



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, March 08, 2005

Council Session

Item G5

**#2005-60 - Approving Safe Haven Grant/Crisis Center
Memorandum of Understanding**

Staff Contact: Joni Kuzma

Council Agenda Memo

From: Joni Kuzma, Development Specialist

Council Meeting: March 8, 2005

Subject: Approving Memorandum of Understanding between The Crisis Center, Inc. and the City of Grand Island for a Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, for an Implementation Grant

Item #'s: G-5

Presenter(s): Joni Kuzma, Development Specialist

Background

In January 2003, the Crisis Center, Inc. applied for a Safe Haven Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Program Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice for the development of a plan for implementation of a Safe Havens program. The grant funds were available to local governments that proposed to enter into a collaborative working relationship with state and local courts and a non-profit, non-governmental entity in the local community that provides local shelters and programs for domestic violence and sexual assault victims. The City of Grand Island served as the submitting entity on behalf of The Crisis Center.

The Planning grant award of \$119,983 was awarded in September 2003 with a grant period from October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2005. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Crisis Center and the City of Grand Island was approved by Council in December 2003 to carry out the requirements as outlined in the grant. Through this planning grant the Safe Haven Director, under supervision of the Crisis Center, administered grant funds, established a community-based advisory committee, created policies and procedures for the operation of a visitation and safe exchange center, provided documentation to the City regarding grant progress, submitted required reports to the Office on Violence Against Women and completed a needs assessment for the community.

Discussion

The Safe Havens Planning Grant has enabled the Crisis Center to prepare for implementation of a Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Exchange Center. A 2005 grant application will be submitted to the Office on Violence against Women by March 10, 2005. A signed Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Crisis Center, with the agreement that the Crisis Center will act as sub-grantee, is required for the grant application. This Memorandum will not be binding if the grant is not received.

Alternatives

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Crisis Center and authorize the Mayor to sign related documents
2. Refer the issue to a Committee.
3. Postpone the issue to a later date.

Recommendation

City Administration recommends that the Council approve the Memorandum of Understanding and authorize the Mayor to sign related documents.

Sample Motion

Motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the Crisis Center and authorize the Mayor to sign related documents.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
SAFE HAVENS: SUPERVISED VISITATION AND SAFE EXCHANGE GRANT
REFERENCE GRANT APPLICATION NO.:**

The City of Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska is the lead Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program applicant, and supports The Crisis Center, Inc. in its efforts to implement and operate a supervised visitation and safe exchange center in our community. The City of Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Crisis Center, Inc. (The Center), supervised visitation and safe exchange center and the Hall County Court system.

I. History of Relationship

The Crisis Center, Inc. began collaborating with the City of Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska in 2001. Initially, the Director of the Crisis Center, Inc. contacted members from community agencies having a direct interest in the need for a supervised visitation and safe exchange center to serve on a planning committee. Once the project director was hired by The Center, additional agencies and members of the community were contacted to participate in the planning process. The committee expanded to its current seventeen members. Agencies who have participated in the planning phase of the project include, The City of Grand Island, The Crisis Center, Inc., The Grand Island Police Department, Health and Human Services, a representative from the Nebraska State Legislature, Heartland Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), the Child Advocacy Center, Central Health Center, a private supervised visitation service provider, two practicing mental health professionals, and two family law attorneys.

The planning committee has met on a monthly basis to discuss the provision of visitation services to victims of domestic violence. Throughout this relationship, The Crisis Center, Inc. has provided training as needed for the project director and planning committee members in the following areas: recognizing signs of domestic violence; methods and strategies for working with victims of domestic violence; and the potential impact of domestic violence on children and battered persons.

The supervised visitation and safe exchange center will accept referrals from The Crisis Center, the local court system, mental health professionals and the legal community for families in need of supervised visitation services. Additionally, the Community Consulting Committee and The Crisis Center, Inc. Board of Directors will continue to meet on a monthly basis to develop a comprehensive plan for building a larger collaboration focused on supporting domestic violence response and supervised visitation.

The partnering organizations' ultimate goal is the protection of domestic violence victims and their children in all settings. As a result, the City of Grand Island and The Crisis Center, Inc. through its supervised visitation and safe exchange program are striving to develop an expanded collaboration including child abuse and neglect organizations, law enforcement, courts, hospitals, legal advocates, families, and community groups. The Community Consulting Committee and The Crisis Center, Inc. Board of Directors has identified the local court system as a partner and a court representative has begun attending their monthly planning meetings. The group's immediate goal is to develop an awareness and understanding among potential collaborators of the unique circumstances surrounding supervised visitation in cases of domestic violence.

II. Development of Application

Discussions regarding the collaborative effort that is proposed in the application and detailed in this Memorandum began in earnest in November, 2003. During their regular monthly meetings, the Consulting Committee members discussed elements of the application and the appropriate roles of each partner. The Visitation Project Director met with members of the Financial Resources Committee to develop a grant application as supplemented with key judicial and Crisis Center staff recommendations.

