

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 9, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 89: RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR THE CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE FUND FOR HUMAN SERVICES

This memorandum is in response to a request from Councilman Krupicka and Councilman Wilson regarding an analysis of the feasibility of recommendations submitted by Hopkins House and The Campagna Center for the 2010 Children's Fund and the Fund for Human Services.

Background

As Council is aware, the Children's Fund (CF) is one of three competitive grant opportunities in the Alexandria Fund for Human Services (AFHS). The CF serves children from birth to six, the Youth Fund (YF) serves youth from the age of six to 21 and the Community Partnership Fund (CPF) funds programs for adults and families, with the goals of self-sufficiency, prevention and protection and treatment. The Early Childhood Commission is responsible for establishing the priorities for the Children's Fund. More details about the funds are available in Budget Memo #36.

Using AFHS to Leverage Additional Funds

The first recommendation concerns changes to the AFHS including adding to the existing priorities for the AFHS in FY 10, "projects that have a high likelihood of leveraging new, current or additional private and public funds into the City...." Currently, a significant amount of leveraging already occurs in the Children's Fund. The CF was established in 1993 and funds programs in two areas:

- Programs that provide comprehensive services such as the Family Support Project, which funds social workers on site at participating centers, and the Parent Nurturing Project, which provides parent education for at-risk families. No match is currently required for these programs.

- Early childhood classroom programs and early intervention services for at-risk children, birth to five, such as Healthy Families Alexandria (HFA), Alexandria Resource Mothers and Child and Family Network Centers.

For the programs in the first area, no match is required. However, programs in the second area are required to provide at least a dollar for dollar match. In FY 2009, these three programs received a total of \$699,105 from the CF and drew down a match of \$1.5 million from foundations, fundraising activities and other grant opportunities. Foundations have been very responsive to the local match requirement and have continued to contribute at very high levels because of the on-going financial commitment of the City in support of these programs. In addition, HFA was chosen last fall to be one of two local Healthy Families programs in Virginia to be put forth by Healthy Families Virginia to be funded at a level that would allow them to “go to scale” or serve all of the eligible families. One of the primary reasons HFA was chosen was the long-term commitment of City funding to the program. Consequently, the majority of the CF dollars support programs that leverage other funds.

Adopting a “Sustainability” Criteria

The second recommendation is to add a priority for projects “that offer a sustainability strategy that can be realistically accomplished within three years.” This is a concept that has been considered numerous times by the Early Childhood Commission without resolution because of the lack of availability of funds to replace Children’s Fund dollars. Most programs maximize their ability to raise non-City funds because of the attractiveness of the local match and any cut in funding would most likely result in a loss of services for families and children.

Consolidating the Three Funds

The third recommendation in this category is to consolidate all of the AFHS funds into a “single, coherent source of financial support” The three funds that make up the AFHS were carved out to serve particular populations with specific needs. City commissions knowledgeable about and dedicated to serving these populations have the responsibility for developing the priorities for the Youth Fund and the Children’s Fund. Most Children’s Fund programs and Youth Fund programs fund prevention services that have been proven in multiple research studies to prevent the need for costly treatment and remediation and the advocacy of the two commissions has been important in protecting valuable services. The three funds were brought under the umbrella of the AFHS to establish uniformity in the process, facilitate the development of a continuum of care from birth to old age, ensure coordination among the funds and prevent duplication of services. Staff believes this process is working well and they do not recommend that the funds be consolidated. However, should City Council accept this recommendation, it would not possible to make a change of this magnitude for FY 2010.

