Request for Grant Proposals

**Standard Grant
Fiscal Years 2027-2029**

**Date of Release: January 5, 2026
Grant Proposals Due: February 17, 2026**

SUMMARY

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
Funding Amount Per Year: $10,001 to $75,000 each (*Note: $75,000 cap is new for this cycle*)
Virtual Pre-Proposal Training Session: January 14, 2026 (register here)
Selection Announcement: June 2026
Point of Contact for Questions: DCHSAlexFund@alexandriava.gov
Application Submission: Please submit all applications and supporting materials using the online submission form

I.   BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The City of Alexandria, through its Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), is pleased to invite grant proposals for the newly launched Alexandria Fund for Human Services (AFHS) standard grant component for the FY 2027 through 2029 grant cycle.

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.

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. Additionally, AFHS now offers two new grant categories, mini grants and incubator grants, to create accessible entry points for emerging organizations and reduce barriers to funding for focused, smaller-scale initiatives.

II.   OVERVIEW

Refined Grant Priorities
The evaluation developed five EHS criteria to guide funding decisions. Organizations interested in applying for a FY 2027-2029 grant award must demonstrate an ability to impact one of five grant priorities with programs and services that promote stabilization and foster thriving within communities:
- Basic Needs Fulfillment
- Vulnerability and Equity
- Health and Safety

- Economic Stability and Support
- Social Functioning and Cohesion

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[1]. 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.*

Standard Grant Opportunity
Standard grants support 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 half of FY 2027.

Funding Amount
Standard grant requests will range from $10,001 to $75,000 per year for the three-year grant cycle (FY 2027-2029). Grant proposals totaling $10,000 or less should be submitted through the newly established mini and incubator grant opportunity. The actual amount of each grant award will be confirmed once funds are appropriated by City Council through its annual budget proceedings and adoption of the FY 2027 budget. Approved grant award amounts will remain the same for the two subsequent years in the grant cycle and are contingent upon City Council's annual AFHS appropriation and satisfactory performance of the grantee.

Application Submission Requirements
Each application—whether single or joint—must:
- Address **only one** of the five grant priorities
- Focus on either **stabilizing** or **thriving** outcomes (not both)
- Serve one or more of the designated focus populations

Joint Applications
Organizations submitting a joint application must include an executed agreement or letter of commitment from all prospective partner(s) that outlines the specific roles and commitments of each partnering organization**.**

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[1] 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.

III.   ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for AFHS standard grants, organizations must meet **ALL** the following criteria:

- Possess an IRS nonprofit determination and demonstrate an immediate ability to serve City of Alexandria, Virginia residents.
- 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 (see zip codes in section VI). Organizations based in adjacent jurisdictions are eligible provided they serve individuals residing within the city limits.

IV.   APPLICATION PROCESS

Competitive Review Process

This is a competitive grant application process; all grant proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a panel of subject matter experts from the community and in consultation with an interdisciplinary DCHS staff team. Prior AFHS grant performance will be taken into consideration during the review process and when determining grant awards. Standard grant proposals will be evaluated and rated based on the criteria and point values in *Attachment I*.

Submission Requirements

Grant proposals must be submitted electronically via the Alexandria Fund for Human Services' online submission form. Applicants must respond to eligibility screening in the grant portal prior to starting an application.

New Users: register and create an account by visiting here.

Existing Users: Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, please use the "Forgot your Password?" link to the left to reset your password.

Not Sure? If you think that you or someone at your organization has already registered in the system, do not create a new account. Please contact Department of Community and Human Services at: DCHSAlexFund@alexandriava.gov to receive your username.

Grant applications may **not** be submitted in person, by U. S. Postal Services, courier, email nor facsimile.

V.   TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

Virtual Pre-Proposal Training Sessions: January 14, 2026, **from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.** – register here

This optional session 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. The recording will be available on the DCHS website following the training.

For reasonable disability accommodations, contact Danelle.johnson@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.5791 or

Virginia Relay 711.

Weekly Technical Assistance Office Hours: Each Thursday and Friday from January 22 through February 13, a member of the AFHS Grant Team will be available in 30-minute intervals between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (*Note: Questions about program design or eligibility must be raised by or before February 12)*. 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 for office hours here.

