

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 16, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO 69 : RPCA VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

This memorandum provides additional information about the value of a volunteer coordinator position in the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. The potential for the creation of such a position was discussed at the Caring Community Budget Work Session.

The concept of a coordinator is to work with department line staff to create programs and opportunities that can be accomplished by volunteers. Meaningful opportunities are the most important element of a successful volunteer program. The opportunities can be ongoing such as taking care of flower beds or assisting in recreation programs. They can also be episodic such as park clean ups, special event hosts or team work days. To the same extent that RPCA plans and conducts recreation programs, the department would provide a multitude of volunteer programs. This position could also help other city departments with volunteer opportunities such as Office of Historic Alexandria, Libraries and Citizens Assistance. RPCA already has a large concentration of volunteers through youth sports and other recreation services. Centralizing this effort would improve the quality and volume of volunteer activities throughout the City.

This position would be responsible for planning, organizing and directing the volunteer programs associated with the Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities, and potentially other City departments. The incumbent would organize and conduct meetings, and provide technical guidance to City departments in volunteer development. Examples of work performed would include:

- Organizing, coordinating and managing the recruitment of volunteers for RPCA and other City departments.
- Developing a marketing plan for recruitment of volunteers, including the production of written informational and educational materials that communicate pertinent volunteer services program objectives.
- Developing and implementing standards and plans for city wide volunteer services programs.
- Collaborating with City departments and Volunteer Alexandria to analyze, promote and evaluate City volunteer programs.
- Managing volunteer clearinghouse for City department needs.

- Screen volunteer applications and obtain background investigations, fingerprints, photographs and criminal history records check.
- Establish and maintains effective working relationship with community groups and ancillary agencies, and presents informational and educational programs.
- Orient and train volunteers in their respective roles, and trains program staff in appropriate use of volunteer services.
- Establish and implement plans for recognizing volunteer service, and evaluates the effectiveness of the volunteer program;

The suggested salary grade for this position would be equivalent to a Recreation Supervisor IV, which would put the annual salary and benefits cost for this position at approximately \$78,000. Initially, the position investment payback would be estimated at 20 to 1. For each dollar of salary the city would receive \$20 in volunteer services (salary equivalency). The actual payback measure would be calculated and reported in the annual budget document to track actual performance over time.

The potential fiscal and service level impact of this position, beyond the annual salary and benefit costs, will depend fully on how the volunteer efforts are deployed. If volunteer labor is used to perform work currently performed by City staff, there is some opportunity for cost savings. On the other hand, if the volunteers are used to expand upon service delivery, the fiscal impact may be limited but the quality of service delivered to the public could improve. The reality is that the majority of the contribution made by volunteers will serve to enhance service levels and not supplant existing efforts. This topic should be revisited once a coordinated volunteer program is in place and good data on cost savings and service delivery are gathered.