

TO: Juvenile Welfare Board Members

FROM: James E. Mills, Executive Director
Browning Spence, Director of Community Planning and Research *HES*

Requested Action

The Board is requested to approve the selection of the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida as the Phase III evaluator of the Pinellas Safe Start Initiative.

Options

1. Approve the request.
2. Deny the request
3. Any other action the Board deems appropriate.

Recommended Action

Approve the selection of the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida as the Phase III evaluator of the Pinellas Safe Start Initiative and allocate \$60,000 for the rest of FY 02-03.

Source of JWB Funds

No JWB funds are involved. All funds for the required evaluation of Safe Start are paid for by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact on JWB funds.

Narrative

On February 13, 2003, the Board approved release of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Phase III evaluation of the Pinellas Safe Start Initiative. Safe Start is a demonstration project funded by OJJDP to develop and implement a community response and prevention system to reduce the impact of violence exposure on young children (birth through 6 years). The evaluation is mandated by OJJDP and is a major component of the Safe Start Initiative.

Three applications were submitted. One did not include the required plan for protection of human subjects and confidential data, and was not accepted for review. A review team consisting of representatives from the Research and Evaluation Center, Pinellas Safe Start, and the Safe Start Partnership Center reviewed the merits of each application and conducted interviews with both MGT of America and the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida. On the basis of the applications and interviews, review team members rated the candidates using a standardized format. The total and

average rating received is presented below.

		Total Score	Average Score	
1.	MGT of America	Tallahassee, Florida	289	72.3 of 100
2.	The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida	Tallahassee, Florida	317	79.3 of 100

After careful consideration of all available information, the review team reached consensus and selected the Ounce of Prevention Fund as the candidate to recommend for the award of the Phase III evaluation contract. While both organizations were well qualified to perform the evaluation, the Ounce's proposal contained more staff time commitment to the project and more on-site contact with stakeholders. The Ounce of Prevention Fund is experienced with performing multi-site, multi-year national evaluations and evaluations of early intervention, prevention, and early childhood programs and collaboratives. The Ounce of Prevention Fund employs participatory evaluation methods, in which program personnel, local evaluators, funding agents, and other stakeholders are cooperative partners in program evaluation. This method of evaluation offers the advantage of promoting stakeholder buy-in to the data collection and interpretation process, as well as promoting cooperation and honest discussion about program improvement.

This is a multi-year evaluation contract funded for up to \$67,500 annualized, or \$202,500, from April 2003 through December 2005. Since there has been a gap between evaluators, the selected evaluator will need to perform additional work during this fiscal year, therefore, staff is recommending \$60,000 for the six months remaining in the fiscal year. OJJDP has approved the selection. The amount awarded is contingent upon the continued availability of OJJDP funds.

Staff Resource Person: Patrick R. Draves, M.A., Senior Research Consultant, Research and Evaluation