

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES DEPARTMENT
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

TO: Mayor and City Council

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

SUBJECT: Submission of an Application for the State Criminal Justice Planning (421) Fund Grant from the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division

DATE: February 17, 2005

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This ordinance authorizes the submission of a grant application by the Department of Community Initiatives to the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division for the State Criminal Justice Planning (421) Fund grant in the amount of \$45,230 to expand the Teen Court Program during the period September 1, 2005 through August 31, 2006. This ordinance also authorizes, upon award, the acceptance of the award in an amount not to exceed \$45,230, and approval of a budget and personnel complement in connection with the award.

Staff recommends the approval of this ordinance.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Department of Community Initiatives is addressing the problem of juvenile delinquency by providing prevention and early intervention services to high-risk students in San Antonio. Teen 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 more than 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 justice solutions to other youth appearing before the Teen Court.

San Antonio first began its Teen Court in August 2002 through funding from the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant. Grant funding decreased in July 2003 and the cost of the Teen Court Program was absorbed by the department's General Fund using existing positions.

Since its inception, the program has trained 80 youth representing 31 middle and high schools from 10 Council districts to serve as court officers (judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, bailiff and jury) and has seen a total of 236 cases. In addition to serving the Municipal Courts, the

program has provided additional volunteer opportunities for our youth such as participation in National Youth Service Day, appearances on radio and television and various National Youth Court Month activities celebrated in September 2004.

The grant funding request would expand the Teen Court Program by providing an additional court and a caseworker II to coordinate activities. The caseworker II would assist the Program Coordinator with the activities of both courts such as scheduling youth defendants and youth volunteers for trials, scheduling youth defendants for Victim Impact Panels, coordination of bi-annual trainings to train youth volunteers in the roles of the court and assist with the organization of special events such as National Youth Court Month or other service learning opportunities. The caseworker II would also provide skill-building classes for youth defendants such as life skills, anger management, theft awareness and tobacco cessation, and other supportive services as needed. This expansion will allow the court to see additional youth defendants and provide volunteer opportunities for trained youth to serve the court. The program is targeting 153 defendants during the grant period.

The Teen Court meets every Wednesday and hears cases of theft under \$50, minor in possession of alcohol or tobacco, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession of a graffiti instrument. 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 jury assigns the sentence to include community service, jury terms, life skills classes and victim impact panels.

POLICY ANALYSIS

This ordinance continues existing city policy of supporting the City's Human Development and Family Strengthening core issue of youth development by providing prevention and early intervention services to our young people in order to deter delinquent behavior.

Performance Measures:

Teen Court Program

Output Measures	FY 2003-2004	FY 2004-2005 Projected	Target Level 2005-2006
No. of Defendants seen by Teen Court	102	112	153
No. of Defendants completing Victim Impact Panels	101	106	148
No. of Youth Volunteers completing Teen Court training	37	50	100

Outcome Measures	FY 2003-2004	FY 2004-2005 Projected	Target Level 2005-2006
Percentage of Defendants that complete court sanctions successfully	95%	95%	98%
Percentage of Defendants that do not recidivate for 1 year following successful completion of sanctions	Not available	85%	90%

FISCAL IMPACT

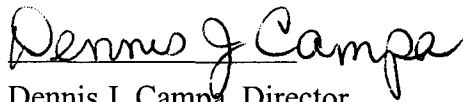
This ordinance requires no General Fund commitment. Requested grant funds will allow an additional caseworker to coordinate activities in an additional court and expand program activities.

COORDINATION

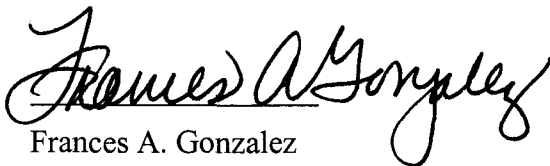
The Department of Community Initiatives has coordinated with the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Coalition, Municipal Courts, City Attorney's Office, Finance Department, Office of Management and Budget, Commission for Children and Families, Greater San Antonio Crime Prevention Commission and the Youth Commission.

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS

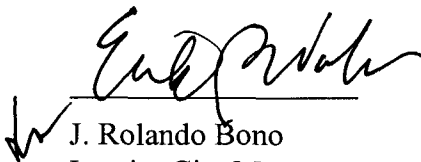
Provisions of the City's Ethics Ordinance do not apply.



Dennis J. Campa, Director
Department of Community Initiatives



Frances A. Gonzalez
Assistant City Manager



J. Rolando Bono
Interim City Manager