

March 13, 1996

**TO:** CITY MANAGER

**FROM:** JOINT EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

**SUBJECT:** EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (E.A.P.)

**PURPOSE:** To obtain Council's approval for the continued funding of the Employee Assistance Program

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT the City of Burnaby continue to retain the services of Brown Crawshaw Inc. to operate our Employee Assistance Program.
2. THAT the Program be funded for 1996 as outlined in this report.

**REPORT**

**REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM PROVIDED BY BROWN CRAWSHAW:**

The Joint Committee has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Employee Assistance Programs (including Critical Incident Stress Debriefing), and cost analysis of our program from 1986 to 1995. Upon consideration of all information provided, the Joint Committee agrees that Brown Crawshaw Inc. are providing an effective and cost efficient service for the City of Burnaby employees. The review of budgets of Employee Assistance Programs in other Lower Mainland cities supports that the Burnaby program costs compare favourably with those of other jurisdictions.

We have been advised by CUPE, IAFF and BCNU that they do not wish to see a change in providers, given the level of satisfaction within their respective memberships. A previous survey by the Joint Committee also highlights that recipients of the services of Brown Crawshaw Inc. feel pleased and satisfied with the services provided, and have no reservations about recommending the program to co-workers. This is especially important in a program that is providing confidential counselling and referral services, as well as Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.

When the major aspects of a solid and reliable Employee Assistance Program are considered (assurance of confidentiality, prompt and effective service at reasonable cost), the research and cost analysis by the Joint Committee support that our current provider is meeting these expectations. The Joint Committee therefore recommends that the City continue with the services of Brown Crawshaw Inc. in 1996.

REPORT ON 1995 PROGRAM:

Based upon the ninth annual report of our Consultant, Brown Crawshaw Inc., we can advise Council that the program continues to be very effective. In ancillary activities, the Consultants provided quarterly and annual reports, attended joint committee meetings and were involved in six separate events with the Fire Department including orientation events and critical incident training and debriefings.

In the core program, there were 106 employee referrals as compared to 93 referrals in the year 1994. 106 referrals represents 112% of the Committee's estimate of 95. This is typical of our experience in the last two or three years when there have not been large increases in the program but enough to put a strain on our estimates of referrals and therefore on budgets.

Of the 1995 \$53,750 budget, \$51,630 was spent.

1996 PROGRAM:

For 1996, the Committee is estimating conservatively approximately 100 referrals. There is some concern amongst Committee members that as well as cutting back on peripheral activities in favor of core referrals which is acceptable to the Committee, the other method of dealing with more referrals than the budget contains is to reduce the number of hours per person referred.

Clients require varying hours of consultation. The objective in the early years of the program was to maintain a Lower Mainland average of 6 hours per employee referral. However, over the last ten years, the consultation has reduced to 5 hours per referral. In 1995, in order to meet the budgetary constraints, the 5 hours per referral was further reduced and there is the concern of the Joint Committee that the quality of the program could suffer somewhat. The Committee's concern is that the needs of the necessary referrals continue to be met and not be eroded through lack of required budget.

Other factors in 1996 include the transfer of a number of Health Department employees to another jurisdiction (this could provide some relief to our program) and the fact that our Consultant has guaranteed that the hourly charge out rate for 1996 will remain at the 1995 level, namely, \$108 per hour. Given the hold the line on the Consultant rate, the unknown on the Health Department move and the concern regarding the eroded service, the Joint Committee recommends that Council approve proceeding with the 1996 program based on no change to the hourly rate from that charged in 1995 (\$108/hour) for an estimated total cost of \$56,000 with the final costs based on the actual number of referrals and hours of counselling required. This would allow the Committee to maintain the minimum level of consultation service without sacrificing the quality of the program.

Given the prevailing high rate of knowledge of the program by our employees, our high levels of utilization, penetration and client satisfaction, the Joint Committee will commit to keeping all other expenses to an absolute minimum during this same period of time.

  
DENNIS GAUNT

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