



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**19-4206

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**Agenda Item Number:** 17.

**Agenda Date:** 6/20/2019

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Municipal Court

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Presiding Judge John W. Bull

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** City Wide

### **SUBJECT:**

Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program Grant submission and acceptance upon approval, in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, from the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office.

### **SUMMARY:**

This ordinance approves the submission of a Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program grant application and acceptance of funds, upon award, of up to \$1,000,000.00 from the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office, for the period of September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020 and authorizes a personnel complement of 13 positions. This will be the third year Municipal Court applies for the grant. In FY 2017, the City applied for and was awarded \$1,196,133.00 for the Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program. In FY2018, the City applied for and was awarded \$937,945.72 for the Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program. Municipal Court, in accordance with the San Antonio/Bexar County Joint Committee on Truancy, recognizes the significance of intervention and prevention services for youth. Addressing the underlying challenges families encounter is the key to success.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Truancy limits students' educational opportunities, increases the likelihood of students engaging in harmful behavior and reduces the amount of funding that local school districts receive through the state's school system. In Bexar County, efforts to address truancy are complicated by the large number of local jurisdictions, disparate filing methods, and a high level of student mobility among school districts. Over fifteen independent school districts were filing cases using different approaches and were filing cases with any one of six justice of the peace courts or with Municipal Court. In 2013, HB1479 (83<sup>rd</sup> legislative session) was signed into law, which

mandated the creation of a truancy committee to develop a uniform process for administering, tracking and reducing truancy for the fifteen school districts in Bexar County. Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff and then Mayor Julian Castro appointed a Truancy Committee of eleven members, which recommended an addendum to the Master Interlocal Agreement between the City of San Antonio and Bexar County. On May 29, 2014, City Council approved Addendum A-11 to the Master Interlocal Agreement, which established a Uniform Truancy Case Management Program. On April 29, 2014, Addendum A-11 was passed unanimously by the Bexar County Commissioners' Court.

## **ISSUE:**

The demand for effective campus-based programs has increased, resulting in a decrease in the volume of cases the juvenile court is seeing; therefore there is a need in continuing with this effort to continue to see reduction; students are placed on mediation dockets that include a combination of programs to address specific underlying problems. There is evidence of a reduction in recidivism and truancy by youth who engage in productive social service programs that cover a variety of family needs.

## **ALTERNATIVES:**

An alternative would be for the City to take no action, resulting in challenges in obtaining low cost or free successful, effective programs for juveniles across the city and county.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This ordinance approves the submission of a Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program grant application and acceptance of funds, upon award, in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.00 from the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office for the period of September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020 and authorizes a personnel complement of 13 positions. This grant does not require a city match.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance authorizing budgetary and personnel grant related items for the Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program.