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

VI.   PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Grant Priorities

Organizations interested in an AFHS FY 2027-2029 mini or incubator grant must propose an initiative, program, or service that aligns with one of the EHS *stabilizing* or *thriving* focused grant priorities as described below:

- **Basic Needs Fulfillment:** Criteria: Services that promote wellbeing

Stabilizing	Thriving
Provides consistent access to basic needs with some security	Promotes long-term individual or family well-being and self-sufficiency beyond immediate needs
Examples: housing stability efforts, linking individuals to primary healthcare, access to early care and education support	*Examples: nutrition education, preventive healthcare*

- **Vulnerability and Equity:** Criteria: Program or service that addresses systemic inequities or support historically marginalized communities as noted in the focus population.

Stabilizing	Thriving
Addresses disparities by providing ongoing support that reduces marginalization	Promotes systemic change and structural equity, ensuring all communities have opportunities for prosperity
Examples: disability assistance, employment and training efforts	*Examples: policy reforms, economic mobility efforts, equitable healthcare access*

- **Health and Safety:** Criteria: Program or service that contributes to public level health and community safety.

Stabilizing	Thriving
Strengthens protective factors to prevent crises and improve resilience	Builds sustainable, health-promoting systems that enhance long-term public well-being
Examples: access to community health clinics, mental health/substance use disorder support, out-of-school-time programs, domestic violence prevention	*Examples: programs/services that promote access to healthcare, public health education, promote nutrition education*

- **Economic Stability and Support:** Criteria: Programs or services that support financial security for individuals and communities.

Stabilizing	Thriving
Enhances financial security and mobility through structured programs	Promotes long-term economic independence and prosperity
Examples: job training, financial education, connecting residents to affordable early care and education supports and childcare	*Examples: small business grants, wealth-building initiatives or economic mobility*

- **Social Functioning and Cohesion:** Criteria: Programs or services that support societal stability, prevent displacement, and fosters community well-being.

Stabilizing	Thriving
Encourages inclusive participation and community support	Builds long-term social resilience, belonging and civic engagement
Examples: community-wide programs that promote social engagement and participation, civic engagement, volunteering, mentorship programs	*Examples: leadership development, cultural programming, initiatives promoting collective well-being*

Focus Populations

During the evaluation and community input process, additional groups were incorporated into the focus population. 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.

Geographic Eligibility

Programs or services must serve individuals residing in one or more of the following Alexandria, Virginia zip codes:

22206 | 22301 | 22302 | 22304 | 22305 | 22311 | 22312 | 22314

Grant Application

This section describes the elements of the grant application contained in the web-based Foundant portal. A pdf version of the online application can be found here. Applicants should be prepared to fill in all the fields in the cover page, provide narrative responses in the character-limited sections, and upload the required documents.

Cover Page
- Organization's Legal Name if different than proposed
- First Time Applicant
- Organization Mailing Address
- Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director/Authorizing Representative
- Email Address
- Telephone Number
    - Principal Program Contact Person
    - Email Address
    - Telephone Number
- Organization's Website Address
- Organization's Federal Tax ID
- Organization's Fiscal Year Start/End
- Organization's FY 2023 Total Operating Budget Amount
- Name of the Proposed Program/Service
- Physical Address of the Program/Service
- Amount Requested for the Proposed Program/Project
- Joint Application- Contact Information for all Partnering Agencies
    - Partnering Organization Name
    - Partnering Organization Address
    - Partnering Organization Telephone Number
    - Partnering Organization Website
    - Partnering Organization's Principal Contact
        - Email address
        - Telephone Number
- Selection of the **Essential Human Service Funding Priority** the proposed initiative, program or service will address.
- Selection of the **Focus Population(s)** will be the proposed initiative, program or service support

- Selection of the anticipated **Zip Codes** where these individuals will reside.
- Date the Board of Directors approved the submission of this grant proposal

Narrative Responses

Applicants must provide narrative responses for each of the following sections. Each section has a specified character limit and must be completed in the online application portal.

1. **Statement of Need (5,000-character limit)**

   Applicants must provide a detailed and well-supported Statement of Need that outlines the specific issue their proposed program or service seeks to address, along with the focus population it is designed to serve. The narrative should clearly describe how the proposed effort will benefit residents of the City of Alexandria, with a particular emphasis on the following:
   - Use of Alexandria-specific data to demonstrate need, including relevant statistics and findings from local reports or community assessments.
   - A description of the geographic area to be served and any documented gaps in existing services.
   - Key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the population of focus.
   - Evidence of unmet needs, disparities, or barriers faced by the community.

   If your program will be delivered at a location outside your organization's own facilities, please include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Letter of Commitment from the partner providing the space. This document must outline the specific roles and commitments of each partnering agency or organization and be attached to your application.

2. **Grant Priority Being Addressed (5,000-character limit)**

   Applicants must clearly outline the core activities and strategic approaches their program will implement to address the selected grant priority area. Describe how the proposed initiative aligns with one of the five defined grant criteria and how it meets an identified Essential Human Service (EHS) need that promotes either *stabilization* or *thriving* conditions for individuals and/or families. In your response, please address the following:
   - **Program Approach**: Describe the specific activities, services, or interventions your program will implement to respond to the selected priority.
   - **Continuum of Care Placement**: Identify where your program falls on the continuum of care— whether it focuses on stabilization (e.g., preventing harm, promoting health, and enabling economic and social participation) or long-term thriving (e.g., economic mobility, empowerment, leadership development) conditions.
   - **Evidence-Based or Promising Practices**: Indicate whether your program incorporates evidence-based, promising, or innovative practices. Briefly describe these approaches and the rationale for their use.
   - **Supporting Evidence**: Provide data, research, evaluation findings, or past performance results that demonstrate the effectiveness of your proposed approach. Highlight proven outcomes, impact metrics, or success stories that support your model's ability to achieve intended results.

3. **Data Collection: Key Outcome Measures and Baseline Data (5,000-character limit)**
   In this section, applicants must propose the number of individuals and households that will directly be supported and identify and define **three (3) key outcome measures** that will be tracked over the course of the three-year grant period. These measures should reflect the intended impact of your proposed program or service and align with the goals of the selected grant priority area. See *Attachment III* for guidance on developing outcome measures (Department of Health and Human Services' Measuring Outcomes Guidebook). In your response, please include:

   - **Outcome Measurement**: Clearly state three (3) specific, measurable outcomes your program aims to achieve. These should reflect meaningful change for the focus population and be linked to the program's core activities. Outcome measures are specific indicators used to assess the results or effects of a program, intervention, or treatment — particularly in terms of its impact on individuals, populations, or systems.
   - **Measurement and Tracking**: Describe how each outcome will be measured. Include the tools, metrics, or indicators that will be used to assess progress (e.g., pre/post surveys, case management data, participant tracking systems).
   - **Data Collection Methods:** Explain the methods, tools, and sources you will use to collect data, such as interviews, surveys, administrative records, or third-party evaluations.
   - **Monitoring Systems**: Detail how data will be regularly monitored, analyzed, and used to inform program decisions. Include any systems, software, or processes that will support ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement.
   - **Baseline Data Collection Capacity:** In addition to the outcome data described above, all funded programs will be *required* to collect and report *baseline data*, including the following:
     - The number of individuals or households served
     - The ZIP code where services are delivered, or where participants reside (for home-based services)
     - Demographic information, including race and ethnicity
     - The language(s) in which services are provided

4. **Proposed Number of Individuals to be Supported FY 2027-2029**
   Provide the projected number of unduplicated individuals to be served in each year of the three-year grant cycle.

5. **Proposed Number of Households to be Supported FY 2027-2029**
   Provide the projected number of unduplicated households to be served in each year of the three-year grant cycle.

6. **Outreach and Engagement (5,000-chacacter limit)**
   Please describe your organization's capacity and current operational practices that enable effective outreach and engagement with the proposed focus population in carrying out the proposed service/program. Highlight the specialized expertise of your staff, the size and structure of your team, and your demonstrated ability to provide services that are ***accessible, culturally responsive, and community centered***. Be specific in outlining your outreach and engagement strategies, such as:

- Your physical presence or service locations within the target neighborhood
- Flexible service hours that accommodate community schedules and needs
- Use of bilingual and culturally competent staff to ensure effective communication and trust
- Participation in local community events and activities to build relationships
- Partnerships and collaboration with trusted community institutions, organizations, and service providers to facilitate recruitment and strengthen connections with participants
- Demonstrate how these strategies foster meaningful engagement and support equitable access to your program or services.

7. **Essential Human Services Spectrum (5,000-character limit)**
   Using the Essential Human Services (EHS) definition, please describe how your proposed program provides a coordinated and comprehensive set of interventions aimed at supporting individuals and families as they move from *stability* toward long-term self-sufficiency and *thriving*.
   - **Stability** - Continued survival by preventing harm, promoting health, and enabling economic and social participation.
   - **Thriving**-Services that foster mobility, resilience, and community engagement.

   Responses should include the following:
   - **Coordinated Interventions:** Explain how your program provides an integrated set of services that work together to meet the diverse needs of the focus population.
   - **Multidimensional, Wraparound Approach:** Describe how the program addresses root causes by considering individuals or households within the broader environmental and social context.
     - **Stability:** Fostering consistency, safety, and mitigating immediate risk factors.
     - **Thriving:** Supporting long-term self-sufficiency, quality of life, and sustained success.
   - **Tailored Support**
     Discuss how your program customizes interventions to respond to the complex and evolving needs of the population served.
   - **Long-Term Impact**
     Illustrate how your approach fosters sustainable progress and supports lasting self-sufficiency and thriving outcomes.

8. **Voice in Program/Service Design and Implementation (1,500-character limit)**
   Describe how individuals with lived and living experience, program participants, and community partners have meaningfully contributed to the **design, development, and ongoing refinement** of the proposed program or service. Explain how their insights, feedback, and perspectives have informed key elements of your service model, including goals, structure, and implementation strategies.
   Detail the methods used to gather community input, such as:
   - Focus groups or community listening sessions.
   - Advisory boards or leadership councils.
   - Surveys or participatory planning sessions.
   - Collaborative partnerships with community-based organizations.

Additionally, describe how participants and stakeholders will continue to have a voice throughout the program's lifecycle—through evaluation, continuous improvement processes, or decision-making roles—to ensure the program remains responsive to community needs.

9. **Collaboration (1,500-character limit)**
Describe how your proposed program demonstrates intentional collaboration with designated community organizations and partners to strengthen and expand the City's human services network. Clearly identify the type of collaboration (e.g., coordination, cooperation, integration), the roles and responsibilities of each partner, and the intended outcomes of the joint effort. Using the Tamarack Institute's Collaboration Spectrum provided below, indicate where your project currently falls on the continuum and how this level of partnership enhances service delivery and outcomes for the focus population. If submitting a joint application, see the requirements in the section below.

Compete	Co-exist	Communicate	Cooperate	Coordinate	Collaborate	Integrate
Competition for clients, resources, partners, public attention	No systematic connection between agencies	Inter-agency information sharing (e.g., networking)	As needed; often informal; interaction on discrete activities or projects	Organizations systematically adjust and align work with each other for greater outcomes	Longer term interactions based on shared vision & goals; shared decisionmakers and resources	Fully integrated programs, planning & funding

10. **Fiscal and Organizational Management (3,500-character limit)**
Applicants must provide a description of the organization's capacity to effectively manage public funds and deliver services with fiscal integrity and strong organizational oversight. This section should also provide a clear overview of the organization's governance structure, financial management systems, and leadership qualifications, as well as the experience in managing grants of similar scope or complexity.

Required Elements:
- **Leadership and Governance:** Describe the qualifications and experience of your senior leadership team and governing board. Include information on Board oversight responsibilities, relevant expertise, and how governance structures support the mission and fiscal health of the organization.
- **Fiscal Accountability:** Outline your financial management practices, including budgeting processes, internal controls, and use of accounting systems. Describe the organization's approach to financial reporting, monitoring, and compliance with funder requirements.
- **Audit and Financial History:** Highlight the quality and reliability of your audit and financial review processes. If available, reference recent audit results, internal audit mechanisms, and actions taken to address any past findings.
- **Grant Management Experience:** Provide examples of successfully managed grants— including government, public-sector, and private funding—including the size, duration, outcomes achieved, and compliance history.

