



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of July 8, 2006**

DATE: June 12, 2006

SUBJECT: Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)

C. M. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Reallocate \$61,819 of FY 2007 Federal PATH funding from Community Residences, Inc. to the Department of Human Services (DHS) mental health and substance abuse homeless program (101.410210).
2. Authorize 1.0 FTE permanent grant-funded Mental Health Therapist II position in DHS to continue PATH services to seriously mentally ill homeless persons with co-occurring substance abuse disorders.

ISSUES: Should we reallocate funding to support a grant funded FTE in DHS to ensure effective services for seriously mentally ill homeless persons with co-occurring substance abuse disorders?

SUMMARY: In previous years, DHS applied for PATH funding and contracted with Community Residences, Inc. (CR) to provide services to homeless persons who are seriously mentally ill with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Due to repeated requests from the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) and recent programmatic changes within the DHS Behavioral Healthcare Division, we are recommending that the federal funding be reallocated to support a permanent, grant-funded Mental Health Therapist II who would serve homeless persons with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Integrating these services with similar services provided by the department would result in more effective services for homeless persons.

BACKGROUND: The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1990 authorized a federal grant program to provide services to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless with serious mental illnesses including those with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. The grant is administered by the Center for Mental Health Services in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The PATH program funds outreach, mental health

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Marikay Crangle, Behavioral Healthcare, DHS

and substance abuse treatment, case management, and other support services, and a limited set of housing services.

DISCUSSION: DMHMRSAS administers the Virginia PATH program and funds seventeen Community Service Boards to: 1) engage homeless seriously mentally ill individuals and those with co-occurring substance abuse; 2) provide immediate support services; and 3) assist in the transition to mainstream mental health and substance abuse and housing services. DMHMRSAS administrators have repeatedly requested that the Arlington CSB/Behavioral Healthcare Division directly operate the PATH grant to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and the integration of mental health and substance abuse services for homeless persons. The Arlington CSB is the only jurisdiction that has not been directly providing the PATH services.

Due to the loss of \$132,716 LPACAP revenue in FY 07, CR homeless services were eliminated. The remaining \$61,819 of PATH funding previously contracted to CR supports one worker that is not connected to other mental health and substance abuse services and results in fragmented services. In June 2005, DHS assumed the operations of the Treatment on Wheels (TOW) Program that had been previously operated by Vanguard Services. This \$149,452 federal grant supports 2.5 grant funded FTEs that provide mental health and substance abuse services for homeless persons. The TOW Program allows DHS to provide on-site community based substance abuse and mental health services to AACH, Doorways, Susan's Place, and the ASPAN winter shelter. The integration of TOW services into the DHS continuum of mental health and substance abuse services provides more seamless service delivery to homeless persons with serious mental health and co-occurring substance abuse disorders.

Leveraging the PATH and TOW grants would expand and improve integrated services for homeless persons with serious mental illness and substance abuse. Staff will work closely with the homeless providers and provide outreach services to those homeless individuals who are mentally ill and/or substance abusing who are not yet linked to needed services. Mental health and substance abuse assessments, case management, treatment and other supports will be provided by the PATH position in conjunction with TOW staff. This will result in improved and more effective services.

The Arlington Community Services Board approved this item at its May 17, 2006 board meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no impact to net tax support. The PATH grant requires an indirect match of \$22,084, which will be met within the adopted FY 2007 DHS budget.