

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 6, 2013

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

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Authorization To Apply For A Renewal Five-Year Grant Application For Substance Abuse Prevention Funding For The Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition Of Alexandria.

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ISSUE: City Council authorization to apply for a renewal five-year grant to the Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) for the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA). The grant application deadline is March 22, 2013.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Authorize the submission of the five-year grant application to SAMHSA for funding in the amount of \$125,000 per year.
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

BACKGROUND: The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) began receiving Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) funding in October 2008 under an initial five-year grant. The current grant is set to expire on September 30, 2013. If awarded, the current request for applications would continue funding through September 30, 2018.

The existing DFC grant funds a full-time coordinator for the Substance Abuse Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA) and non-personnel related costs. SAPCA is a broad-based community coalition that focuses on preventing underage substance abuse and is comprised of parents, youth, media, nonprofits, businesses, policymakers, and representatives from the Alexandria City Public Schools and various City departments. The coordinator organizes the work of SAPCA to implement comprehensive substance abuse prevention activities and facilitate ongoing community assessment.

DISCUSSION: The purpose of the DFC Program is to establish and strengthen collaboration to support the efforts of community coalitions working to prevent youth substance use. SAPCA focused on alcohol, marijuana and tobacco reduction for the first five years and will continue this focus for the next five years if awarded the grant.

Alcohol and cigarette use has decreased since SAPCA received the initial grant in 2008 and began implementing its action plan. According to the 2011 Alexandria Youth Risk Behavior Survey, in the past 30 days, 30% of high school students drank alcohol and 14% smoked cigarettes. This is lower than the 2007 findings: 36% drank alcohol and 15% smoked cigarettes. Fifteen percent of high school youth report binge drinking in the past month; 20% reported binge drinking in 2007. The results are more disturbing when categorized by grade level. In the past 30 days 40% of 12th graders drank alcohol and 20% smoked cigarettes. This is still lower than the 2007 rates: 45% had drunk alcohol and 22% smoked cigarettes, but still unacceptably high.

To combat alcohol, marijuana and tobacco use, SAPCA's key initiatives included:

- Policy Change – Delegate Herring introduced a bill based on SAPCA's suggested changes to strengthen Virginia's Social Host Law. The bill became law in July 2011.
- Community YouthMapping – In 2010 and 2011, SAPCA collaborated with 11 community organizations to map existing and needed resources and opportunities for youth in our community.
- Project Sticker Shock – Teams of youth and adults place "STOP" stickers on multi-packs of alcohol in over 60 stores in Alexandria to remind adults it's illegal to purchase for minors. This activity is carried out annually.
- Recognition of retailers who pass alcohol compliance checks – SAPCA worked with the Police Department to establish a process of sending jointly signed letters congratulating retailers who pass quarterly compliance checks.
- Risky Behavior Workshops – SAPCA partners with the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy and the Gang Prevention Task Force to jointly present a workshop that helps parents and other adults communicate with their children about drugs, sex, and gangs. Since 2009, over 230 parents and other interested adults have attended and provided positive feedback.
- wreckED presentations – SAPCA members present this program, created by the Partnership at DrugFree.org, to challenge teens to think more about their own and their friends' behavior regarding alcohol and other drugs. The program was presented to over 250 ninth graders and the senior class in 2012.

SAPCA also works closely with the Clean and Smoke Free Air Coalition of Alexandria to battle tobacco use. The two coalitions partnered to successfully advocate for signs to be placed in parks and bus shelters requesting individuals refrain from smoking at those sites.

This grant application is consistent with the current City Council Strategic Plan, Goal Four, *Alexandria is a caring community that supports and enhances the well-being, success and achievement of the City's residents* and the ACPS School Board Strategic Plan, Objective 1.8, *create effective partnerships to encourage a sense of community ownership of our schools and to support the development of the academic, social, physical and emotional needs of students.*

FISCAL IMPACT: If awarded, DCHS will receive \$625,000 over five years to support SAPCA's substance abuse prevention work. The grant period is October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2018, with 100% in-kind matching required in the first year, 125% in the following two years, and 150% in the last two years. The in-kind match will be met through a combination of tracking volunteer efforts of SAPCA partners and existing City prevention activities included in the proposed FY 2014 Budget. DCHS will serve as the fiscal agent for all funds received.

There are no funds available in the City budget to continue the SAPCA coordinator once the grant funds are expended. The grant-funded position would terminate upon the expiration of the grant.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

STAFF:

Debra R. Collins, Deputy City Manager
Mike Gilmore, Department Director, DCHS
Deborah Warren, Director, Center for Children and Families, DCHS
Jim Fleming, Fiscal Officer III, DCHS
Noraine Buttar, SAPCA Coordinator, DCHS