



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MAY 20, 2015

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

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Grant Application to the National Endowment for the Humanities and Accepting a Grant Award From the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities for Immigrant Alexandria Project.

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**ISSUE:** Council consideration of a grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a one year planning grant, and accepting a planning grant award from the Virginia Endowment for the Humanities to begin implementation of a city-wide interpretive initiative, *Immigrant Alexandria: Past, Present, and Future* project celebrating the history of diversity in Alexandria.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council authorize the City Manager to:

- (1) Submit a grant application (due by August 13) to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), requesting \$65,000 in funding;
- (2) Accept a grant award of \$8,000 from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities; and
- (3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** In accordance goals and objectives outlined in the *Alexandria City Council Strategic Plan, as revised June 2010*, the Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) is developing a multi-year departmental work program highlighting the long history of cultural diversity in Alexandria. To achieve the strategic goals, **Immigrant Alexandria** will consist of the following components to engage the public: archival research; consultation with recognized scholars and content experts; organization of a public symposium; development of oral histories of recent immigrants to the City, as well as representatives from various groups that have migrated to Alexandria over time; preliminary design for future interpretive formats to be funded in a future two-year phase that will include exhibits, cultural performances, special events and written materials. The

focus will be the mid-nineteenth century to today.

The overall intention of this endeavor is for the public to have a better understanding of the historic and contemporary significance of immigration to Alexandria and the ways in which it has impacted the City's social and cultural fabric. OHA will utilize funds included with the existing department operational budget, including staff salaries and benefits of existing personnel, totaling \$22,000 for NEH and \$19,560 for VFH, as the City contribution to total planning project costs. No additional City funds are required. Future grant application(s) for interpretive implementation phase will be submitted to Council beforehand.

**DISCUSSION:** These two grant applications were originally projected to be submitted simultaneously in earlier funding cycles, but were delayed by the OHA Director pending a meeting with NEH officials to determine what aspects of the proposal would be considered eligible for funding. This last minute delay inadvertently resulted in the erroneous submission by OHA staff of the VFH proposal, requesting \$10,000 to develop and transcribe the oral history segment of the project, without the required pre-approval by Council of the application submission. Soon after, OHA was subsequently awarded a reduced amount of \$8,000 for the project. The VFH award will influence positive support from NEH to execute the full planning component of the one-year project. If awarded these two grants, project funds will be used by OHA to complete the first-year planning initiatives leading to a projected two-year future humanities implementation phase for development of city-wide interpretive programming. A summary of the two grants is attached. The NEH grant application deadline is August 13, 2015.

**GRANT PERIOD:** NEH award will be announced by in fall 2015. The VFH grant has been received, but is being held pending Council approval. The term of both grants is one year from the award date.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Each grant requires a City contribution towards total project costs which will be met within approved FY 2015 and FY 2016 OHA departmental budgets, including staff salaries and benefits, of \$22,000 for NEH and \$19,560 for VFH. No additional City funds are required.

**ATTACHMENT:** NEH and VFH Grant Summaries

**STAFF:**

Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager

Lance Mallamo, Director, Office of Historic Alexandria