



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 17, 2023

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

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

FROM: KATE GARVEY, DIRECTOR, DCHS /s/

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of Approval for the Department of Community and Human Services to Receive Ready Regions Funding to Support the Implementation of Virginia Quality Birth to Five and carry out required functions.

ISSUE: Consideration of approval for the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) to accept funds from the Virginia Department of Education (Ready Regions Capital Area) aimed at implementation of Virginia Quality Birth to Five (VQB5).

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

1. Authorize DCHS to enter into an agreement with Fairfax County beginning in FY 2024 to serve as the grant recipient for the City of Alexandria;
2. Approve DCHS's annual receipt of \$290,000 to implement the requirements of VQB5;
3. Authorize an increase of 1.0 FTE for a Coordinated Enrollment position within DCHS and designate funding to Kids First Years to carry out the Family Engagement requirements; and
4. Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: During its 2022 session, the General Assembly introduced legislation related to regional cooperation structures for early childhood care and education. This legislation became effective July 1, 2022. It required that the Virginia Board of Education establish a system of regional entities responsible for coordinating early childhood care and education services, guiding quality improvement of such services, and coordinated access to such services for families, and implementing the uniform measurement and improvement

system. In July 2022, Fairfax County executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF) reflecting Fairfax County's role as the lead agency for Ready Region Capital Area.

Under the VECF MOU, Fairfax County, through its Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) is responsible for building early childhood systems and the unified Virginia Quality Birth-Five (VQB5) coordination. As the lead agency for the Ready Region Capital Area, NCS is the recipient of grant funding from VECF. These funds are to be utilized to support the Ready Regions required activities and come from multiple funding sources. Baseline funding will come from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) for VQB5 coordination, family engagement, and coordinated enrollment. Supplemental funding will come from the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) and other potential sources, such as the Nemours Foundation.

DISCUSSION: In October 2022, Fairfax initiated communications with the Capital Area Ready Regions localities to identify who in each locality would serve as the grant sub-recipient. Alexandria's Kids' First Years (KFY) as a community-based, non-profit 501(c)(3) that serves as the City of Alexandria's early childhood coordinating body, agreed to serve as the subgrant recipient.

No other localities have a coordinating body structure like Kid's First Years. This made the City of Alexandria unique in being the only locality where VQB5 subaward would not be given to a governmental entity. This posed challenges when the draft agreement was distributed in November 2022. Due to the significant expansion of new initiatives and attendant management requirements, it was determined that this scope of responsibility exceeded the capacity of Kid's First Years and thus would need to shift to DCHS. In order for the Department to take on this body of work, DCHS will need to enter into an agreement with Fairfax County to receive funding in the amount of \$290,000 and will need to create a position to carry out the coordinated enrollment. The family engagement requirements of the grant would continue to be carried out by Kids First Years.

FISCAL IMPACT: DCHS will be awarded \$290,000 to deliver the scope of services and requirements under VQB5 Ready Regions.

STAFF:

Kendel Taylor, Interim Deputy City Manager

Robin Crawley, LCSW, Chief, Early Childhood Services, DCHS