



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2021

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Approval for the Department of Community and Human Services to Accept and Utilize State Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Funding to Expand Child and Family Behavioral Health Outpatient Services.

ISSUE: Consideration of approval for the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS)/Community Services Board (CSB) to accept funds from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (VDBHDS) to expand DCHS's Child and Family Behavioral Health Services capacity to provide outpatient services for children with serious mental illness and/or serious emotional disturbances and their families; one of nine required services associated with the System Transformation Excellence and Performance in Virginia (STEP-VA).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- 1) Approve DCHS's/CSB's annual receipt of \$176,799 to increase staffing, capacity and community access to Child and Family outpatient services. The funding would become part of DCHS's ongoing Performance Contract with VDBHDS;
- 2) Authorize the addition of a position (1.0 FTE) fully supported by the additional VDBHDS revenues; and
- 3) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: STEP-VA through VDBHDS has provided funding to CSBs throughout Virginia to improve access, increase quality, build consistency, and strengthen accountability across Virginia's public behavioral health system. Outpatient Services is a required service of STEP-VA, the purpose of which is to ensure the provision of high quality, evidence-based, trauma-informed, culturally competent, accessible behavioral health services that addresses a broad range of diagnoses and considers an individual's course of illness across the lifespan from childhood to adulthood.

VDBHDS sent a notice to local CSBs requesting Boards to propose an allocation for additional Outpatient Services STEP-VA funding. The Alexandria CSB subsequently submitted a proposal to the VDBHDS allocating funds to expand the Child and Family Behavioral Health Services program by an additional Senior Therapist position. The Alexandria CSB via DCHS was notified the proposal was accepted and the award of \$176,799 in ongoing funding for an additional Senior Therapist position in the Child and Family Behavioral Health Services team, effective July 1, 2021.

DISCUSSION: Child and Family Behavioral Health Services (CFBHS) engages Alexandria youth and families in an array of mental health services, including assessment and evaluation, screening and intake, counseling, psychotherapy, psychological testing, peer support, intensive care coordination and case management.

Since the on-set of the COVID-19 pandemic referrals for mental health treatment for youth and families has increased. For comparison, during the period covering July 2019 to March 2020 CFBHS received 164 referrals. During the same time period for the following years, CFBHS received 241 referrals for mental health treatment. As the 2021 to 2022 school year is underway, CFBHS anticipates an additional increase in the demand for these services. The addition of a Senior Therapist position, will expand the team's ability to provide outpatient services, decrease wait times for youth and families to receive treatment, and reduce the likelihood of the need for more intensive and expensive services in the future. The other benefit of the expansion is an increase in capacity for completing Same Day Access; the ability for qualified residents to walk in and receive an assessment on the same day, another tenet of the STEP-VA program.

FISCAL IMPACT: DCHS/CSB has been awarded \$176,799 in ongoing funding from VDBHDS to support the addition of a Senior Therapist (Grade 21) to the CFBHS team, the remaining balance is utilized to defer costs of all outpatient programs as per our state performance contract. No local match required. Where feasible, DCHS will bill Medicaid for eligible outpatient services. The person hired for the position will be informed of the nature of the funding for the position.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF:

Debra R. Collins, Deputy City Manager
Kate Garvey, Director, Department of Community & Human Services (DCHS)
Stacey Hardy-Chandler, Director, Center for Children and Families
Morgan Routt, Director, Office of Management & Budget
Raphael Obenwa, Chief Fiscal Officer III, DCHS