



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, January 24, 2006

Council Session

Item G22

**#2006-31 - Approving Safe Haven Visitation Center 2006 Grant
Application & MOU**

Staff Contact: Joni Kuzma

Council Agenda Memo

From: Joni Kuzma, Development Specialist

Council Meeting: January 24, 2006

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 a 2006 Implementation Grant

Item #'s: G-22

Presenter(s): Joni Kuzma, Development Specialist

Background

In January 2003, the City of Grand Island 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 \$119,983 Planning grant 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.

In September 2005 a \$152,698 Planning/Implementation was received from the Department of Justice for the Safe Haven project. In March 2005, Council approved a new Memorandum of Understanding between the City, the Child Advocacy Center (as new sub-grantee) and the courts. With these funds, the Heartland Family Visitation Center found and are remodeling a

location for the center (204 N. Locust), have hired Visitation staff and are refining policies and procedures to plan for an April 1, 2006 opening date.

A 2006 Implementation grant is due January 26, 2006 for funding that will begin in September 2006, at the end of the 2005 Planning/Implementation grant. This grant will be used for operations of the Center.

Discussion

The Safe Havens Planning/Implementation Grant has enabled the Heartland Family Visitation Center to prepare for opening of a supervised visitation and exchange center. The 2006 grant application will be submitted to the Office on Violence against Women on or before January 26, 2006. A signed Memorandum of Understanding between the City, the Heartland Family Visitation Center (sub-grantee) and partners (Crisis Center and the courts) is required for the grant application. The Heartland Family Visitation Center plans to be incorporated as its own non-profit entity by the time the grant is awarded so no intermediary organization will be needed for this MOU. 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, the Child Advocacy Center and the courts 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, the Child Advocacy Center and the courts and authorize the Mayor to sign related documents.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
SAFE HAVENS: SUPERVISED VISITATION AND SAFE EXCHANGE GRANT
REFERENCE GRANT APPLICATION NO.: 2006-**

This Memorandum of Understanding is approved and executed on this _____ day of _____ 2006 by THE CITY OF GRAND ISLAND (THE CITY), THE HEARTLAND FAMILY VISITATION CENTER (HFVC), THE CRISIS CENTER, INC. (THE CENTER), CENTRAL NEBRASKA CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER (CAC), AND THE HALL COUNTY COURT SYSTEM (THE COURTS).

1. History of Relationship. The City of Grand Island began collaborating with the Executive Director of The Crisis Center, Inc. in 2001, which culminated in the award of Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange planning grant 2003-CW-BX-0026. As a result of a March 2005 application, The City of Grand Island received a second grant of continuation funding for the planning phase of the project with the award of grant 2005-CW-AX-0013

At the inception of the project, representatives were recruited from several community agencies, who work to meet the needs of families experiencing difficulties in family dynamics, to serve on an advisory/consulting committee. These difficulties may or may not include issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and stalking. Agencies who have participated in the planning phase of the project include The City of Grand Island, The Crisis Center, Inc., Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center, The Grand Island Police Department, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, a representative from the Nebraska State Legislature, Heartland Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Central Health Center, a private supervised visitation service provider, and representatives from the mental health and legal communities.

The planning committee has met on a monthly basis for the past two years to discuss the provision of visitation services in the Grand Island area. One of the primary goals of partnering organizations has been the protection and safety of all members in families experiencing difficulties in family dynamics and in need of HFVC services. As a result, the City of Grand Island, the Heartland Family Visitation Center and their community partners strive to develop and expand the collaboration to include child abuse and neglect organizations, law enforcement, courts, hospitals, legal advocates, families,

and community groups. The Collaborative Partnership's immediate goal is to develop an awareness and understanding among all collaborative partners of the unique circumstances surrounding supervised visitation in cases of domestic violence.

The City of Grand Island, The Heartland Family Visitation Center, and the Community Consulting Committee have identified the local court system as a partner. A representative from the Hall County Attorney's office will represent and act as the liaison for the Hall County Courts at the monthly Consulting Committee.

The Heartland Family Visitation Center will accept referrals from domestic violence advocates employed by The Crisis Center, Inc., the local court system, the Hall County Attorney's office, mental health professionals and the legal community for families in need of supervised visitation services. Self referrals will also be accepted.

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.

2. Development of Application. Discussions regarding the collaborative effort that is proposed in the application and detailed in this Memorandum began in earnest in November, 2005. During their regular monthly meetings, the Consulting Committee members discussed elements of the application and the appropriate roles of each partner. The Director of the Heartland Family Visitation Center met with members of both the Financial Resources and Consulting Committees to develop a grant application, which was supplemented with recommendations from key judicial and Crisis Center staff.

The Director of the Heartland Family Visitation Center also conducted an independent study of similar supervised visitation programs. Physical visits were made to visitation centers in Duluth, Minnesota; Yankton, South Dakota; Rapid City, South Dakota; Mitchell, South Dakota; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Independence, Missouri; Kansas City, Kansas; and Bend, Oregon were contacted via telephone and e-mail. The information gathered as a result of the independent study enhanced the quality of proposed programmatic elements.

Committee representatives provided input during the initial development phase and feedback throughout the process. Recent meetings among the collaborative

partners including representatives from the City of Grand Island, the Heartland Family Visitation Center, The Crisis Center, Inc., Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center and local court representatives have led to the agreement reflected in this Memorandum and the submission of the 2006 grant application.