- Strong responses will reflect an organization with **sound infrastructure**, a commitment to **transparency**, and the proven ability to manage funding responsibly and effectively.

11. **Proposed Budget** – Download and complete the Excel budget spreadsheet for all revenues and expenses associated with the proposed project. Upload the completed spreadsheet in the cover page section. Instructions for completing the spreadsheet are included on the first tab. This budget should contain only first-year projected revenues and expenses (FY2027). If selected for funding, budgets for subsequent years in the three-year cycle will be submitted with your regular reporting requirements.

12. **Budget Justification (1,500-character limit)-** This narrative will support the line-item budget for the funding request and the revenues from other funding sources for the proposed program/service proposed in the Program Budget section. Only administrative costs directly related to the proposal are to be included within the request. Information that should be included:
    - **Other resources/revenue streams:** What will be leveraged or are being sought (type, source and use restrictions) to help sustain the proposed initiative, program or service?
    - **Personnel**: Staff needed to accomplish program, related job responsibilities and the percentage of time the positions will spend on proposed program/service. Identify all supervisory or administrative positions, providing percentage of time devoted to project management, oversight, or administrative support functions.
    - **Estimations of in-kind support**. The value of volunteer hours should be calculated using the Independent Sector https://independentsector.org/blog/new-value-of-volunteer-time-2025-released/ at $34.79 per hour rate. If volunteers will donate skills valued at higher in-kind hourly rate, include a rationale in the budget justification.
    - **Joint applicants:** Identify areas of shared costs or distribution of costs among participants.
    - I**mpact of partial funding:** Discuss the impact on the proposed program/service and associated outcome measures (from Question 3) if the full funding request is not awarded. Include:
        - The minimum acceptable funding level necessary to implement the project
        - Which outcomes could still be achieved with reduced funding
        - Any limitations or modifications expected due to partial funding
    - **Sustainability:** Plan for sustaining the project after the FY 2027-2029 grant cycle.

    NOTE: Successful applicants will have the opportunity to submit a final budget prior to the execution of the FY 2027-2029 grant agreement. Approved grant award amounts will remain the same for the two subsequent years in the grant cycle and are contingent upon City Council's annual AFHS appropriation and satisfactory performance of the grantee.

13. **Joint Applications**
    Efforts should be made to link with other programs that serve the same population and to submit a joint application. All joint applications must include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Letter of Commitment from formal partners that outlines clearly
    - the nature of the partnership,

- the scope, responsibilities, and commitments of each participating organization,
- and how the collaboration contributes to achieving the proposed outcomes and strengthens the City's overall human service delivery system.

14. **Grant Application Attestation -** Applicants will be required to attest to the authorization to apply for AFHS grant funding and declare to the best of their knowledge and belief that the information in the grant proposals is accurate.

Required Attachments

The following attachments must be uploaded in an electronic file form (e.g., PDF, Excel, Word, PNG, GIF, JPG a maximum size of 12 MiB per document). If the applicant is unable to provide any of the required attachments, an explanation for each missing attachment must be included in the corresponding section.

1. IRS Letter of Nonprofit Determination (as applicable).
2. Most Recent External Audit (organizations with annual operating budget of $750,000 or less, may submit most recent Board approved year-end financial statement or most recent IRS Form 990.
3. Organization's FY 2025 Operating Budget.
4. Budget Spreadsheet
5. Organization's Most Recent Annual Report (if available).
6. Board of Directors Roster
7. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Letters of Collaboration for **Joint Applications or programs or services that will be delivered at a location outside the organization's own facilities**. This document must outline the specific roles and commitments of each partnering agency or organization.

VII.   POST-AWARD GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants must meet the following grant requirements throughout the three-year grant cycle.

Outcome Measures

Prior to the execution of the FY 2027-2029 grant agreement, DCHS will confer with successful applicants and confirm approved outcome measures. The approved outcome measures will become an attachment to the executed grant agreement. Awarded grantees will receive the required reporting templates and formatting instructions during the post-award session. The three key outcome measures must be tracked continuously throughout the entire AFHS 2027-2029 grant cycle.