Setting Aside Funds for Childcare

The second overall recommendation is to set aside a portion of the Children’s Fund FY 2010 allocation – in the range of \$400,000 or more to: 1) help reduce the fee system waiting list; 2) help serve children aged birth to five that are ineligible for federal/state funded programs; and 3)

to match scholarship funds raised by non-profits. Reprogramming CF dollars to the Child Day Care Fee System would mean that those funds could not be used to draw down matching dollars from foundations and other funders as they do now. In addition, such a large set-aside would change the very character of the Fund, from offering a competitive grant opportunity to funding a Department of Human Services program which already has a federal/state funding stream. Other information relevant to this recommendation includes:

1. As of March 17, there were 372 children on the waiting list although, due to attrition, the Department of Human Services has been able to take 20 families off the list since mid-February. Virginia is slated to receive approximately \$35 million in fee system dollars from the stimulus package that do not require a local match. DHS estimates that it would cost approximately \$828,240 to clear the waiting list and hopes to receive at least that much in stimulus funds.
2. Approximately 25% of children entering kindergarten in Alexandria have not had a preschool experience which places them at risk for school failure. It is difficult to know for sure just how many of those families would take advantage of a preschool opportunity if funding were available. However, in FY 2009, City Council made available \$130,000 in carry-over funds to serve families ineligible for federally-funded child care programs. The recruitment process identified 61 families who completed applications. Twenty-three of those families were eligible and 17 children were funded.
3. Providing funding as a match for scholarship dollars raised by individual child care programs is an option but only if families are funneled through the single point of entry process that is now in place to ensure that all other federal and state funding has been accessed. These scholarship funds, if used to fund child care for 4-year-olds at centers that meet the quality requirements, can be used to draw down Virginia Preschool Initiative dollars, as described below.

Examining Ways to Leverage More VPI Dollars

The third recommendation is that City Council conduct an examination of the extent to which Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) dollars are being fully and properly leveraged in the City. Every year, all child care programs in Alexandria, both full- and half-day, are invited to participate in VPI if they are able to provide five services, one of which is a quality preschool education. The Alexandria VPI has met that standard for many years by requiring that participating programs be accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. For the current year, participation was opened up to programs that had applied for accreditation and were in the process of scheduling their NAEYC site visits. Any program that meets that standard is welcome to participate. In future years, all programs may be required to earn a minimum score on the State Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). Nevertheless, staff will work with the early childhood stakeholders and the State to ensure we are maximizing all available VPI resources and possibly expand participation to qualified entities.

In FY 2009, a total of \$612,378 in Children's Fund dollars (that had already drawn down \$1.5 million dollars in matching funds) were also used to draw down \$252,000 in VPI dollars. With the 50% cap on the VPI match requirement that becomes effective in FY 2010, the Children's Fund match plus other matching dollars would draw down a total of \$630,000, an increase of 250%, assuming the number of eligible children served remained the same. Eligible children are those at-risk due to low-income, homelessness, family instability, teen parenthood and other factors, a definition that was developed by the Early Childhood Commission.

Convening a Meeting of Early Childhood and Stakeholders

The fourth recommendation is that City Council convene a meeting of Early Childhood stakeholders. In a meeting of the City Council/School Board Subcommittee on September 24, 2008, the City and Schools Staff Group (CSSG) was directed to prepare a statement on preschool, outlining the steps the group will take to implement a comprehensive, coordinated preschool initiative. The CSSG is a committee of City agency heads and Alexandria City Public Schools administrators to enhance the coordination of services. The purpose of the preschool implementation plan, which is included as Attachment A, is intended to ensure increased accountability by City and School staff in working with the early childhood community to implement best practices and bring together all stakeholders.

