



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMUNITY &**  
**HUMAN SERVICES**



## Department of Community and Human Services Notice of Funding Opportunities

The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) is pleased to announce that the Alexandria Fund for Human Services (AFHS) Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) for the period covering July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2029, will be released on January 5, 2026. Since its inception, the AFHS has provided funding through a competitive grant-making process for eligible programs and services of nonprofit partners that meet human service needs for the City's most marginalized residents across the lifespan.

### SUMMARY INFORMATION

**Date of Release:** January 5, 2026

**Proposal Due Date and Time:** 5 p.m., February 17, 2026

**Period of Performance:** Three (3) years, July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2029

**Maximum Funding Amount Per Year:** Up to \$75,000 for standard grants, up to \$10,000 for incubator and mini grants

**Selection Announcement:** June 2026

**Point of Contact for Questions:** [DCHSAlexFund@alexandriava.gov](mailto:DCHSAlexFund@alexandriava.gov)

### NEW TO AFHS FOR FY 2027-2029

To ensure that AFHS is responsive to the growing and changing needs of the community, Alexandria's City Council requested an independent evaluation of the program. The 2025 evaluation recommended restructuring AFHS to focus competitive grants on programs and services that promote stabilization and foster thriving within communities, using a spectrum-based approach to Essential Human Services (EHS). Based on these recommendations, the FY 2027-2029 grant cycle introduces five refined grant priorities aligned to the EHS framework and establishes new mini-grant and incubator grant components. These new award categories create accessible entry points for emerging organizations and reduce barriers to funding for focused, smaller-scale initiatives.

### PRIORITIES AND AWARD TYPES

#### NEW TO AFHS Refined Grant Priorities

The evaluation developed five EHS criteria to guide funding decisions. Organizations interested in applying for an FY 2027-2029 grant award must demonstrate an ability to impact one of these five

grant priorities, with programs and services that promote **stabilization** and foster **thriving** within communities:

1. **Basic Needs Fulfillment** – Services that promote wellbeing
2. **Vulnerability and Equity** – Program or service that addresses systemic inequities or supports historically marginalized communities as noted in the focus population
3. **Health and Safety** – Program or service that contributes to public level health and community safety
4. **Economic Stability and Support** – Programs or services that support financial security for individuals and communities
5. **Social Functioning and Cohesion** – Programs or services that support societal stability, prevent displacement, and foster community well-being

### **Essential Human Services Definition**

*Essential Human Services (EHS) are those that meet the fundamental needs necessary for survival, stability, and well-being. Rather than a dichotomous classification of essential or not, services exist on a spectrum. At the most basic level, they ensure survival by addressing the immediate bare needs of food, water, shelter, and safety<sup>1</sup>. The next level supports continued survival or **stability** by preventing harm, promoting health, and enabling economic and social participation. At the highest level, they foster mobility, resilience, and community engagement — collectively known as **thriving**. Rather than a fixed set of services, EHS depends on contextual factors such as geography, culture, and societal conditions.*

### **Focus Populations**

The populations of focus for AFHS remain the same. Proposed programs or services must benefit one of the following:

- Children and youth (including ages 0-5).
- Individuals with low incomes and low wealth.
- Individuals with dental, physical health, mental health, vision care needs, and for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Individuals facing crises.
- Survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Older adults.
- Historically marginalized communities: This includes, but is not limited to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant populations (including those who lack documentation or families with mixed status), justice-involved individuals, LGBTQIA+ individuals, persons with disabilities across the lifespan to include support for care givers, individuals with Limited English Proficiency, unhoused /Housing Insecure /Housing Cost Burdened.

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<sup>1</sup> This definition was developed by Community Science in the Alexandria Fund for Human Services Evaluation (April 2025), drawing on frameworks including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the Basic Needs Approach, and the Human Services Value Curve.

## Categories of Awards

New to this award cycle are separate Requests for Grant Proposals (RFGPs) for each category of award: one RFGP for standard awards and one RFGP for the new incubator and mini awards. Organizations may submit multiple applications. Each application must address only one of the five grant priorities, focus on either stabilizing or thriving outcomes, and serve a designated focus population.

- A. **NEW TO AFHS Standard Grants:** \$10,001 to \$75,000 each (*Note: \$75,000 cap is new for this cycle*)
  - For organizations well positioned to offer services that are sound in practice and innovative in the way services are delivered to respond to emerging and critical human service challenges.
  - Applicants must attest that the proposed program or service will be ready for full implementation upon the grant award or within the first quarter of FY27.
- B. **NEW TO AFHS Mini Grants:** \$7,000 to \$10,000 each - This opportunity supports existing and new smaller scale programs or services. This funding may be used to defray discrete program or service expenses, implement focused activities, or address immediate needs.
- C. **NEW TO AFHS Incubator Grants:** \$7,000 to \$10,000 each - These awards provide flexible, low barrier funding that empowers the successful applicant to **create and test new, innovative or developing** programs or services. These grant requests may also be used for early-stage implementation of programs or services that may not have an extensive track record or formal infrastructure.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Organizations interested in submitting an AFHS grant proposal must meet the following criteria:

- Possess an IRS nonprofit determination and demonstrate an immediate ability to serve City of Alexandria, Virginia residents.
- **Incubator Grant applicants only:** Applicants with a pending IRS nonprofit determination at the time of proposal submission may apply. However, if recommended for a grant award, funding will be contingent on receipt of the IRS nonprofit determination letter within 90 days of the AFHS Intent to Award Notice.
- Have no outstanding federal, state or local regulatory violations, taxes or penalties.
- Demonstrate that AFHS funding will benefit eligible individuals and households residing within one of the eight (8) zip codes within the geographical city limits of Alexandria, VA. Organizations based in adjacent jurisdictions are eligible provided they serve individuals residing within the city limits.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

**NEW TO AFHS Virtual Pre-Proposal Training Sessions:** DCHS will host two virtual pre-proposal training sessions via Zoom:

- **January 14, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** – Standard Grant Proposal Process – register [here](#).
- **January 15, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** – Incubator and Mini Grant Process – register [here](#).

These optional sessions will provide an overview of the AFHS grant application process and requirements, as well as an opportunity to preview the online grant application portal. Attendance is strongly encouraged, particularly for first-time applicants and organizations new to Foundant, the online grants management platform.

*For reasonable disability accommodations, contact [Danelle.johnson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Danelle.johnson@alexandriava.gov) or call 703.746.5791 or Virginia Relay 711.*

**NEW TO AFHS Weekly Technical Assistance Office Hours:** A member of the AFHS Grant Team will be available in 30-minute intervals between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays during the grant proposal preparation period from January 22 through February 13. The purpose of this dedicated time is to answer questions regarding RFGP submission guidelines and address Foundant access issues. Office hours are **not** intended for discussion of or feedback on an applicant's proposed program or service design. Sign up information will be available in the forthcoming RFGP.

**Written Questions:** Questions regarding the grant proposal process may be submitted via email to [DCHSAlexFund@alexandriava.gov](mailto:DCHSAlexFund@alexandriava.gov) through **February 12, 2026**. Responses will be posted as an FAQ on the [DCHS website](#) within 48 hours.

## GETTING STARTED

- Read this NOFA in its entirety
- Create an account in Foundant. Grant proposals will only be accepted through the Foundant Technologies on-line grant portal. Organizations new to the AFHS on-line grant portal are strongly encouraged to preview Foundant Technologies' video tutorial for prospective grant applicants at <https://support.foundant.com/hc/en-us/articles/4479853059991>
- Sign up to attend one of the virtual pre-proposal training sessions:
  - Standard Grant Proposal Process – register [here](#).
  - Incubator and Mini Grant Process – register [here](#)
- Have questions? Reach out about this notice or the forthcoming RFGPs at [DCHSAlexFund@alexandriava.gov](mailto:DCHSAlexFund@alexandriava.gov)