



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** APRIL 16, 2014

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

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

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Grant Application to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for Funding of Homeless Services.

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**ISSUE:** Submission of the collaborative Virginia Homeless Solutions Program grant application to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD) for the provision of homeless services.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- 1) Authorize the submission of the two-year collaborative Virginia Homeless Solutions Program grant application to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for funding in the amount of \$749,094 in year one and \$703,094 in year two;
- 2) Approve an increase of three positions (3.0 FTEs) fully supported by grant revenues, to include:
  - A Family Services Specialist (1.0 FTE) to assess homeless children and provide referrals to services as part of the centralized intake process; and
  - Two Family Service Specialists (2.0 FTEs) to screen individuals and families seeking shelter services. Services will include diverting the households from shelter when possible or referring to shelter services as appropriate.

These grant-funded positions will terminate upon the expiration of the grant, if no alternative funding is identified. The individuals who fill these positions will be notified of this condition of employment at the time they are hired and will be required to sign an agreement of understanding

with regard to this condition. There are currently no funds available in the City budget to continue these activities once the grant funds expire.

- 3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents.

**BACKGROUND:** The providers of homeless services for the City of Alexandria have annually applied for homeless services funding from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. In FY 14, the City of Alexandria, Carpenter's Shelter, New Hope Housing, Inc., Christ House, and the Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless received awards totaling \$1,040,176 to provide emergency shelter, homeless prevention, rapid-rehousing, shelter diversion, and transitional housing services.

**DISCUSSION:** This year the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development is requiring a single collaborative application from The Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness in the City of Alexandria (The Partnership) with the City of Alexandria as the designated lead agency. The Partnership is a collaborative group of Alexandria public and private partners providing housing and homeless services.

The goal of the application is to provide strategic, community-based initiatives that support the following outcomes:

- Reduction in the number of households entering homelessness (Prevention/Diversion);
- Reduction in the length of time households experience homelessness (Rapid Re-Housing);
- Reduction in the number of households re-entering homelessness (Prevention).

The requested funding amounts in the grant application:

- City of Alexandria, Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) - \$749,094 for Prevention, Shelter Operations, Child Services Coordination, Centralized Intake, and Continuum of Care Planning
- Carpenter's Shelter - \$362,500 for Rapid Re-Housing, Shelter Operations, and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- New Hope Housing - \$150,000 for Rapid Re-Housing

DCHS is requesting funds for individuals and families in danger of experiencing homelessness, including the Centralized Intake System required by HUD, Continuum of Care planning, and coordination of services for homeless children. Currently, the Centralized Intake System operates as a coordinated system in which individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness are screened for services at Carpenter's Shelter and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness are screened at the DCHS Office of Community Services. The Office of Community Services has always provided this service to families. This year Carpenter's Shelter has deleted Centralized Intake from their grant request and the City is requesting funding to provide that service.

According to the 2013 Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Report, Alexandria has the greatest percentage of decrease in single adult homeless individuals in our Region. This success is largely attributed to the Centralized Intake System. Moving that service entirely under the Office of Community Services will place Centralized Intake within the same office that administers homeless prevention and diversion funding. We anticipate being able to make a greater impact on homeless prevention through this strategy. Carpenter's Shelter and New Hope Housing, Inc. are requesting funds to shelter persons who are experiencing homelessness as well as to quickly rehouse and stabilize the homeless.

The proposed services align with the Federal, State and City strategic plans and are supported by analysis of the community need per the 2014 Point-in-Time housing needs assessment for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the City. This grant is also consistent with the current City Council Strategic Plan, Goal 7, Objective 1: *Promote a continuum of affordable housing opportunities for all residents, especially those most in need.* Objective 3: *Provide a comprehensive and cohesive system of prevention, early intervention and treatment services to those Alexandrians most in need.*

**FISCAL IMPACT:** This year the VDHCD is requiring a 25 percent match for the Virginia Homeless Solutions Program grant. If awarded, DCHS will receive \$749,094 in funding with a match requirement of \$187,274. This match will be met through our local funding allocations for shelter operations. If outcomes are achieved, this data will be used to make application for alternative funding to support the continuation of these services.

Amounts awarded to Carpenter's Shelter and New Hope Housing, Inc. will be received directly by the respective agencies and each will be responsible for providing their required 25% match amount. If all grant requests are awarded, the community will receive \$1,261,594 in homeless services funding.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**STAFF:**

Debra R. Collins, Deputy City Manager

Kate Garvey, Department Director, DCHS

Suzanne T. Chis, Executive Deputy Department Director, DCHS

Dennis McKinney, Director, Center for Economic Support, DCHS

Jim Fleming, Fiscal Officer III, DCHS

Pam Michell, Executive Director, New Hope Housing, Inc.

Lissette Bishins, Executive Director, Carpenter's Shelter