

MEMORANDUM

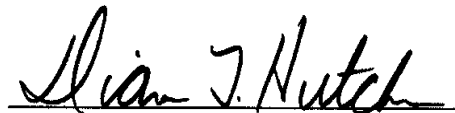
DATE: November 27, 2007
TO: The Board of Supervisors
FROM: Diana F. Hutchens, Director of Social Services
SUBJECT: Local Contribution - Circuit Court Mediation Program - \$6,000

The Social Services Division has designated \$6,000 to be appropriated to the Circuit Court which will move the administration of the Mediation Program from James City County to the Circuit Court. We are requesting these one-time funds be appropriated at this time.

James City County has successfully shouldered the majority of the workload in the mediation arena through the Division of Social Services for which they have won both a State and national award. The program was designed to help court-ordered families decide issues of child custody and visitation. It is supported by the notion that parents are best equipped to make decisions about their children. We have been committed to the program which has grown tremendously. Today the program utilizes private providers who render the mediation services and are compensated by the Supreme Court of Virginia on a case-by-case basis. The program originally used social workers but as it has grown, it has transitioned to the private sector and no longer requires involvement by Social Services. Most all mediation programs in Virginia operate under this model.

Judge Samuel Powell of the Circuit Court and Judge George Fairbanks of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court are attempting to follow the Prince William County, Va. model of mediation, which essentially attaches mediation administration to the Circuit Court. They believe mediation positions are meant to be eventually fully funded by the State. The Courts wrote a grant and received \$10,000 from the Supreme Court, and are requesting that the County contribute the additional \$6,000 funds needed to support this program. The Circuit Court has already secured an office outside Circuit Court #2 on the third floor for the mediation office.

We are truly committed to helping make the Courts' efforts successful and recommend the adoption of the attached resolution authorizing the appropriation of \$6,000 from the Undesignated Local Match line item in the Social Services budget to the Circuit Court in order to provide the additional funds needed for the Courts' Mediation program.



Diana F. Hutchens

CONCUR:



Doug Powell

Attachment