



Carpenter's Shelter

Alexandria Hubert N. Hoffman, Jr. Center

18
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June 13, 2025

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Mayor Ayia Gaskins and Members of the Alexandria City Council
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: Input on AFHS Recommendations

Dear Mayor Gaskins and Members of the City Council,

Carpenter's Shelter is grateful for the opportunity to provide a response to and perspective on the recommendations outlined in the evaluation conducted by Community Science of the Alexandria Fund for Human Services. As a long-standing provider of emergency shelter and a partner in the City's broader efforts to prevent and end homelessness, we recognize the importance of this moment to redefine, realign, and reinvest in what essential human services truly require.

We believe this evaluation offers a thoughtful and necessary shift in how the City partners with nonprofits to support its most vulnerable residents. The proposed recommendations—particularly the redefinition of Essential Human Services (EHS) as a continuum from survival to stability to thriving—are critical. These changes acknowledge what many providers of human services already know: survival-based services lay the foundation for healthy, productive lives. Without stable shelter, food, or safety, people struggle.

This is why we support the evaluation's recommendation to prioritize direct contracts for survival-based services. Emergency shelters like Carpenter's Shelter, which has no contract with the city, state or federal government for its family shelter, cannot suspend operations while awaiting the outcome of a competitive grant process. Supporting foundational services through direct contracts ensures that Alexandria's critical safety net remains intact, consistent, and resilient.

At Carpenter's, we believe reliable service requires reliable support. We view the proposed revisions to the AFHS not as a disruption, but as a beneficial realignment.

True partnership between the City and service providers is essential to addressing and dismantling systemic barriers, and we thank you for your

continued partnership and for creating space for organizations like ours to be part of this dialogue. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the City of Alexandria, to proceed with these recommendations and help realize the establishment of a community where every resident may have the opportunity to thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'S. M. Steene', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shannon Steene
Executive Director