In addition, at their March meeting, the Early Childhood Commission approved a recommendation of the executive committee that a meeting of primary stakeholders be convened in late April or early May to give each group the opportunity to share their vision and their missions and goals and to plan for an early childhood summit to be held in the fall. The City Schools Staff Group will work with the ECC to help facilitate this goal.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Comprehensive, Coordinated Preschool Initiative Implementation Plan
2. Letter from Hopkins House
3. Letter from The Campagna Center

**COMPREHENSIVE, COORDINATED PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

PRESENTED TO THE
CITY COUNCIL & SCHOOL BOARD
AT THEIR JOINT MEETING
NOVEMBER 24, 2008
UPDATED JANUARY 26, 2009

BY THE CITY & SCHOOLS STAFF GROUP

COMPREHENSIVE, COORDINATED PRESCHOOL INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACTION/STRATEGY	TIME		RESPONSIBLE ENTITY/STAFF	COMMENTS
	START	END		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition that Preschool Leadership/Accountability rests with the City Council/School Board Subcommittee (CCSBS) to make decisions and recommendations that guide early childhood programming and initiatives. 	11/08	Ongoing	CCSBS/CSSG	<p>Policy and direction are set by City Council and School Board, with implementation responsibilities delegated to the City & Schools Staff Group (CSSG).</p> <p>High level policy group will leverage high level business and community support.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CCSBS will direct the CSSG to collaborate with and coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders in the early childhood community. Under their direction, the CSSG will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seek new grant opportunities to fund early childhood initiatives. ○ Continue exploring opportunities for “braiding” funding streams to maximize access for children to quality programs. ○ Continue the active involvement and leadership of the Early Childhood Commission (ECC) and the Department of Human Services/Office of Early Childhood Development (DHS/OECD) staff in aligning local preschool strategic efforts with the Strategic Plan for Virginia’s Early Childhood; study current State infrastructure and promising practices in place in other states and in other Virginia jurisdictions to identify those that can be adapted to support Alexandria’s needs. ○ Support the efforts of the ECC and DHS/OECD to establish a clearinghouse of early childhood programs that will provide a single point of entry for parents of young children and will help parents identify the programs that best suit their family’s needs and financial circumstances and maximize the use of scarce resources. 	11/08	Ongoing	CCSBS/CSSG	<p>This will not replace or compete with ongoing efforts in the early childhood arena.</p>
	05/07	Ongoing	CSSG	<p>The School Readiness Council applied for a VA Early Childhood Foundation Grant in 10/08 (the board will make their decision on January 29) and for funding from the Washington Area Women’s Foundation in 11/08.</p>
	7/09	Ongoing	CSSG	<p>Fiscal challenges have increased the necessity of braiding funding to accomplish objectives.</p>
	10/08	05/09	School Readiness Council/ECC/CSSG/OECD	<p>The ECC is in the process of inviting several leaders of organizations in the city that are involved in early childhood-related activities to attend the February 2 ECC meeting and participate in a discussion of the strategic direction of early childhood in the city, including the possibility of an Early Childhood Summit.</p>
	07/08	06/09	ECC/OECD	<p>Pilot has been initiated. Staff will identify new or reallocated funds to continue this initiative. A 4-day early childhood fair is being planned for late March at Charles Houston Recreation Center.</p>

ACTION/STRATEGY	TIME		RESPONSIBLE ENTITY/STAFF	COMMENTS
	START	END		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement a standardized quality rating system in Alexandria preschool programs that receive State/City funding. 	09/07	Ongoing	VA Dpt of Educ/ECC./CSSG/OECD	<p>Currently, the City, through the Department of Human Services, applied for and was approved for the second year of the Virginia QRIS (Quality Rating Improvement System) demonstration project. It is expected that eventually the QRIS will be a requirement for the Virginia Preschool Initiative and any other state funded programs. Programs that receive general fund dollars, such as those in the Children's Fund, are required to be accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children but the QRIS is being seriously considered as an option.</p> <p>Staff will determine cost of implementing this recommendation, which will be rolled out over several years contingent upon the identification of funding.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a system for collecting and sharing demographic as well as quantitative and qualitative data that measures the impact of preschool education on a child's academic, social, and emotional readiness for kindergarten. 	11/08	04/09	CSSG/Natl Ctr for Children in Poverty/Kellogg Foundation/OECD/ACPS	NCCP will provide technical assistance. City Staff will work closely with ACPS Monitoring & Evaluation staff. Private child care centers will share Pre-K PALS data with ACPS.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor the coordination of early childhood curricula with desired kindergarten entry level skills and behaviors. 	12/08	06/09	CSSG/VA Preschool Initiative/VA Dpt of Educ/ECC/OECD/ACPS	The Virginia Department of Education developed the Virginia Foundation Blocks for Early Learning and they are aligned with the Virginia Kindergarten Standards of Learning. Curricula used by child care centers that participate in the Virginia Preschool Initiative are required to be aligned with these Foundation Blocks.

