

Memorandum

To: Juvenile Welfare Board Members

From: James E. Mills, Executive Director 
Lisa A. Sahulka, Director of Programs & Finance 

Date: January 3, 2002

Re: Request for Reconsideration

Linda Osmundson, Executive Director of the Center Against Spouse Abuse (CASA), is requesting reconsideration of the Board's action of December 13, 2001 denying funding for Religious Community Services (RCS) – The Haven to continue the Domestic Violence Intervention Project during FY 01-02.

The board memo submitted in December is attached as a reference. Ms. Osmundson's letter is also attached.

(Since all members of the Board voted on the prevailing side, any Board member may move for reconsideration. The motion requires a second and approval by a majority vote.)

DEC 21 2001

December 21, 2001

James E. Mills, Executive Director
JWB
6698 68th Ave. N., Suite A
Pinellas Park, FL 34665-5060



Dear Mr. Mills:

I am writing to request that the JWB Board of Directors reconsider the request to Allocate up to \$29,870 in Community Contingency - Unallocated funds in FY 01-02 to Religious Community Services – The Haven to continue the Domestic Violence Intervention Project.

This is a vital part of the support CASA and The Haven provide to survivors of domestic violence and their children. The DVIP attorney is crucial to balancing the power of the opposing side. This attorney is available for domestic violence victims with children. Legal services include representation at injunction hearings, bi-monthly educational group sessions at the shelters, and legal consultation regarding domestic violence issues such as child custody, visitation, and child support. GLS also provides law-related training for CASA and RCS employees and volunteers. Some examples include:

- When children return from a visit with their non-residential parent and exhibit signs of physical or sexual injury, the GLS attorney requests an emergency hearing before a judge to reconsider regular visitation in order to assure safety for the child.
- When an attorney represents the opposing side. A domestic violence survivor has been victimized by violence exhibited by the abusive partner. When the pro se victim faces the partner with an attorney, she freezes in fear and is unable to speak to a judge. Even the most compassionate judge is unable to discern the truth if the survivor is virtually paralyzed by fear and cannot talk.
- When custody matters are to be decided and there is an opposing attorney.
- When supervised visitation is requested or when there is a dispute over visitation, the attorneys work out the details for the judge so that the survivor is not repeatedly revictimized by the abusive partner's threats of violence during these negotiations.

The GLS attorney provides invaluable consultation to CASA and The Haven advocate who work with victims to have the courage to speak in court. Without this attorney, indigent survivors of domestic violence and their children face even more daunting obstacles to achieving safety. We urge the JWB Board of Directors to reconsider this funding decision for this year.

Sincerely,


Linda A. Osmundson
Executive Director

Cc: Linda Amidei, The Haven
John Cunningham, Gulf Coast Legal Services
Lisa Sihulka, JWB

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CASA online:
www.casa-stpete.org

TO: Juvenile Welfare Board Members

FROM: James E. Mills, Executive Director
Lisa A. Sahulka, Director of Programs and Finance

Requested Action

The Juvenile Welfare Board is requested to allocate up to \$29,870 to Religious Community Services – The Haven to continue the Domestic Violence Intervention Project during FY 01-02.

Options

1. Approve the request.
2. Approve an alternate amount.
3. Deny the request.
4. Any other action the Board deems appropriate.

Recommended Action

1. a. Allocate up to \$29,870 in Community Contingency - Unallocated funds in FY 01-02 to Religious Community Services – The Haven to continue the Domestic Violence Intervention Project.
- b. Include a Special Condition in the contract:
“Reimbursement requests will be accompanied by documentation of the number of clients served, number of service hours, and the number of individuals represented at injunction hearings.”

Source of JWB Funds

FY 01-02 Community Contingency - Unallocated Funds

Fiscal Impact

FY 01-02 Community Contingency - Unallocated funds will be reduced by \$29,870 from \$395,219 to \$365,349.

Narrative

The Domestic Violence Intervention Project is a collaborative effort between Gulfcoast Legal Services (GLS), the Center Against Spouse Abuse (CASA), and Religious Community Services (RCS) -The Haven. Through a contractual agreement with RCS, GLS provides victims of domestic violence, referred by CASA and RCS, with timely access to an attorney whose goal is to enable clients to pursue all legal remedies available to correct the harm caused by their batterers and to prevent repeat violence. Most clients have children and an

income below 150% of federal poverty guidelines. Legal services include: representation at injunction hearings, bi-monthly educational group sessions at each shelter, and legal consultation and advice regarding domestic violence issues such as child custody, visitation, and child support. GLS also provides law-related training for CASA and RCS employees and volunteers.

The Domestic Violence Intervention Project was originally funded in December 1999. At that time, GLS had experienced a decrease in their federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funding for two consecutive years, and was unable to continue free legal consultation to the families served by RCS and CASA. From January to September 2001, GLS provided 105 unduplicated CASA and RCS-Haven shelter adults with legal consultation and advice. Legal representation at injunction hearings was provided for 17 of those adults.

Current VAWA funding ends June 30, 2002. GLS has continued to seek other new funding sources. In FY 00-01, they approached the Department of Justice and Florida Department of Children and Families. However, no additional funds have been awarded.

Revenues	FY 97-98	FY 98-99	FY 99-00	FY 00-01 Projected	FY 00-01 Actual	FY 01-02 Projected
VAWA	\$54,831	\$25,192	\$21,224	\$22,000	\$21,500	\$ 21,500
JWB			\$28,000	\$28,000	\$28,000	\$ 29,870
Total	\$54,831	\$25,192	\$49,224	\$50,000	\$49,500	\$ 51,370
RCS/CASA Clients			87	100	105	100
RCS/CASA Clients – injunction hearings			12	16	17	17
Hours billed to JWB			0	700	750	725

RCS – The Haven is requesting JWB funding of \$29,870 for 725 hours of contractual legal services from GLS at the rate of \$41.20 an hour for the period of October 2001 through September 2002. Funding will cover the costs of the GLS attorney salary, benefits, and other related expenses such as: library expenses, on line legal resources, insurance, and office supplies. Actual cost of this service is \$50.00 per hour. GLS requested a 3% increase to help cover increasing costs. Private attorney rates range from \$175-\$225 per hour.

Gulfcoast Legal Services	Hourly Rate	Annual Hours	Annual Rate
Salary Portion	\$ 26.76	725	\$ 19,401
Benefits Portion	\$ 6.87	725	\$ 4,980.75
Other Expenses	\$ 7.57	725	\$ 5,488.25
Total	\$ 41.20	725	\$ 29,870

It is recommended that the Board approve the funding request, which will provide the continuation of the Domestic Violence Intervention Project for 100 domestic violence victims in FY 01-02. Staff will come to the Board with a recommendation for ongoing funding for this program during the FY 02-03 budget process. JWB has funded this request on a one-time-only basis for three fiscal years.

Source: Susan Biszewski-Eber, Contract Manager