



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of September 25, 2010**

DATE: September 03, 2010

SUBJECT: Family Unification Program funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher Program.

C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Appropriate \$540,534 in HUD Housing Choice Voucher funds (208.372715) and up to \$60,354 in HUD Administrative Fees (208.372714) to the Department of Human Services (DHS) (208.51181).
2. Authorize the County Manager or his designee to execute the Family Unification Program Amendment to the Annual Contributions Contract.

ISSUES: This is a request to appropriate federal funds to provide 50 housing choice vouchers to children aging out of the foster care system and families who are currently separated or face imminent separation due to the lack of adequate housing.

SUMMARY: In September 2009, HUD issued a Notice of Funding Availability announcing the availability of \$14.6 million to fund approximately 1,940 new Family Unification Program housing choice vouchers nationwide. Arlington County competitively applied for and was awarded \$540,534 to fund 50 vouchers and is one of only three Virginia jurisdictions to receive funding. The vouchers will be used for rental assistance to help reunite families whose children have entered the foster care system primarily due to housing problems, and will be available to youth who have left foster care and are homeless or at risk of homelessness. With the addition of these 50 vouchers, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program will administer a total of 1,511 housing vouchers.

BACKGROUND:

The federal grant stipulates that all prospective families and youth must be certified and deemed eligible by the County's Child Welfare and Public Housing offices in order to comply with HUD regulations. DHS staff will administer the Family Unification Program as a collaborative effort

County Manager:

County Attorney:

40.

Staff: Cynthia Stevens, Peggy Pimentel, and Corey Travis, DHS

between its Child and Family Services Division and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program. The Family Unification Program administrative reserves will be used to fund a temporary contract employee to perform eligibility and certification duties. An annual maximum of \$60,354 will be available for administration costs. The vouchers issued through the program are valid for five years.

The Family Unification Program vouchers help meet the goals of the County's Project PEACE initiative and the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. The program will specifically target instances where the primary factors in the child being placed in care or not reunited with the family are substandard or dilapidated housing, homelessness, domestic violence, overcrowding, or inaccessibility.

Staff will work with youth and families accepted into the program to identify and secure affordable housing and provide in-home support for families for a minimum of three months. support will focus on assisting the family or youth in retaining housing and will include life skills, employment and educational opportunities, assistance with vocational goals, and parenting education.

The award of Family Unification Program funds will allow the County to meet the growing housing needs of families facing struggles to reunite as well as youth aging out of Foster Care. Because HUD has not increased the federal Housing Choice Voucher budget in many years, the infusion of new funds for this special population will ease the burden on the regular program to place households from the waitlist who can only enter the program upon resident turnover.

FISCAL IMPACT: None. All 50 housing choice vouchers plus associated administrative costs are fully federally funded. There is no match requirement and no impact on net tax support.