Required Baseline Data

In addition to outcome measures, all funded programs will be *required* to collect and report *baseline data*, including the following:
- The number of individuals or households served
- The ZIP code where services are delivered, or where participants reside (for home-based services)
- Demographic information, including race and ethnicity

- The language(s) in which services are provided

Note: Applicants should describe their data collection methods and capacity for tracking this baseline data in the Outcome Measurement and Data Collection section of the grant proposal narrative.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to submit mid-year and year-end reports for each year of the three-year grant cycle. Reporting templates and formatting instructions will be provided during the post-award session. Reports are due on January 31 and July 31 of each grant year. Additionally, grantee organizations with an annual budget greater than $750,000 must submit their annual External Audit, and grantee organizations with an annual budget of less than $750,000 may instead submit their Year-End Financial Statement or IRS Form 990. These documents will be sent directly to the City of Alexandria's Office of Internal Audit each grant year.

VIII. GRANT PROCESS TIMELINE

Notice of Funding Availability	December 17, 2025
Request for Grant Proposals Issued	January 5, 2026
Virtual Pre-Proposal Training Session for Prospective Standard Applicants	January 14, 2026
Virtual Pre-Proposal Training for Prospective Mini or Incubator Applicants (only if applying for a Mini or Incubator Grant)	January 15, 2026
Dedicated Technical Assistance Office Hours (Office hours on February 13 will be reserved for technical/portal access issues only)	Jan. 22, 2026 – Feb. 13, 2026
Deadline for Grant Proposal Questions	February 12, 2026
Grant Proposal Submission Deadline	February 17, 2026
Grant Application Certification	February 18-27, 2026
Grant Proposal Review Period	Mar. 2, 2026 – Apr. 10, 2026
City of Alexandria FY 2027 Budget Adoption	April 29, 2026
Grant Award Recommendations Presented to City Council	May 2026
Grant Award Notice and Grant Agreements Issued to Successful Applicants	June 2026
Signed Grant Agreement Due	June 2026
FY 2027 Grant Cycle Begins	July 1, 2026
Post-award Training	Week of July 13, 2026

Attachment 1: Scoring Criteria

Total Number of Points: 150 total points

Statement of Need Scoring Criteria – (20 Points Total)		
Criteria	**Points**	**What Reviewers Will Evaluate**
Clarity and Relevance of Need	5	Clearly describes a specific and relevant need aligned with the purpose of the grant. Overall clarity, support and description of the issue to include program/service benefits.
Definition and Understanding of Focus Population	4	Effectively identifies and describes the focus population, including relevant demographic and geographic details.
Use of Alexandria-Specific Data	4	Provides recent and relevant local data to substantiate the need. Sources are credible and clearly cited.
Alignment with Grant Priorities	4	Request clearly identifies whether the program supports *stabilization* or *thriving* and aligns with the outlined grant priority areas.
Addressing Service Gaps	3	Demonstrates a strong understanding of existing service gaps and how the proposed program intends to address them.

Grant Priority Being Addressed Scoring Criteria – (20 Points Total)		
Criteria	**Points**	**What Reviewers Will Evaluate**
Clarity of Grant Priority Selection	3	Applicant clearly identifies one of the five grant priorities and the corresponding EHS need (addresses a defined priority and promotes stabilization or thriving).
Alignment with Stabilization or Thriving Goals	4	Program clearly supports stabilization or thriving outcomes in a way that aligns with grant intent.
Defined Strategic Approach and Core Activities	5	Core activities are well-defined, strategically sound, and appropriate to the identified need and population.
Use of Evidence-Based or Promising Practices	4	Application demonstrates the use of proven or innovative practices, supported by rationale or research (description of approaches and rationale for use).
Evidence of Effectiveness	4	Application includes strong supporting data or past performance outcomes that demonstrate the program's potential for impact (data, research, performance results, proven outcomes).

Data Collection and Outcome Measurement Scoring Criteria – (30 Points Total)		
Criteria	**Points**	**What Reviewers Will Evaluate**
Defined Outcome Measures	6	Three specific, measurable, and relevant outcomes are clearly identified and aligned with program goals.
Measurement Tools and Tracking Methods	6	Applicant outlines how each outcome will be tracked using appropriate tools or indicators.