ACTION/STRATEGY	TIME		RESPONSIBLE ENTITY/STAFF	COMMENTS
	START	END		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Educate parents of infant and preschool aged children about school readiness related topics. 	01/09	Ongoing	CSSG/OECD/ACPS/Healthy Families/NOV AUL Resource Mothers/Inova	HFA and Alexandria Hospital provide a parenting kit, “Healthy Start”, to the parents of all newborns. OECD provides informational material to parents in its role as the city’s Resource and Referral agency.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Develop and implement a community awareness plan that educates the community about the economic and social benefits that quality child care and preschool education provide to the City. 	01/09	Ongoing	School Readiness Council/ACPS/OECD/ACM for Econ Dev	Work with City’s Economic Development staff and business in implementing this recommendation. The Chamber of Commerce is being invited to participate in the planning and sponsorship of the early childhood summit or whatever activity the ECC decides to pursue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Implement a transition process between early childhood programs and ACPS kindergarten, by: (1) engaging ACPS and preschool staff in transition activities that prepare children for the move from the pre-K environment to public school; and (2) ensuring the timely transfer of student records and pertinent information from preschools to ACPS. 	05/09	09/09	ACPS/OECD/Ctr Directors	As an example, staff will ensure that the pre-K Phonemic Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) scores on each child are forwarded to ACPS upon the child’s enrollment in kindergarten. Fall kindergarten PALS scores can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of various programs and activities in preparing children for kindergarten.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Establish a Center for Excellence in Early Childhood through public/private partnerships to consolidate resources and provide consistent, high-quality professional development to child care providers and preschool educators. 	07/08	03/09	ECC/School Readiness Council/OECD/Ctr Directors	The DHS/OECD and the School Readiness Council have taken the lead in implementing this “virtual” center. The School Readiness Council will learn by January 30 whether or not their “Getting Ready” proposal, which would fund the Center for Excellence, has been approved for funding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Consider the need for additional space for early childhood programs in the planning of City and ACPS capital improvement projects, such as new construction or building expansions/renovations. 	11/08	Ongoing	Plng & Zng/ACPS/CSSG	

HOPKINS HOUSE

A Learning Center for Children, Youth, and Families

Alexandria Center
1224 Princess Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Fairfax Center
8543 Forest Place
Alexandria, VA 22309

March 10, 2009

The Honorable William D. Euille
The Honorable Redella S. Pepper
The Honorable Ludwig P. Gaines
The Honorable K. Rob Krupicka
The Honorable Timothy Lovain
The Honorable Paul C. Smedberg
The Honorable Justin M. Wilson

Dear Mr. Mayor, Madam Vice Mayor, and Members of Council:

I write to you regarding the City Manager's proposed FY10 City Budget. In the spirit of collaboration, both The Campagna Center and Hopkins House join in sending similar remarks under separate cover to you.

During this extremely difficult economic period, we are all pressed to make very difficult choices in the face of greatly diminished resources. Therefore we want to make it clear at the outset that, at least on the part of The Campagna Center and Hopkins House, we are not appealing to you for more money. Instead, we are asking that City Council to use this difficult period as an opportunity to strengthen the City's collaboration with nonprofits.

