

**CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**



Agenda Date:	April 1, 2024
Action Required:	Appropriation
Presenter:	Misty Graves, Director of Human Services
Staff Contacts:	Reginald Allen, Human Services Planner Hunter Smith, Human Services Planner
Title:	Appropriating Funding from the BAMA Works Grant to Community Attention Foster Families - \$5,000 (1 of 2 Readings)

Background

The Department of Human Services Community Attention Foster Families (CAFF) received capacity building funding to improve "Recruitment and Retention of Black, Indigenous and People of Color Foster Families" to serve the disproportionate number of BIPOC children placed in foster care locally. The project will provide funding for multimedia recruitment of BIPOC foster homes and support family engagement and training activities for foster families.

The intended impact to have more BIPOC children placed in culturally and racially appropriate foster homes, resulting in more stability and a faster pace to permanency. The total grant is \$5,000 and there is no required local match.

Discussion

The federal Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 was to ensure long term connections and support for all children, particularly children of color. MEPA "requires agencies to diligently recruit a diverse base of foster and adoptive parents to better reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of children in out of home care." Currently, 66% of CAFF foster children are BIPOC as compared to 21% of foster homes. Children entering foster care invariably have experienced trauma including separation from their families of origin. Expecting them to adjust to a culture different from their own compounds that trauma. While most white foster parents have the best intentions, research shows that BIPOC children in white families remain in foster care longer and are slower to move to a permanent home. Recruiting foster parents of any race has been challenging over the past year due to COVID.

The long-term value of this project will be a stronger, more inclusive, anti-racist system of foster care. CAFF foster parents will reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children they serve. BIPOC foster families will have the skills and knowledge to effectively serve the children they are parenting. Most importantly, foster families and children will feel supported and bonded to other foster families. Foster families that experience this bond are able to provide mutual support to each other.

Children in homes that are connected to other foster children in similar situations are more stable and resilient, being able to share their experiences with others. As a result, foster children will have fewer placement disruptions and will move more quickly to permanency.

Alignment with City Council's Vision and Strategic Plan

The Bama Works Fund grant aligns with the City of Charlottesville's Strategic Plan – Goal 1: An Inclusive Community of Self-sufficient Residents, Objective 1.5: Intentionally address issues of race and equity; and Goal 2: A Healthy and Safe City, Objective 2.3: Improve community health and safety outcomes by connecting residents with effective resources.

Community Engagement

CAFF has an active and engaged Foster Family/Staff Committee that includes ten resource foster families. These families have committed to be pod leaders to reach out to other foster families to form relationships and bonds. It is their intention to promote retention by providing mutual support by participating in shared activities and training. Foster parents have committed to being co-trainers in the proposed training opportunities. Several have agreed to share mini-stories in the proposed marketing activities.

Budgetary Impact

This has no impact on the General Fund. The funds will be expensed and reimbursed to a Grants Fund.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval and appropriation of grant funds.

Alternatives

Appropriation

Attachments

1. CAFF BAMA Works Appropriation Attachment FY24