

Visitation Grant Advisory Group Meeting Meeting

Thursday, May 25, 2017
Capitol Building – DDN A
9:00 AM CDT

Attendance: Judge Robin Houwman, Judge Robert Mandel, Representative Taffy Howard, Senator Joshua Klumb, Greg Dean

Excused: Carla Bachand

Staff: Shannon Schweitzer, Victims' Services Program Manager; Robert McCarthy, Senior Policy Analyst

Call Meeting to Order

Shannon Schweitzer called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Judge Robin Houwman was named chair.

Members of the Advisory Group attending both in person and via DDN introduced themselves to meeting participants attending in person and via DDN.

A motion was made to approve the May 2016 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and carried.

Shannon Schweitzer let the group know the total amount of SFY 2018 AV funds available for distribution was \$100,000. It appeared that all SFY2017 funds would be expended by the end of the grant period so there would not be any for re-allocation.

9:30 Public Testimony and Grant Requests

Judge Houwman opened the meeting for public testimony and for the visitations centers that submitted grant requests to address the Advisory Group.

- Aberdeen, Kids Konnection Safe Harbor

Debbie Menzel stated they are asking for \$22,000 this year. She explained that they are operating at a deficit and their funds were spent quickly last year. They have implemented a different pay process to make it easier for clients. They get donations from private donors such as United Way, Safe Harbor Foundation, and Avera.

- Mitchell, Mitchell Area Safehouse/Family Visitation Center

Candice George stated they are requesting \$14,500 in funding this year. They served 31 families last year and collected partial payments from 5 of the families. They try to collect 10% of the hourly rate or \$2.50 per hour regardless of income. They experienced a drop in numbers served

from 2016 to 2017. They have not done fundraising but a local bar wants to do a fundraiser for them.

- Rapid City, United Families

Kelly Peterson stated they are requesting \$20,000-\$30,000 for funding this year. They saw a large growth last year and exhausted funds in November. Billed 550 hours to the grant and once the grant funds were gone they adjusted their fee scale. Many clients were unemployed so the \$10 fee is too much for many. They charge \$7 for exchanges and reduce the fee scale for two hours per week and then revert to the full rate. They haven't done any fundraising.

- Sioux Falls, Family Visitation Center

Luke Comeau and Jolene Thompson stated they are requesting \$50,000 in funding this year. They charge \$10 per parent per visit and \$5 per parent per exchange. This past year they had about a 20% increase in hours requested. Even though their client numbers went down, the number of hours requested went up and needed to increase staffing to meet the increased hours. They have 10 full-time staff and 20 part-time staff. Their organization brought in over \$255,000 in donations.

- Watertown, Beacon Center

Dawn Sikkink, Emily Halverson, and Denise Riegel stated they were requesting \$14,000 in funding this year. The AV funds were used for approximately 36% of their clients. The funds were depleted at the beginning of May. They saw a large increase in exchanges and have utilized part-time staff to provide more hours. They raise approximately 20% of their funds through donations.

- Yankton, River City Family Connections

Brad Link stated they are requesting \$20,000 in funding this year. They served 46 people this past year for 517 hours. Their agency has had to close on weekends. They ran out of AV funds in March. They rose over \$38,000 thru donation letters and fundraisers this past year.

General Discussion by Advisory Group

Break at 10:00 AM and meeting resumed at 10:15 AM

Sioux Falls Visitation Center clarified that they removed grandparent and sibling visits from their numbers served with AV funds and that resulted in a change of numbers served from 2016 to 2017.

The Advisory Group discussed how to determine an equitable distribution of funds. They discussed the need for more funds to provide this service to clients. The group discussed dispersing funds based on the number of clients served vs the number of hours of service. Judge Houwman explained that past advisory groups have looked at the requested amounts and when the funds were expended.

Greg Dean proposed the following distribution of funds:

Aberdeen - \$9,250
Mitchell - \$13,000
Rapid City - \$11,000
Sioux Falls - \$50,000
Watertown - \$13,500
Yankton - \$13,000

Greg Dean stated he was frustrated there were not enough funds. He utilized the location of centers, last year's funding amounts and when funds were expended to determine amounts. Representative Howard stated she thought the group needed to be more proactive with Rapid City and all of the agencies.

Judge Houwman proposed the following distribution:

Aberdeen - \$8,000
Mitchell - \$11,000
Rapid City - \$14,000
Sioux Falls - \$43,000
Watertown - \$12,000
Yankton - \$12,000

Representative Howard proposed the following substitute motion:

Aberdeen - \$8,000
Mitchell - \$11,000
Rapid City - \$15,000
Sioux Falls - \$43,000
Watertown - \$11,500
Yankton - \$11,500

This substitute motion was withdrawn.

Judge Mandel proposed a substitute motion that utilized size of locations and populations served. Representative Howard seconded the substitute motion.

Aberdeen - \$10,000
Mitchell - \$10,000
Rapid City - \$20,000
Sioux Falls - \$40,000
Watertown - \$10,000
Yankton - \$10,000

Discussion on the motion included Greg Dean voicing concerns to cut Sioux Falls by so much. Representative Howard stated there is only one agency West River and they serve the entire

western region. Judge Mandel stated funding had been cut for Rapid City when services were lost there.

Greg Dean proposed an amendment to the motion made by Judge Mandel. Senator Klumb seconded the amendment.

Aberdeen - \$10,000
Mitchell - \$10,000
Rapid City - \$15,000
Sioux Falls - \$45,000
Watertown - \$10,000
Yankton - \$10,000

Discussion on the amendment. Judge Houwman calls for a vote and the amendment passes.

Senator Klumb proposed a substitute motion and Greg Dean seconded the motion.

Aberdeen - \$8,500
Mitchell - \$10,500
Rapid City - \$15,000
Sioux Falls - \$45,000
Watertown - \$10,500
Yankton - \$10,500

Judge Houwman called for the vote. The substitute motion passed. The advisory group then voted on the motion and it passed.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting will be held in April 2018.

Judge Houwman nominated Greg Dean for Chair Elect and Senator Klumb seconded the nomination. The nomination passed and Greg Dean will be the next Chair for the advisory group.

Senator Klumb moved and Greg Dean seconded to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned.