

BACKGROUND: The DJJ invited the City of Alexandria to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement that would enable DJJ to reimburse the City for a behavioral health professional to provide services to juvenile offenders referred by DJJ's 18th District Court Service Unit (CSU). DJJ utilizes mental health initiative funding to support local positions co-mingled at CSUs across the Commonwealth. These positions are created via partnership between DJJ and localities.

DISCUSSION: The overarching purpose of this partnership with DJJ is to create a full-time, state-funded position that can continue substance use intervention efforts presently funded by the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) and the City.

These services would include comprehensive evaluations, individual therapy and relapse prevention treatment, group therapy, parent education workshops, and programming for the Court. These services are needed based on the increasing numbers of youth coming to the Court's attention with substance use concerns. Early 2023 research indicated that approximately 55% of court-involved youth were either testing positive for substances and/or receiving specialized substance use treatment in the community and the numbers continue to grow.

A 2022 ARPA grant funded an initial part-time position that led to the creation of the Substance Use Intervention Program at the CSU. However, services through ARPA funding will end in December 2024. The City in FY 2024 supplemented this work by funding a part-time, bilingual clinical psychologist. The mental health professional hired for this role is working 20 hours a week through a temporary employment agency. If the Council approves this MOA, the full-time position will assume and absorb the Substance Use Intervention Program duties.

ARPA-funded services began in July 2022 and a total of 140 cases have been evaluated and consulted. This also includes six youth from the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center who were a part of the Stages of Change group treatment pilot program.

FISCAL IMPACT: This grant does not require any City match and provides for 100% of the funding for the position, including salary, equipment and benefits. The Therapist would be a part of the CSU Treatment Team and supervised by the Therapist Supervisor. The CSU would provide a workstation and meeting space for the Therapist; CSU does not need additional space to accommodate the position.

The MOA will be reevaluated on an annual basis with DJJ. Substantive changes or adjustments, if needed, will be docketed for future consideration by the City Council.

ATTACHMENT: Memorandum of Agreement

STAFF:

Yon Lambert, Deputy City Manager
Linda Odell, Court Service Unit
Stephanie Marzelli, Court Service Unit
Cindy Catlett, Court Service Unit