The Visitation Project Director also conducted an independent study of similar supervised visitation programs in other jurisdictions. Physical visits were made to visitation centers in Duluth, Minnesota; Yankton, South Dakota; and Toledo, Ohio. The Visitation Project Director initiated contact via telephone and e-mail with Program Directors at centers in Rapid City, South Dakota; Mitchell, South Dakota; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Independence, Missouri; Kansas City, Kansas; and Bend, Oregon. This information enhanced the quality of proposed programmatic elements. Additionally, the Directors discussed the application process and expectations of the evolving collaboration with potential members. These representatives provided input during the initial development phase and feedback throughout the process. Recent meetings among the Executive Directors, City representatives and local court representatives have led to the agreement reflected in this Memorandum and the submission of the 2005 grant application.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

The Crisis Center, Inc. - *Community Domestic Violence Agency*

- Provide co-leadership between the Executive Director of the Crisis Center, Inc. and the Visitation Project Director for all non-administrative duties related to developing an interagency collaboration among child abuse and neglect organizations, law enforcement, courts, hospitals, legal advocates

and community groups. Joint efforts will also include coordination of efforts in the areas of budget and financial stability; fundraising activities; and identification of grant resources specific to the needs of the visitation project implementation plan and to insure sustainability of the supervised visitation and safe exchange center.

- Provide up to three domestic violence awareness training sessions per year to supervised visitation and safe exchange center employees. Additional collaboration members will be invited to participate in these sessions.
- Refer all domestic violence victims with children, who are in need of supervised visitation or exchange services, to the supervised visitation and safe exchange center. The Crisis Center staff agrees to provide relevant case information to the staff of the supervised visitation and safe exchange center and to follow-up on the outcome of referrals.
- Promote training/education of local law enforcement agencies and court representatives regarding domestic violence issues and supervised visitation. The Crisis Center, Inc. may enter into agreements with these agencies as to the number of training sessions to be provided.

Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Center

- Dedicate 5 staff members and volunteers to providing supervised visitation services to families impacted by domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, and stalking.
- Provide facilities (e.g. rooms, enclosed playground, etc.) for the program service objectives.

Visitation Project Director:

- Support the growth of the collaborative effort and supervise all supervised visitation and safe exchange center activities.
- Submit program evaluation information to local and national evaluators as required by the grantor.
- Submit financial documentation for accounting as needed.
- Maintain confidentiality of individuals and families using supervised visitation and safe exchange center services.

Hall County Court - Local Court System

- **Submit referrals and relevant case information to the staff of the supervised visitation and safe exchange center, and follow-up on the outcome of the referrals.**
- **Provide training for collaboration partners on the legal system and its role in working with victims of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and stalking.**
- **Designate a representative and alternate representative to participate in the collaboration meetings, as is currently taking place.**

City of Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska

- **Act as the fiscal agent for the grant project and ensure compliance with the reporting requirements of the Office on Violence Against Women.**
- **Support the collaboration efforts of the project by providing a conference room for monthly partner meetings.**
- **Designate staff members from the Police Department and Community Projects Department to participate on the Community Consulting Committee.**

IV. Time Line

The roles and responsibilities described above are contingent on the City of Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska receiving the funds requested for this project in the OVW grant application. The beginning and ending dates of this collaborative effort would coincide with the grant period, anticipated to be 10/01/05 through 09/30/07.

APPROVAL

We, the undersigned have read and agree with this MOU. Further, we have reviewed the portion of the proposed project budget pertaining to the collaborative effort described here, and approve it.

**By _____
Ruby Tupper
Visitation Project Director**

**By _____
Shellie Pointer, Executive Director
The Crisis Center Inc.**

Date _____

Date _____

By _____
Mayor Jay Vavricek
The City of Grand Island

Date _____

By _____
Judge
Hall County/District Court Judge(s)

Date _____

RESOLUTION 2005-60

WHEREAS, the Safe Havens Supervised Visitation and Exchange Grant Program provides an opportunity for communities to support supervised visitation and safe exchange of children, by and between parents, in situations involving domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, or stalking; and

WHEREAS, grant funding for such program is available to local governments that propose to enter into a collaborative working relationship with state and local courts and a nonprofit, nongovernmental entity in the local community that provides local shelters and programs for domestic violence and sexual assault victims; and

WHEREAS, the Crisis Center has requested assistance from the City of Grand Island in seeking funding to implement and operate a supervised visitation and safe exchange center in the community; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended that the City submit a grant application and related document to request funding on behalf of the Crisis Center through the Safe Havens Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program to expand services currently being provided by the Crisis Center; and

WHEREAS, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Crisis Center and the City of Grand Island is required to set out the responsibilities of each party with respect to use of the funding for implementation of grant goals and objectives; and

WHEREAS, the City Attorney has reviewed and approved such Memorandum of Understanding.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA, that:

1. The City of Grand Island is hereby authorized to submit a grant application and related documentation to request funding on behalf of the Crisis Center from the Office of Justice Programs through the OJP Grants Management System for the Safe Havens Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program.
2. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Crisis Center and the City of Grand Island is hereby approved for the use of Safe Havens grant funds to implement and operate a supervised visitation and safe exchange center as outlined in the document.
3. That the Mayor is hereby authorized and directed to execute the grant application and the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the City of Grand Island.

- - -

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska, March 8, 2005.

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk