



Legislation Text

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File #: 24-1923, Version: 1

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MARCH 26, 2024

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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

**FROM:** KATE GARVEY, DIRECTOR,  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant Award to the Alexandria Community Services Board in the Department of Community and Human Services from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services for the Implementation and ongoing Operation of the Marcus Alert Program.

**ISSUE:** City Council's consideration of the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant award from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) for the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) to implement and provide Marcus Alert programming in our crisis services programs.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

1. Authorize the acceptance of the grant award for funding to DCHS in the amount of \$478,285 for the duration of this fiscal year (FY 2024) with no match required, to provide crisis programming in the community in partnership with the Alexandria Police Department (APD) and the Department of Emergency & Customer Communications (DECC);
2. Approve the addition of two full-time Human Service Specialist II positions (2 FTE) that will be fully supported by the award from the DBHDS; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** The DBHDS contacted the Executive Director for the Alexandria Community Services

Board (ACSB) in September 2023 to discuss funding the Alexandria Marcus Alert program implementation earlier than the previously projected start of July 1, 2026. As a result of the implementation and ongoing work of the City of Alexandria's co-responding teams (ACORP) coupled with the foundational work ACSB staff has been doing to implement the Marcus Alert programming in Alexandria, DBHDS staff earmarked available funding for Alexandria to start the implementation process this current fiscal year (FY 2024). The funding will be on-going in the State's allocation to the ACSB.

**DISCUSSION:** The Marcus Alert System was enacted by the Virginia General Assembly after Mr. Marcus-David Peters, who was experiencing a behavioral health crisis, was killed by police in Richmond, VA in 2018. The goal of the Marcus Alert is to provide a behavioral health response to individuals experiencing a crisis related to mental health, substance use or developmental disabilities using the existing network of first responders already in place in the community. The Marcus Alert System works with local law enforcement agencies, 9-1-1 operating systems, regional crisis response systems and the local Community Services Board to establish protocols and guidelines to direct the appropriate level of first responder response when an individual is experiencing a behavioral health emergency in the community.

In 2022, ACSB staff began to plan and implement foundational aspects of the Marcus Alert System in collaboration with the Alexandria Police Department (APD), the Department of Emergency and Customer Communications (DECC), and community stakeholders. This work has resulted in the development of protocols and procedures needed to stand up the program. This mandated system will continue to build upon the years of collaboration with APD and Community Services Board staff.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The budget for this award is \$478,285. The award period is July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, with no required matching funds. The City is responsible for the general administrative costs associated with this award. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by DCHS, the administering agency. The existing administrative staff will cover these functions. Although the funding period ends June 30, 2024, the City will be able to attribute expenditures that have already occurred in support of the Marcus Alert Program in this fiscal year to these funds. As a result, the funds will be exhausted within the award period.

This funding will be used for personnel, grant required training and support for the implementation and ongoing service provision. The funding for these two new full-time Human Service Specialist II positions will become part of the base budget and replace City general funds to support the salary of a current ACSB position, as well as support a portion of the salary of a supervisor. Additionally, the funding will provide training and support to the DECC call center regarding police diversion and the use of community locations when an individual is exhibiting signs of a behavioral crisis. This funding will become a part of the base budget funding contained within the State's Performance Contract with the Alexandria Community Services Board.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None.

**STAFF:**

Alethea Predeoux, Deputy City Manager

Yon Lambert, Deputy City Manager

Kendel Taylor, Director of Finance

Phil Caldwell, Director, Center for Adult Services/Executive Director of the Alexandria CSB,  
DCHS

Morgan Routt, Director, Office of Management and Budget