



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 26

Agenda Date: March 7, 2024

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Municipal Courts

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Carla Obledo

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program Grant Submission and Acceptance Upon Award, up to \$355,823.00, from the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office.

SUMMARY:

This ordinance approves the submission of a Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program grant application and acceptance of funds upon award, of up to \$355,823.00 from the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office, for the period of September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025, and offers a personnel complement of five positions. This is a continuing grant in its eighth year with Municipal Court. Municipal Court, in accordance with the San Antonio/Bexar County Joint Committee on Truancy, recognizes the importance of intervention and prevention services for youth. Addressing the underlying challenges families encounter is the key to success.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Truancy limits students' educational opportunities, increases the likelihood of students engaging in harmful behavior and reduces the amount of funding that local school districts receive through the state's school financing system. In Bexar County, efforts to address truancy were complicated by the large number of local jurisdictions, disparate filing methods and a high level of student mobility among school districts. Over fifteen independent school districts were filing truancy

cases using different approaches and were filing cases with justice of the peace courts or with the San Antonio Municipal Court. In 2013, HB 1479 (83rd legislative session) was signed into law, which mandated the creation of a truancy committee tasked to develop a uniform process for administering, tracking and reducing truancy for the fifteen school districts in Bexar County. Former Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff and then Mayor Julian Castro appointed a Truancy Committee, which recommended an addendum to the Master Interlocal Agreement between the City of San Antonio and Bexar County. In 2014, both City Council and Bexar County Commissioners Court approved Addendum A-11 to the Master Interlocal Agreement, establishing a Uniform Truancy Case Management Program. The program adopted an invariant, less punitive approach to truancy intervention and prevention.

ISSUE:

The demand for effective programming and services in the schools has increased as the number of challenges has increased. Juvenile Case Managers are assigned to work with school districts and are encountering new issues related to mental health, finances and a reluctance to return to school, resulting in additional obstacles. Juvenile Case Managers work closely with schools and families to address underlying issues and help the districts in engaging students and families. Case Managers have had to become very resourceful in their abilities to make change and improvements in school re-engagement.

ALTERNATIVES:

An alternative would be for the City to take no action. However, this would prove to have a very negative impact on our students and families. The grant's resources allow the court opportunities for case managers to improve the quality of engagement that leads to success.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance approves the submission of a Truancy Intervention and Prevention grant application and acceptance of funds, upon award, of up to \$355,823.00 for the Truancy Intervention and Prevention Program from the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office, for September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025, and offers a personnel compliment of five positions. There is no fiscal impact to the City's General Fund in the form of a cash match.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this grant ordinance.