3. Recitals.

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Island, a Nebraska Municipal Corporation, is a unit of local government as identified by the Department of Justice as an eligible applicant, applied for Safe Havens grant funds for implementation of a supervised visitation and safe exchange center to be known as The Heartland Family Visitation Center in accordance with a plan developed under Safe Havens planning grants 2003-CW-BX-0026 and 2005-CW-AX-0013 from the Office on Violence Against Women;

WHEREAS, the Department of Justice encouraged all applicants for the Safe Havens grant to enter into a collaborative working relationship with state or local courts and a non-profit, non-governmental entity in the local community;

WHEREAS, The Community Based Consulting Committee feels very strongly that the visitation center is urgently needed in our community to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault and stalking;

WHEREAS, the Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center continues in its role as host of the visitation project as a program under the umbrella of its 501 (c) 3 as per Agreement approved by its Board of Directors on July 20, 2005, until such time as the Heartland Family Visitation Center has incorporated and obtained its own 501(c)3 status to be accomplished as quickly as possible ;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

4. Roles and Responsibilities

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 Development Division to participate on the Community Consulting Committee.

The Heartland Family Visitation Center

- Dedicate a minimum of 4 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.
- Collaborate with Director and staff of The Crisis Center, Inc. to develop and coordinate training curriculum to be utilized by both organizations in training of staff pertaining to issues of domestic violence and supervised visitation and safe exchange.
- Work with Crisis Center staff to develop policy and protocols related to staff attendance at court hearings and initial contacts of potential clients for the benefit of both organizations.

The Director of the Heartland Family Visitation Center:

- 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.

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

- Collaborate with Director and staff of the Heartland Family Visitation Center to develop and coordinate training curriculum to be utilized by both organizations in training of staff pertaining to issues of domestic violence and supervised visitation and safe exchange.
- Work with Heartland Family Visitation Center staff to develop policy and protocols related to staff attendance at court hearings and initial contacts of potential clients for the benefit of both organizations.

- Refer all domestic violence victims with children, who are in need of supervised visitation or exchange services, to Heartland Family Visitation Center. The Crisis Center staff agrees to provide relevant case information with consent of the client to the staff of the supervised visitation and safe exchange center and to follow-up on the outcome of referrals.
- Work with staff of the Heartland Family Visitation Center to promote training/education of local law enforcement agencies and court representatives regarding domestic violence issues and supervised visitation.
- Appoint a domestic violence advocate and/or other direct service provider to participate in the monthly meetings of the Community Consulting Committee.

Hall County Court - Local Court System

- To participate in the monthly meetings of the collaborative partners as are currently taking place via a representative from the Hall County Attorney's Office that will act as a liaison/representative for both the Hall County Courts and the Hall County Attorney's Office.
- Submit referrals and relevant case information to the staff of The Heartland Family Visitation 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.
- Participate in training opportunities made available through the collaborative partnership pertaining to all issues surrounding supervised visitation and safe exchange services and family violence.

Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center

- Continue to provide co-leadership through the Executive Director of the Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center and the Director of the Heartland Family Visitation Center 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 ensure sustainability of the supervised visitation and safe exchange center.
- Designate a representative of the agency to participate on the Community Consulting Committee.

5. **Time Line.** The roles and responsibilities described above are contingent on the City of Grand Island, 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 January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2008.

6. This document shall be binding upon all the successors and assigns of the parties hereto.

7. The City of Grand Island reserves the right to withdraw from participation in this agreement at any time during the grant period.

8. **Future Amendments.** Occasionally the undersigned may jointly desire to amend the terms of this Memorandum of Understanding for any future agreement. Such consent shall not be unreasonably withheld but must be acknowledged in writing by all original parties to this Memorandum of Understanding before going into effect.

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, Director
Heartland Family Visitation Center

Date _____

By _____
Philip Martin
Hall County Court Judge

Date _____

By _____
Shellie Pointer, Exec. Director
The Crisis Center, Inc.

Date _____

By _____
Sondra Schwehn, Exec. Director
Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center

Date _____

ATTEST:

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk

By _____
Mayor Jay Vavricek
The City of Grand Island

Date _____

RESOLUTION 2006-31

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 difficult family situations which may involve 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, grant funding received to date has allowed a downtown location to be remodeled and has enabled the Heartland Family Visitation Center to prepare for opening of a supervised visitation and exchange center to provide programs for families experiencing difficulty in domestic violence or sexual assault situations; and

WHEREAS, additional funding is now being sought to assist in the costs associated with operating such facility; and

WHEREAS, a Memorandum of Understanding between the City, the Heartland Family Visitation Center, the Crisis Center, the Central Nebraska Child Advocacy Center, and the Hall County Court System 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 from the Office of Justice Programs through the OJP Grants Management System for the Safe Havens Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program, Office on Violence Against Women.

2. The Memorandum of Understanding between the parties identified above 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.

Approved as to Form ☐ _____
January 19, 2006 ☐ City Attorney

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Adopted by the City Council of the City of Grand Island, Nebraska, January 24, 2006.

Jay Vavricek, Mayor

Attest:

RaNae Edwards, City Clerk