



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of November 13, 2007**

DATE: November 13, 2007

SUBJECT: Appropriation of U.S. Department of Labor Grant Funds for the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Workforce Initiative.

C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Appropriate \$496,912 from federal Department of Labor funds (101.371456) to the Department of Human Services (101.51131) for workforce services to BRAC impacted employees and businesses, contingent upon approval by the Commonwealth of Virginia Governor's Office on Workforce Development
2. Authorize 3.0 FTE permanent grant funded positions in the Department of Human Services to carry out BRAC workforce activities.

ISSUES: Should \$496,912 be accepted and appropriated for specified activities? Should 3.0 FTEs be authorized to carry out BRAC workforce activities?

SUMMARY: The 2005 federal BRAC decisions will have a significant impact on the loss of jobs located in Arlington County, particularly Crystal City. An estimated 17,000 civilian Department of Defense (DoD) jobs are projected to relocate out of Arlington by September 15, 2011. The job exodus will impact both defense contractors and area service sector jobs. In 2006, the Arlington County Board commissioned a BRAC Transition Task Force to study the anticipated impact and make recommendations for a County response. One of the Task Force's primary recommendations was to provide conveniently accessed workforce services customized to meet the needs of BRAC impacted workers and businesses. These services would be delivered through a newly created BRAC Transition Center located in Crystal City. The appropriation of \$496,912 will fund staff in the Transition Center to provide critical services. The existence of the Transition Center will enable Arlington to strengthen its response to BRAC action and mitigate negative impacts to the County.

BACKGROUND: The US Department of Labor (DOL) awarded \$4.9 million to the Northern Virginia region to plan and execute workforce services to BRAC impacted workers and businesses. The Northern Virginia award is part of a total \$10 million package that was awarded to the Washington metropolitan region, \$4 million of which went to Maryland and \$1

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Carla Leap, DHS, Economic Independence Division

million to the District of Columbia. The funding is designed to bring the Washington metropolitan region together in a collaborative manner under a new DOL framework known as *Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development*. Within this context, the DOL's expectation is that Virginia, Maryland and D.C. will work together to develop strategies that promote regional economic growth and competitiveness.

The \$4.9 million award to Northern Virginia will go primarily to the two Workforce Investment Boards: the Alexandria/Arlington Workforce Investment Board and the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board representing Fairfax, Loudon, Prince William, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park. A small percentage of the funds will be retained by the Governor's Office on Workforce Development as the lead state program operator. This is a two-year grant from October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2009. DOL has indicated that funding for BRAC is expected to continue through and possibly beyond September 15, 2011, the completion deadline for all BRAC realignment and closures.

Arlington County serves as the administrative entity and fiscal agent of the Alexandria/Arlington Workforce Development Consortium. Staff is currently in negotiation with the Governor's Office on Workforce Development to obtain the Alexandria/Arlington share of the BRAC grant. Of the \$4.9 million total, the Alexandria/Arlington proposal to the state is \$2.2 million. The proposal is concentrated on two funding tracks: 1) internal resources for staff and client services at the BRAC Transition Center and 2) external resources to continue assessing the needs and identifying opportunities for BRAC impacted workers and businesses. The proposed funding tracks are based on the strategic recommendations made by Arlington's BRAC Transition Task Force, endorsed by the Workforce Investment Board, and subsequently approved by the Arlington County Board.

DISCUSSION: The workforce service strategies and design has been a collaborative effort involving business, community, and county leaders. For the past two years, the Department of Human Services (DHS) has worked closely with Arlington Economic Development in designing the County's BRAC response initiative. Staff from DHS served on the Workforce Subcommittee of the BRAC Transition Task Force and has led the Workforce Investment Board's BRAC strategic planning efforts.

The decision to provide on-site services was based on a previous successful (small scale) venture with BRAC actions in the mid 1990's when Arlington Employment Center staff was deployed to the Navy Yard to serve displaced workers. Unlike service provision in the past, the newly created BRAC Transition Center represents a partnership between workforce and economic development services. The center will be staffed full time by workforce specialists to provide employment services customized to meet the unique needs of workers impacted by BRAC. The BRAC impacted job loss includes approximately 17,000 direct DOD civilians, an estimated 9,000 indirect defense contractors and thousands of service sector jobs. In addition to the potential volume of customers, each sector comes with their own set of challenges. These challenges are due primarily to the sensitive nature of the jobs as they relate to national security.

Workforce Specialists in the Transition Center will provide a wide array of specialty services. Services will include assistance with alternative employment options in Arlington by providing

information on employment opportunities in the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies and their contractors, linking with headhunter firms, and communicating the latest security clearance information. Also available will be career resources and counseling, resume assistance, job vacancy listings, assistance with certain types of re-training opportunities and a variety of on-site symposiums designed to enhance job seekers' employment opportunities. Additionally, a variety of public and private education institutions and area employers have committed to providing specialized services through the BRAC Transition Center.

In addition to job seeker services provided at the BRAC Transition Center, external outreach will further engage stakeholders in the BRAC response efforts. Planned activities include a series of focus groups for contractors, small businesses, educational partners, and certain impacted industries (e.g. professional associations, hospitality, retail, and restaurants); surveys to targeted defense agencies; and a series of briefings on topics related to small business development and emerging entrepreneurial opportunities. Discussions are also underway with educational providers to enhance the pipeline of skilled workers in science and security technology training and job opportunities. Many of these activities, while physically centered in Arlington, will take on a regional perspective in line with DOL directives. All planned activities, however, will be dependent on the level of funding received.

FISCAL IMPACT: None. There is no impact on net tax support. All funding is from the Department of Labor; no local matching funds are required. Non-personnel costs, including rent, for the BRAC Transition Center will be paid out of a grant from the Virginia National Defense Industrial Authority in Arlington Economic Development (101.71001).