Through rather modest but significant changes in its grant-making process to nonprofits, the City has an opportunity to expand the funding resources available to benefit Alexandria residents. Foundations, businesses, and even the federal government have come to fully appreciate the value of "compounding" in nonprofit funding. That is, a grant from the City to a nonprofit may attract a matching grant from a foundation or business or leverage federal funds; and, with these combined resources, the nonprofit is able to produce a benefit to society at lower cost than if government were to do it. This is compounding in its best form.

With this notion in mind, we recommend that City Council consider the following:

1. Add to the existing priorities for the Alexandria Human Services Fund (AHSF) in FY10, projects that have a high likelihood of leveraging new, current, or additional private and public funds into the City (i.e. "compounding"). This

- change can be implemented in the FY10 Budget process without disrupting the process.
2. Add to the existing priorities for AHSF grants in FY10, projects that offer a sustainability strategy that can be realistically accomplished within 3 years. (Inferred here is that grants to the same projects (as different from “Organizations”) should not be indefinitely renewed). This change can be implemented in the FY10 Budget process without disrupting the process.
 3. Consolidate all of the AHSF grant funds into a single, coherent source of financial support to nonprofits with an overarching guiding principle: That the AHSF be used to demonstrate the benefits of public/private collaboration and to draw new and additional funds into the City for the benefit of its residents. This change can be implemented in the FY10 Budget process without disrupting the process.

Second, we recommend that City Council set aside a portion of the Children’s Fund FY10 allocation – in the range of \$400,000 or more:

- To help reduce the number of children on the City’s list waiting for Childcare Fee Subsidies; and,
- To help serve children ages 0-5 that are ineligible for federal/state funded programs (i.e. Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, VPI); and
- To match childcare “scholarship” funds raised by nonprofits. Nonprofits would be invited to launch or expand private fundraising strategies based on a City match.

We understand that the City’s Childcare Fee Subsidy waiting list has grown to well over 300 children. In this economy, if parents are denied help to afford childcare they will not have the help they need to find and keep jobs. Also, current eligibility requirements require that both parents be working and with the rising unemployment rate many families currently receiving Childcare Fee Subsidies will lose childcare. This will be heartbreaking for parents, tragic for their children, and costly for the City. Therefore, additional local funds need to be set aside to serve these families that are ineligible or do not have access to federal/state funding. Such an investment of City funds in FY10 could not help raise substantial private dollars to address the need but also demonstrate the clear benefits of public/private collaboration.

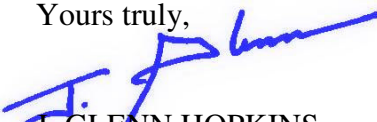
Third, we recommend that City Council conduct an examination of the extent to which Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) dollars are being fully and properly leveraged in the City. Based on information presented last fall to the Early Childhood Commission, it appears that Children’s Fund money, combined with other resources, are being used to draw down VPI dollars from the state. If this is indeed the case, the City is missing an opportunity not only to attract new and additional source of money but also serving fewer

children than it might. Also, with the new VPI funding model recently approved by the Virginia House of Delegates, it is important that these new dollars are leveraged and accessible to a wide range of programs and families. Indeed, by reprogramming Children's Fund money away from VPI draw-down may provide the resources to reduce the Childcare Fee Subsidy waiting list. The VPI program could become more of a scholarship program where the money follows the child to the parent's choice of program.

Fourth, we recommend that City Council convene a meeting of Early Childhood stakeholders to consider ways to streamline the coordination of early childhood public policy and funding in the City. There are several groups and organizations invested in early childhood public policy and funding. These groups include the Early Childhood Commission, nonprofits, and the Early Childhood Directors Group, and the newly formed Alexandria-Arlington School Readiness Council. In addition to these, the Alexandria Community Trust and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation play an important role in funding early childhood programs in the City. The Alexandria City Public Schools and the City government have also recently put forth a proposal to add an administrative oversight layer for government funding of early childhood programs. This myriad of entities and groups not only consumes a considerable amount of human and financial resources in the City, but sometimes conflicts around policy. We believe the children and families of the City could be better served by a single, comprehensive framework that includes participation of all invested partners.

