



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:20-2212

Agenda Item Number: 12.

Agenda Date: 3/19/2020

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Municipal Court

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Presiding Judge Carla Obledo

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

Truancy Intervention and Prevention Grant submission and acceptance upon approval, in an amount up to \$850,000.00, 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 \$850,000.00 from the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office, for the period of September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021, and authorizes a personnel complement of thirteen (13) positions: eleven juvenile case managers, one senior juvenile case manager and one juvenile case manager counselor. This will be the fourth year Municipal Court applies for the grant. In FY 2019, the City applied for and was awarded \$755,356.70 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 truancy 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 (83rd 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, 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. Prior to that, on April 29, 2014, Addendum A-11 was passed unanimously by the Bexar County Commissioners' Court. In March, 2017, an ordinance amending the Master Interlocal Agreement was passed, and included more specific language as relates to the administration of the Truancy Case Management Program. The addendum addresses: jurisdictional issues, juvenile case manager responsibilities, distribution and deposit of court costs, the court being the centralized filing point for cases and the presiding judge of the San Antonio Municipal Court administering the program and assigning judges as needed.

ISSUE:

The demand for effective, campus-based programs has increased, resulting in a decrease in the volume of cases juvenile court is seeing. Therefore, there is a concerted effort to continue to work to see reductions. Students are assigned to 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 grant application and acceptance of funds, upon award, of up to \$850,000.00 for the Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program from the Criminal Justice Division of the Office of the Governor, for September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021, and authorizes a personnel complement of 13 positions. There is no impact to the City's General Fund in the form of a cash match. An attachment is included providing the projection budget and personnel complement of thirteen positions: eleven juvenile case managers, one senior juvenile case manager and a juvenile case manager counselor.

RECOMMENDATION:

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