



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of September 8, 2007**

**DATE:** September 8, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Independent Living Demonstration Project Grant

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Appropriate \$105,244 from the Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources (101.364701) to the Department of Human Services (101.56304) for administrative support to the Independent Living program for foster youth.
2. Authorize the County Manager or his designee to accept the grant and execute the agreement.

**ISSUES:** Should \$105,244 be appropriated to the Department of Human Services?

**SUMMARY:** This grant will continue Arlington's services for foster youth through the Independent Living program, part of a Northern Virginia regional collaborative. The grant provides half-time administrative support to the Independent Living program.

**BACKGROUND:** The Commonwealth of Virginia awarded this funding to Arlington to continue a demonstration project of independent living skills development for older youth in foster care. This regional collaboration includes Arlington, Alexandria City, Fairfax County, Prince William County, and a private provider of therapeutic foster care services. Arlington's Independent Living Coordinator is the lead for the jurisdictions involved with the grant. This is the second year Arlington has received this grant.

**DISCUSSION:** In recent years, there has been a national initiative to improve outcomes for children in foster care placements. Many youth leaving foster care in the past did not have the maturity, financial means, training or necessary supports to become economically self-sufficient. Therefore, this became a targeted area for improvement. The purpose of the demonstration project grant is to help foster care youth gain the necessary life skills and education to obtain meaningful employment.

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: Sherri Brothers, DHS, Child and Family Services Division

Youth in this region benefit from a structured program supporting the development of the skills necessary to function independently after leaving the foster care system. They participate in a semester long training program focusing on skill acquisition in the areas of entrepreneurship and small business development. Youth are given the opportunity to develop ideas for creating their own business, including projected start up costs, marketing, and the creation of a business plan. This affords them the opportunity to explore additional long-term career goals.

The half-time administrative support position enables Arlington to continue building upon its success with preparing foster youth for independence. Arlington surpasses national foster care trends for producing high school and college graduates. Former foster youth accomplishments include youth attending four-year college programs at Catholic University, Clark University, and Edward Waters College. There are also eight youth currently attending Northern Virginia Community College, and three youth attending vocational training programs.

Independent Living Coordinators from the participating jurisdictions plan sessions and the *Real World* event where over 100 foster youth placed throughout the Commonwealth participate in a one-day series of simulated exercises to help them prepare for life beyond foster care. This support position will allow continuance of these activities and events designed for independence and self-sufficiency.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None. There is no impact on net tax support.