TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Martha G. Sepeda, Acting City Attorney

SUBJECT: $126,755 Domestic Violence Grant

DATE: September 29, 2005

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This ordinance accepts the grant award in the amount of $126,755 awarded by the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division (C.J.D.), under the Violence Against Women Act (V.A.W.A.) for the continuation of the Early Intervention for Women Living in Domestic Violence project for the twelve-month period September 1, 2005 through August 31, 2006. Furthermore, this ordinance will also establish a fund, adopt a budget, and approve personnel complements.

The purpose of the V.A.W.A. program is to pursue a coordinated and integrated approach to improving the criminal justice system's response to violence against women, including a partnership between law enforcement, prosecution, courts, victim advocates, and service providers. The Early Intervention for Women Living in Domestic Violence program has expanded the domestic violence court at Municipal Court enabling more Class C domestic violence cases to be evaluated and prosecuted. Consequently, more domestic violence victims receive swift intervention, thereby preventing escalation of domestic violence into more dangerous crime.

Through implementation of this program, the San Antonio City Attorney's Office has expanded its abilities to serve more victims through its domestic violence court. The legal staff positions supported by these grant funds includes an Assistant City Attorney I, a Caseworker II, and an Office Assistant.

In the first seven years of the program over 20,000 cases have been reviewed and over 8,264 cases have been filed. In addition, the family violence program has provided over 15,000 victims with referrals for domestic violence intervention services, case information, and follow-up services through phone calls, face-to-face contacts and letters.

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance.

POLICY ANALYSIS

This grant follows the long-standing practice of seeking Federal and State funds to promote and ensure the health and well-being of the citizens of the City.

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated cost of the Early Intervention for Women Living in Domestic Violence program for this twelve-month period is $242,424.00 from September 1, 2005 through August 31, 2006. Through this
grant C.J.D. will provide $126,755.00 for the twelve-month funding period. The remaining amount due is representative of the minimum 25% required for the V.A.W.A. grant and will be contributed by the City as a cash match. The cash match is provided through the salary and fringe benefits of an Assistant City Attorney III employee who designates at least 50% of her work week on the grant mission. In addition, the cash match includes costs for office supplies and communications provided by the City. The in-kind match is contributed by the work of interns and volunteers on the grant project.

The grant acceptance notice must be signed by the Authorized Official, Mr. Christopher Brady, Assistant City Manager, Ms. Susan Guinn, Chief Prosecutor, and Mr. Milo Nitschke, Finance Director and returned to C.J.D. within 45 days of the award date. Acceptance of this grant award and approval of the funding and budget for this project must be authorized before October 16, 2005.

COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the Finance Department and Office of Management and Budget.

SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS

This ordinance does not request funding for any contractual services requiring disclosure under the City Code of Ethics.

Martha G. Sepeda
Acting City Attorney

J. Rodolfo Boro
City Manager