And, finally, we want to acknowledge City Council's past and ongoing commitment to the children and families of this City. Please know that your support has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated.

Yours truly,



J. GLENN HOPKINS
President



March 10, 2009

Mr. Mayor, Madam Vice Mayor, and Members of Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments regarding the City Manager's proposed FY10 City Budget. In the spirit of collaboration, I submit these remarks on behalf of The Campagna Center and Hopkins House. Glenn Hopkins will bring these remarks for both of us tomorrow evening at the scheduled budget hearing, but I must send my regrets as I have a scheduled Campagna Center board meeting and will not be able to attend the meeting tomorrow evening but offer these written comments.

During this extremely difficult economic period, we are all pressed to make very difficult choices in the face of greatly diminished resources. Therefore we want to make it clear at the outset that, at least on the part of The Campagna Center and Hopkins House, we are not here this evening to appeal to you for more money.

Instead, we are here to ask that City Council use this difficult period as an opportunity to strengthen the City's collaboration with nonprofits.

Through rather modest but significant changes in its grant process to nonprofits, the City has an opportunity to expand the funding resources available to benefit Alexandria residents. Foundations, businesses, and even the federal government have come to fully appreciate the value of "compounding" in nonprofit funding. That is, a grant from the City to a nonprofit, may attract a matching grant from a foundation or business or leverage federal funds; and, with these combined resources, the nonprofit is able to produce a benefit to society at lower cost than if government were to do it. This is compounding in its best form.

Children. Families. Community.

With this notion in mind, we recommend that City Council consider the following:

1. Add to the existing priorities for AHSF funding in FY10, projects that have a high likelihood of leveraging new, current, or additional private and public funds into the City (i.e. “compounding”). This change can be implemented in the FY10 Budget process without disrupting the process.
2. Add to the existing priorities for Alexandria Human Services Fund (AHSF) grants in FY10, projects that offer a sustainability strategy that can be realistically accomplished within 3 years. (Inferred here is that grants to the same projects (as different from “Organizations”) should not be indefinitely renewed). This change can be implemented in the FY10 Budget process without disrupting the process.
3. Consolidate all of the AHSF grant funds into a single, coherent source of financial support to nonprofits with an overarching guiding principle: That the AHSF be used to demonstrate the benefits of public/private collaboration and to draw new and additional funds into the City for the benefit of its residents. This change can be implemented in the FY10 Budget process without disrupting the process.

Second, we recommend that City Council set aside a portion of the Children’s Fund FY10 allocation – in the range of \$400,000 or more:

- To help reduce the number of children on the City’s list waiting for Childcare Fee Subsidies; and,
- To help serve children ages 0-5 that are ineligible for federal/state funded programs (i.e. Head Start, Early Head Start, CCDF, VPI); and
- To match childcare “scholarship” funds raised by nonprofits. Nonprofits would be invited to launch or expand private fundraising strategies based on a City match.

We understand that the City’s Childcare Fee Subsidy waiting list has grown to well over 300 children. In this economy, if parents are denied help to afford childcare they will not have the help they need to find and keep jobs. Also, current eligibility requirements require that both parents be working and with the rising unemployment rate many families currently receiving Childcare Fee Subsidies will lose childcare. This will be heartbreaking for parents, tragic for their children, and costly for the City. Therefore,

additional local funds need to be set aside to serve these families that are ineligible or do not have access to federal/state funding. Such an investment of City funds in FY10 could help raise substantial private dollars to address the need but also demonstrate the clear benefits of public/private collaboration.

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families of the City could be better served by a single, comprehensive framework that includes participation of all invested partners.

And, finally, we want to acknowledge City Council's past and ongoing commitment to the children and families of this City. Please know that your support has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen R. Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "K".

Karen R. Hughes, President/CEO

The Campagna Center