Data Collection Methods and Sources	6	Methods for collecting data are clearly described, reliable, and appropriate for the population and services.
Monitoring and Evaluation Systems	6	Application demonstrates the use of systems or processes for continuous monitoring, learning, and improvement.
Beyond Baseline – Evaluation Approach Quality	6	Application provides a thoughtful and thorough evaluation approach that goes beyond baseline requirements, showing how changes will be attributed to program activities.

Outreach and Engagement Scoring Criteria – (20 Points Total)		
Criteria	Points	What Reviewers Will Evaluate
Organizational Capacity	5	Demonstrates sufficient staff expertise, team structure, and resources to support effective outreach.
Accessibility and Cultural Competence	5	Describes culturally responsive practices, bilingual staffing, and flexible service delivery that meet community needs.
Outreach Strategies	5	Provides clear, targeted, and innovative outreach methods, including presence in the community and collaboration with trusted partners.
Community Engagement and Trust	5	Illustrates strong connections and trust-building efforts within the community, leveraging local networks effectively.

Essential Human Services Spectrum Scoring Criteria – (20 Points Total)		
Criteria	Points	What Reviewers Will Evaluate
Coordinated Interventions	5	Clearly explains how multiple interventions are coordinated to comprehensively address participant needs (Explanation of integrated services working together internal or external to the organization).
Holistic Wraparound Approach	5	Demonstrates understanding of and responsiveness to root causes and the broader context impacting individuals or families.
Multidimensional and Integrated Services	4	Describes integrated, cross-system services that address complex, interconnected needs effectively.
Tailored and Responsive Support	3	Shows how services are adapted to meet evolving and unique participant needs.
Long-Term Impact and Sustainability	3	Articulates how the program supports sustainable progress toward self-sufficiency and thriving.

Voice in Program/Service Design and Implementation Scoring Criteria – (15 Points Total)		
Criteria	Points	What Reviewers Will Evaluate
Integration of Community Input	5	Clearly describes how participant and stakeholder input meaningfully informed program design.

Ongoing Engagement Plan	5	Outlines how community voices will continue to influence implementation, monitoring, or refinement.
Methods of Engagement	5	Use of appropriate and inclusive methods for collecting input (e.g., advisory boards, focus groups, partnerships).

Collaboration Scoring Criteria – (10 Points Total)

Criteria	Points	What Reviewers Will Evaluate
Clarity and Relevance of Partnerships	4	Proposal identifies relevant partners and describes the collaboration's alignment with program goals and community needs.
Defined Roles and Responsibilities	4	Clearly outlines each partner's role and contribution to program success, particularly in joint applications.
Position on the Collaboration Spectrum	2	Accurately identifies the level of collaboration and explains how it enhances service delivery and system coordination.

Fiscal and Organizational Management Scoring Criteria – (15 Points Total)

Criteria	Points	What Reviewers Will Evaluate
Leadership and Governance	4	Leadership team and Board have strong, relevant experience. Governance structure supports oversight and accountability.
Financial Systems and Controls	4	Financial systems and internal controls are clearly described, appropriate, and sufficient for managing public funds.
Audit and Fiscal Accountability	3	Audit history is clean or demonstrates effective resolution of findings. Financial practices ensure compliance and transparency.
Grant Management Experience	4	Applicant demonstrates successful experience managing similar grants, with strong fiscal and programmatic outcomes.

Attachment II: Definition of Terms

Essential Human Services (EHS): Essential Human Services (EHS) are those that meet the fundamental needs necessary for survival, stability, and well-being 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. 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. 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.

Housing instability: Encompasses several challenges, such as having trouble paying rent, overcrowding, moving frequently, or spending the bulk of household income on housing. These experiences may negatively affect physical health and make it harder to access health care.

Incubator Grants: A new type of AFHS funding award between $7,000 and $10,000 intended to provide flexible low barrier funding that empowers the successful applicant to develop and test new, innovative or developing programs or services that will advance or promote *stability* and foster *thriving* in the City of Alexandria communities. 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. The goal of an AFHS incubator grant is to:
- Encourage creative problem-solving to respond to key trends and emerging issues
- Support grassroots or community-driven solutions
- Provide an opportunity to explore promising models
- Help build capacity and generate evidence of impact for future scaling or long-term funding

Indicator: A type of measurement that evaluates the state or success of a program or policy. A good indicator will be easily interpreted, be grounded in research, and will be collected in a timely manner. Increases, improvements or reductions need to be included.
- Measurable: Can be quantified using data (e.g., numbers, rates, percentages).
- Relevant: Reflects important aspects of population health or health system performance.
- Comparable: Can be used to compare between regions, populations, or over a prescribed period.

Innovative practices: Innovation is intended to promote new, more effective, and equitable ways of addressing essential human needs. Nonprofits may demonstrate innovation in one or more of the following ways:
- Service delivery innovation: new approaches that increase efficiency, accessibility, or impact
- Systems change innovation: initiatives that address root causes not just symptoms
- Cross-sector collaboration: partnerships across service areas to improve reach or impact
- Equity-driven innovation: practices that ensure services reach the most marginalized populations
- Sustainable Impact: programs that build long-term solutions, rather than short-term relief

LGBTQIA+: An umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of sexual orientations and gender identities. Abbreviation to denote lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual. +(plus) acknowledges and includes all other identities not covered by the letters.

Measurement Tool: The instrument or method used to determine the funded program/project's impact, outcomes, or effectiveness. These include but are not limited to pre- and post-tests, user satisfaction surveys, and knowledge assessments.

Mini Grant: A new type of AFHS funding award between $7,000 and $10,000 to support smaller scale, specific, short-term projects or initiatives.

Outcome Measures: Outcome measures are specific indicators used to assess the results or effects of a program, intervention, or treatment — particularly in terms of its impact on individuals, populations, or systems.

Outputs: The direct products of program activities and may include types, levels, and targets of services to be delivered by the program. They are the products that result from the activities. Through outputs we "count" what the program does (e.g. number of participants, frequency of classes, hours of tutoring, circulation, number of brochures distributed).

Promising practices: An activity, procedure, approach, or policy that leads to, or is likely to, improved outcomes or increased efficiency for health centers.

Public health innovation: The creation and implementation of a novel process, policy, product, program, or system leading to improvements that impact health and equity. Tenets of public health innovation include the following:
- It is an ongoing, systematic process that can generate incremental or radical changes.
- It requires both collaboration with diverse team members and partners and co-production with people with lived experience who will be affected by the results of the innovation.
- It is an open process lending itself to adaptation or replication.

Service/Program Activities: What the program does with resources or grant funds. Activities are the processes, tools, events, technology, and actions that are an intentional part of the program implementation. These interventions are used to bring about the intended program changes or results. They are the services provided by the program and can be thought of as the "verbs" of the program.

Tamarack Institute's Collaboration Spectrum: A tool that helps groups understand and define different levels of collaboration, from competition to deep integration, by examining the intensity and function of their partnerships. Please refer to the link found in Attachment III.

Attachment III: Links To Helpful Resources

Links to plans and reports useful to the development of your grant application will be made available through the grant portal.

- Alexandria City Council Priorities- https://www.alexandriava.gov/city-council/city-council-priorities
- Alexandria Fund for Human Services Evaluation April 2025- chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/alexandria_fund_for_human_services_afhs_evaluation_april_2025.pdf
- Alexandria's Age Friendly for a Livable Community Plan - https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/dchs/adultservices/age-friendly-community-plan=may2018.pdf
- Alexandria's Community Health Improvement Plan- https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/health/ahdfinalchip6162021.pdf
- Children and Youth Community Plan- https://media.alexandriava.gov/docs-archives/dchs/childrenfamily/cymp2025.pdf
- City of Alexandria Equity Homepage-https://www.alexandriava.gov/Equity
- Department of Health and Human Services' Measuring Outcomes Guidebook - https://cfmco.org/app/uploads/2024/10/Measuring-Outcomes.pdf
- Developmental Assets Profile o*f Alexandria City Youth* – https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2022-08/Attitudes%20and%20Behaviors%20Survey-ACPS-aggregate-Feb2022.pdf
- National Institute of Health Evidence-Based Public Health Practice - https://prevention.nih.gov/research-priorities/dissemination-implementation/evidence-based-practices-programs