



**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

02-079

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

AGENDA:

FEBRUARY 18, 2002

SYNOPSIS -

Approval of Categorical Assistance Progress Report for the period of July 1, 2001 to December 31, 2001, to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice/Executive Office for Weed and Seed.

SUBJECT:

WEED AND SEED
CATEGORICAL
ASSISTANCE
PROGRESS REPORT

FISCAL IMPACT -

None.

TYPE:

Approval.

RESOLUTION

ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

BACKGROUND -

SUBMITTED BY:

JAMES GRANT
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR

On August 17, 1998, by Roll Call No. 98-2614, the City Council accepted a \$175,000 grant award from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed. On August 23, 1999, by Roll Call No. 99-2648, the City Council accepted an additional \$175,000 grant award from the Executive Office for Weed and Seed.

The Department of Justice and other federal agencies are implementing Operation Weed and Seed, a comprehensive and integrated multi-agency approach to addressing violent crime, drug abuse, and deteriorating social and economic opportunities in low-income neighborhoods.

The Des Moines Weed and Seed program continues to move forward to implement the strategic plan that was developed by the community. The Des Moines Enterprise Community Steering Committee (ECSC) continues to serve as the advisory committee for Weed and Seed. Citizen involvement in the Weed and Seed strategy has been and will continue to be quite extensive.

The Categorical Assistance Progress Report is organized into five Weed and Seed elements: (1) Law Enforcement; (2) Community Policing; (3) Neighborhood Restoration; (4) Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment; and (5) Special Emphasis Projects.

Law Enforcement

The Police Department operates 4-6 officers per watch in marked vehicles answering calls for service.

The Narcotics Section continues to work with state and federal agencies on drug complaints in the area. Two drug taskforces that had been formed have been disbanded and are no longer a part of the effort in the Weed and Seed area.

Community Policing

The Police Department continues to assign off-duty officers to the primary safe haven, Grubb YMCA. Their presence continues to deter incidents at the facility and provides an opportunity for more positive interaction with the residents of the community.

Three articles regarding the off-duty police officers were published in the Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) newsletter, the Around Town section of the local newspaper, and the National Weed and Seed magazine.

The Police Department also continues the part-time Bicycle Mounted Patrol program that was initiated in 1997. The bicycle-mounted patrol operates during the warm weather and is a valuable asset to the community.

Neighborhood Restoration Element

Once again, the Park and Recreation Department has contracted to implement the graffiti removal program. Residents and business owners call a designated phone number to request graffiti removal services. This year, the Park and Recreation Department was able to remove graffiti from 82 sites within the Weed and Seed area. Graffiti removal was completed on such structures as: houses, bridge over and underpasses, fences, signs, garages, and businesses.

The Weed and Seed Committee, in collaboration with Iowa State University, publishes and distributes a community newsletter. The newsletter focuses on community issues, upcoming programs and projects, and spotlights residents of the community. In an effort to

effectively distribute the newsletter, the Weed and Seed committee provided funding to assist with the cost of distribution to the five neighborhoods. Over 1,500 copies are printed and distributed on a bi-monthly basis to Weed and Seed residents.

Neighborhood Association Projects: In an effort to assist residents with neighborhood restoration and empowerment, Weed and Seed provided the five neighborhood associations with funding to be used for neighborhood cleanups, community gardens, mowing of vacant lots, neighborhood beautification, and neighborhood newsletters.

This year the neighborhoods were unable to come up with projects for their neighborhood, so a representative from the Park and Recreation Department will be working with them to come up with appropriate beautification projects.

Prevention, Early Intervention, and Treatment Element

The Safe Havens are a major component in the Weed and Seed efforts. There are four designated Safe Havens: Grubb YMCA, Moulton Elementary, Urban Dreams, and King Elementary. The following is a brief summary of three of the four designated Safe Havens.

John R. Grubb YMCA provided a safe and structured educational tutoring service project. The purpose of the program was to serve 50 youth in an after school program. The program emphasized three major areas: academic improvement, social competence, and recreation.

Moulton Elementary utilized the funds to provide young children a nurturing environment and enrichment activities during their Bonus Days. Planned activities for this contract program occurred from March 27-April 6, 2001. The Bonus Days activities were as follows:

Creative Movement and Dance (various cultural dance forms)

Rain Forest (explore wildlife in the rainforest at the zoo)

Outside Experiences (explore various places around Des Moines)

Water, Character Counts, Spring Fling (variety of activities at the Des Moines Science Center)

Native Americans (history, culture, and legends of American Indians)

Living Classroom (learned about animal habitats at

Blank Park Zoo)

King Elementary provided a Safe Haven Extended Learning Center. The extended learning center sought to address three important needs within the neighborhood: (1) provide a safe learning environment for children; (2) assist parents in developing skills in supporting their child's learning; and (3) provide a mentoring program that benefited both high school students and their elementary partners.

The Evelyn Davis Summer Program, in collaboration with AmeriCorps and Grubb YMCA, is an annual program that serves to develop a safe haven for learning and positive interaction. The summer camp began in the month of May and continued through the month of August and targeted youth 4-18 years of age. The program was ten weeks in length and occurred Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., and each Monday through Thursday ended with an evening meal. Approximately 100 youth per day participated in the summer program.

The objectives of the program were: (1) to provide structured activities for 200 youth, in a safe haven for learning and positive interaction with youth and adults; (2) to provide enrichment activities and to employ youth as summer youth counselors; and (3) to provide training and opportunities for individual growth and development. The camp also provided field trips to various places such as: Blank Park Zoo, Des Moines area pools, skating, and bowling. The teen youth participated in the camp as teen counselors, acting as mentors to the younger children.

Also included is the tutoring program administered by Children and Families of Iowa (CFI). Each year Weed and Seed provides CFI with funding to support their tutoring services for youth in the community. The goal of the program is to provide 40 at-risk grade school youth with structured, supervised, and productive educational activities. The tutoring sessions are held during the school year at the Forest Avenue Library, King School, and the Child Development Center. Through this funding cycle, the tutoring program was successful in assisting 49 youth and provided over 1,756 units of tutoring assistance (1 unit equals 30 minutes). The Weed and Seed Committee plans to continue collaborating with CFI in the future.

Special Emphasis Projects

Weed and Seed subcontracted with various vendors to administer the special emphasis projects. The special emphasis areas are: Re-Entry

Program for Offenders and Prevention through the Arts.

The Weed and Seed Committee is still in the process of administering the special emphasis projects. The committee is working with the Child and Family Policy Center, which is a technical assistance clearinghouse of the National Center for Service Integration and a data warehouse for the country to perform a needs analysis for the Re-Entry program.

In an effort to provide a quality Prevention through the Arts program, a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be developed, and interested entities may submit a proposal for consideration. The program proposes to provide Weed and Seed students with arts education modules.
