



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: SEPTEMBER 6, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: JAMES SPENGLER, DIRECTOR, RECREATION, PARKS AND
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the Release of \$200,000 from FY 2023 Contingent Reserves to Stabilize RPCA Out of School Time Staffing.

ISSUE: Consideration of the release of \$200,000 from FY 2023 Contingent Reserves to stabilize Out of School Time Staffing for the Department of Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Activities.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council allocate \$200,000 held in FY 2023 General Fund contingent reserves to enable the distribution of funding to the Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities (RPCA) budget and approve the addition of six (6) new benefitted part-time Recreation Leaders.

BACKGROUND: During the FY 2023 budget's final Add/Delete session, City Council reallocated \$200,000 from the RPCA contingent reserves to the non-departmental contingency budget for the stabilization of City Out of School Time Programs (OSTP). City Council directed staff to present a proposal for use of the funding.

The Out of School Time (OSTP) contingency proposal is to increase permanent part-time staffing at program locations. About 70% of the part-time staff are hourly seasonal/temporary employees who do not receive any benefits or paid leave. This proposal is intended to build a staffing framework for the OSTP that provides consistent quality across all program locations based on a core of best qualified staff. RPCA is requesting more positions that offer employees paid leave and benefits to recruit and retain these staff. Reduced dependency on hourly, temporary employees will sustain a stable staffing framework of part-time permanent, benefitted employees in key OSTP age group leader positions.

The \$200,000 funding will best benefit and improve the program if used to recruit permanent part-time staff, requiring additional FTEs. Additional funding without approving corresponding FTEs would not support the intended benefit. The proposal will support recruitment and retention of qualified staff and improve program quality with consistent program leadership by offering year-round 24 hour/week benefitted positions in the OSTP conducted by RPCA. The proposal would support the division to hire six permanent part-time staff and will be used to fill key age group leader positions at several high-demand program locations.

DISCUSSION: The Out of School Time Program offered by RPCA provides recreation activities, learning opportunities, social and

emotional skills-building, and after school and summer childcare to over 1,500 youth in the school year and 1,300 during the summer. The program is offered at nine recreation centers and school-based locations around the city and provides after school and summer recreation and childcare at below market rates, including a substantial fee assistance program. The program is affordable to vulnerable children and families. Seven of the nine program locations serve schools where 50% to 85% of the enrollment received free or reduced school meals. In addition to childcare that supports working families, research proves that OSTP leads to better school attendance and engagement in learning, reduced behavioral issues, improved test scores and grades, less involvement in risky behaviors, and opportunities for recreation that support healthy development.

Staffing for this priority program has become increasingly challenging, with many locations below typical capacity due to a need for additional staff. Current OSTP staff concerns are reflected in recent RPCA employee surveys and focus groups, including hourly employee dissatisfaction with lack of benefits, paid leave, and annual pay increases. These concerns are reflected in high employee turnover, higher absenteeism, and lower job satisfaction. Currently the OSTP section has an annual turnover rate of 38%, the highest for RPCA and significantly higher than industry standards.

Each of the nine OSTP locations is currently full, and eight of the nine sites have waitlists ranging from 8 to 43. Enrollment capacity at these locations can be increased with additional staff, allowing RPCA to remove the waitlisted participants. RPCA is actively recruiting for the currently available temporary/hourly positions, however, the addition of part time, benefitted positions will enhance recruitment efforts. If approved, the six new positions would be placed at sites with the most need and largest waitlists.

FISCAL IMPACT: The \$200,000 is currently held in FY 2023 general fund contingent reserve for this purpose and therefore there will be no additional impact to the City's operating budget. Authorization by City Council will increase the Department of RPCA General Fund budget by \$200,00 and support the additional FTEs at a grade 8, step 3 which is comparable to the hourly rate temporary employees are currently earning. City Council approval of this proposal will allow staff to recruit the proposed six additional staff and hire early in the current school year.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF:

Debra Collins, Deputy City Manager
James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
Laura Durham, Deputy Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities