

**ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
FY 2006 POLICY PRIORITY PROPOSAL**

**Overview of Policy Priority**

**Department(s):** Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDR)

**Policy Priority:** Restoration of Funding for Aurora House Girls' Group Home

The FY 2006 base proposed budget eliminates funding for the Aurora House program due to the projected loss of Title IV-E funding (\$322,000) supporting programs in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Aurora House is one of three programs under JDRC that is not mandated by Virginia Code. Because of the large amount of funds that needed to be eliminated, it was impossible to take funds from numerous programs and maintain compliance with state standards. Therefore, a decision was made to eliminate funding for one of the group homes. It was concluded that there is a greater demand for residential services for boys. This proposal requests funding to restore Aurora House.

The City of Falls Church administers the Aurora House program under The Judicial Services Agreements governing the exchange of Court and Public Safety services between Arlington County and the City. The County is the primary consumer of Aurora House services. In FY 2004, the County's use of the program comprised 82.4% of the actual utilization. Arlington girls placed at Aurora House continue to attend the County's public schools for which the County school system provides bus transportation. Additionally, these girls and their parents participate in intensive family services provided by the program. The following are some of the important considerations that support a decision by the County to fund the Aurora House:

- Because the County is the primary consumer of the Aurora House services, a decision not to fund the program will result in its closing and the loss of the only long-term, residential alternative for many court-involved girls.
- Court-involved youth are typically eligible only for non-mandated funds through the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA). The level of funds available, (\$68,500) through non-mandated CSA funding is insufficient to provide alternative placements for girls currently served by Aurora House. Therefore, the only alternative is for the Court to order that custody be placed with DHS to access a more costly residential program or placement in foster care.
- The County operates a group home for Court-involved boys making the absence of a comparable facility for girls an issue of equity.
- Aurora House is an excellent value for the County. The County bears no administrative costs or daily operating responsibilities.

**Performance Measures**

| Performance Measure   | FY 2003 | FY 2004 | FY 2005 | FY 2006* | Analysis |
|---|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| Maintain a completion rate of girls admitted to program of at least 75% | 70%     | 90%     | 100%    | 100%     |          |
| Maintain a recidivism rate among program graduates of 30% or less       | N/A     | N/A     | 33%     | <30%     |          |

\* Anticipated benefit with policy priority approved

**Funding Information**

|                              | New FTEs | Year 1 Costs     | Year 2 Costs     |
|------------------------------|----------|------------------|------------------|
| Operational Costs            | -        | \$372,894        | \$384,080        |
| <b>TOTAL POLICY PRIORITY</b> | -        | <b>\$372,894</b> | <b>\$384,080</b> |

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