

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**  
**INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

CONSENT AGENDA

ITEM NO. 44

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Dennis J. Campa, Director, Department of Community Initiatives

**THROUGH:** Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager

**COPIES:** Frances A. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager; City Attorney's Office; Finance Department; Office of Management and Budget; File

**SUBJECT:** **AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION FOR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION GRANT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION**

**DATE:** December 18, 2003

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This ordinance authorizes the submission of a grant application by the Department of Community Initiatives for the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention grant from the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division in the amount of \$106,991 for twelve months. Funds will be used to support the Teen Court Program from September 1, 2004 to August 31, 2005.

Staff recommends the approval of this ordinance.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

DCI coordinates positive strategies to address the challenge of juvenile delinquency. These strategies include teen court, life skills, community service restitution, intensive case management, and restorative justice services.

Youth Courts, promoted by the National Youth Court Center, seek to divert at-risk youth from delinquent behaviors into more positive behaviors by providing a peer court setting. They also offer youth an opportunity to participate in their community by allowing them to serve as youth judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, bailiff and jury.

Youth Courts or Teen Courts now exist in over 900 locations in 46 states and the District of Columbia. Their primary function is to determine a fair and restorative sentence or disposition

for youth respondents. Teen Courts allow youth to provide balanced and restorative justice solutions to other youth appearing before the Teen Court.

During the first 15 months of operation, the Teen Court program trained 59 youth to serve as court members: judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, bailiff and jury. San Antonio's Municipal Court referred 139 youth to the Teen Court for disposition. The Teen Court program was supported last year by the JAIBG grant (approximately \$75,000 of the total \$450,134 JAIBG award) as DCI did not receive JJDP funds last year. The Teen Court program was also supported by \$16,000 in HDSF General Fund dollars. If DCI receives this grant award, General Fund support for FY04 will be reduced from approximately \$75,000 to \$42,000, to support one position.

Youth must plead guilty or no contest before the Municipal Court Judge and agree to participate in the Teen Court prior to diversion to the Teen Court Program. The Teen Court then assigns a binding sentence for the court.

The Teen Court meets every Wednesday evening at 5:30 p.m. in the Frank Wing Municipal Court in Court Room 6. The Teen Court hears cases of theft under \$50, minor in possession of alcohol or tobacco, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of a graffiti instrument. Typically, three cases are heard each week. The jury assigns the sentence to include community service, jury terms, and life skills classes. Court does not meet during school holiday periods but does meet throughout the summer.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS**

The program proposes to serve 225 youth during this grant period. This will be accomplished by adding a second teen court to meet at the same time as the current court. This would allow DCI to serve six defendants per week. Volunteer attorneys from the Mexican American Bar Association will help provide supervision.

This ordinance continues existing City policy of leveraging grant funds to provide valuable services to our community. It furthermore continues City policy of providing prevention and early intervention services to our young people and coordinating positive strategies to address the challenge of juvenile delinquency.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

This ordinance requires no General Fund commitment. These grant funds, if awarded, will be used for personnel and other administrative costs associated with the Teen Court program.

## **COORDINATION**

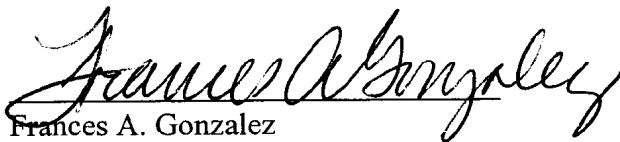
The Department of Community Initiatives has coordinated with the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition, Municipal Courts, City Attorney's Office, Finance Department, Office of Management and Budget, Commission for Children and Families, Greater San Antonio Crime Prevention Commission, and the Youth Commission.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS**

Provisions of the Ethics Ordinance do not apply.



Dennis J. Campa, Director  
Department of Community Initiatives



Frances A. Gonzalez  
Assistant City Manager

Approved:



Terry M. Brechtel  
City Manager