve funds in the amount of \$45,908 will fund IPE an worker from NVFS to serve an additional 25 youth until June 30, 2011. NVFS will be seeking other grant funding during that time to sustain the program in FY 2013.

In FY 2010, the City received another federal earmark for gang and youth prevention and intervention secured by Congressman Moran. This grant included funding for a Mentoring Coordinator to enhance the quality of existing mentoring programs in the City and recruit and train a greater number of volunteer mentors to provide a mentor for every child in the City who could benefit from the mentoring experience. The Alexandria Mentoring Partnership (AMP) was created and includes a consortium of eight diverse mentoring programs throughout the City. The AMP Coordinator provides the oversight for this initiative.

During the short time in the existence of this initiative, the AMP Coordinator has helped improve the overall delivery of mentoring to youth in the City. The AMP Coordinator developed an assessment tool that is now used to measure all City mentoring programs against national standards. Multiple mentor recruitment events were held which resulted in filling the existing mentoring programs to capacity for 2 consecutive school years. Mentor trainings and social gatherings designed to retain mentors were implemented and a mentoring website and social media presence was created. There are currently 340 active mentors within the AMP serving approximately 500 youth throughout the City.

The partners of the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership include Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Project Protégé, Space of Her Own, IPE Mentoring, Untouchables, Building Better Futures, Higher Achievement and PALS. These programs now follow best-practice standards (recruitment, screening, background checks, training, and retention) and each program has distinct measures of effectiveness. All programs have AMP shared metrics designed to help increase high school graduation rates.

The funding for the Alexandria Mentoring Coordinator program will be exhausted on January 8, 2012. It is critical that the AMP Coordination efforts continue the work of providing sound

mentoring programs in the City and that AMP best practice principles expand to include newly developed programs in the school system. Continuation of the AMP Coordinator position until June 30, 2012 will require \$28,431 from contingent reserves.

The IPE program and the AMP initiative have been discussed at the Alexandria Community Policy and Management Team and the City/Schools meetings which include representatives from City youth serving agencies and Alexandria Public Schools. Regular discussion of these programs affords an opportunity to review the progress of the programs and align with other youth activities in the City. The two programs also collaborate with APS prevention program staff on a regular basis and it is anticipated that both programs will be included in the process of formulating the Youth Master Plan.

The Court Service Unit will seek funding through the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention and other sources to secure continued funding in FY 2013. Mike Mackey, the City's Gang and Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator will continue to manage both programs under the auspices of the Court Service Unit. The IPE and AMP mentoring initiative are aligned with Goals 4 (Children, Youth, and Family) and 6 (Public Safety) of the City's Strategic Plan. The staff in both programs closely collaborate with other City and school youth programs in the City.

FISCAL IMPACT: An allocation of \$74,339 in funding from Contingent Reserves from \$150,000 set aside for this purpose by Council in the FY 2012 budget would leave \$75,661 designated in Contingent Reserves for Gang Prevention or to be reallocated by Council for other purposes. If not released in FY 2012 for other purposes, the funds will be reappropriated to FY 2013 as a Gang Prevention Contingent Reserve unless City Council otherwise directs. If no funding is secured for either of these programs in FY 2013, NVFS and the AMP Coordinator have been informed that the programs will be terminated and facets of the programs will be reassigned to other existing staff with a reduction in services.

STAFF:

Lillian Brooks, Director, Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court Service Unit
Mike Mackey, Gang Prevention Coordinator
Kendel Taylor, Acting Director, OMB