



City of Alexandria

Alexandria Fund for Human Services Independent Evaluation: *Framework Recommendations for the FY 2027-2029 Grant Cycle*

City Council Legislative Meeting

SEPTEMBER 30, 2025



Agenda



- Key Recommendations from Independent Evaluation
- Community Engagement Efforts
- Proposed AFHS FY 2027-2029 Funding Framework Recommendations
- Annual Report
- Critical Dependencies



Council Action Requested

- ▶ **Receive and approve the proposed operational framework and recommendations for the Alexandria Fund for Human Services FY 2027-2029 grant cycle.**
- ▶ **Consider and approve the recommended reporting format for future AFHS grant cycles.**

Independent Evaluation Key Recommendations

The evaluation yielded four broad recommendations with embedded sub- recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** Adopt the proposed Essential Human Services (EHS) definition.
- **Recommendation 2:** Restructure the AFHS for greater impact.
- **Recommendation 3:** Explore the feasibility of increasing the total amount of the AFHS funding to meet demand.
- **Recommendation 4:** Address elements of the Grant Application and Review Process

Independent Evaluation Process, Outcomes, and Data Related Recommendations

Establish a competitive grant making process that focuses primarily on **stabilizing** and **thriving** community well-being.



Employ data-driven metrics to ensure that the most vulnerable populations have the support they need (via funded programs/services) to mitigate crises and that the City of Alexandria fosters the conditions that allow populations to move away from surviving and toward thriving



Expected outcomes focused on the following priorities:

Basic Needs
Fulfillment

Vulnerability and
Equity

Health and
Safety

Economic
Stability and
Support

Social
Functioning and
Cohesion



Require all grantees to commit to the collection of baseline data to include: the number of individuals/households served, zip codes, race/ethnicity of those served and the primary language used by those individuals/households supported.

Feedback and Input that Shaped the Proposed Funding Framework and Recommendations

Community Science Sponsored

- Stakeholder & partner focus groups
- Individual stakeholder & partner interviews
- Stakeholder & partner listening sessions
- Data & feedback validation session
- Analysis of current and past AFHS grantmaking practices
- Interviews with neighboring jurisdiction with a human services grantmaking process

DCHS/City Sponsored

- Stakeholder feedback during the June 10 City Council meeting
- Comments during June 14 City Council Public Hearing
- Post Independent Evaluation listening session
- Framework listening sessions
- Post listening session survey
- September 3rd Community Session (w/ACT)

Proposed Funding Framework Recommendations for the AFHS FY 2027-2029 Grant Cycle

Process, Outcome and Data Related

- ▶ Establish a competitive grant making process that **focuses primarily on stabilizing and thriving community well-being.**
- ▶ **Employ data-driven metrics** to ensure that the most vulnerable populations have the support they need (via funded programs/services) to mitigate crises and that the City of Alexandria fosters the conditions that allow populations to move away from surviving and toward thriving
- ▶ **Expected outcomes** focused on the following priorities outlined in the report:
 - Basic Needs Fulfillment
 - Vulnerability and Equity
 - Health and Safety
 - Economic Stability and Support
 - Social Functioning and Cohesion
- ▶ Require all **grantees to commit to the collection of baseline data** to include: the number of individuals/households served, zip codes, race/ethnicity of those served and the primary language used by those individuals/households supported

Proposed Funding Framework Recommendations for the AFHS FY 2027-2029 Grant Cycle

Grant Process

- ▶ **Request data-driven grant proposals** that prioritize impact.
- ▶ Maintain the **three-year grant period FY 2027-2029**.
- ▶ Publish a **clear evaluation rubric** aligned with funding priorities.
- ▶ Allow **6-8 weeks between the release** of the notice and deadline for submission date.
- ▶ Allow **4-6 weeks between the announcement** of grant awards disbursement.
- ▶ Establish **weekly “office hours”** during the grant application timeframe for general questions and answers.
- ▶ Institute an **abbreviated application and reporting process for mini and incubator grants**.
- ▶ Continue to offer **detailed debriefs to all applicants** so that organizations can improve future proposals.
- ▶ Continue to offer **post-award technical assistance** as needed to support the success of grantees.

Proposed Funding Framework Recommendations for the AFHS FY 2027-2029 Grant Cycle

Funding Recommendations

- ▶ **Utilize competitive grant process to fund stabilization and thriving programs and service:**
 - ▶ The **\$1,505,000** used for competitive grants, including mini and incubator grants
- ▶ **Allocate the remaining \$491,430** to procure programs and services to address persistent conditions related to survival, food, shelter and security. Dollar amount is based on historical spending in these areas.

Proposed Funding Framework Recommendations for the AFHS FY 2027-2029 Grant Cycle

Funding Recommendations (continued)

- ▶ **Continue to convene a Community Advisory Group (CAG)**, made up of local stakeholders and including DCHS Subject Matter Experts to guide and advise funding decisions.
- ▶ Fund **mini grants** to support projects and initiatives in small and emerging organizations.
- ▶ Fund **incubator grants** to support the early development and planning phases of a project. These grants would be intended to help shape initial concepts, establish a foundation for future efforts, and prepare for full-scale implementation or additional funding.
- ▶ **Consider prior AFHS grant performance** when reviewing and determining awards.

Proposed Funding Framework Recommendations for the AFHS FY 2027-2029 Grant Cycle

Funding Recommendations *(continued)*

- ▶ **Continue to convene a Community Advisory Group (CAG)**, made up of local stakeholders and including DCHS Subject Matter Experts to guide and advise funding decisions.
- ▶ Provide funding to **help smaller nonprofits** strengthen capacity and to manage grants.
- ▶ Fund **mini grants** to support projects and initiatives in small and emerging organizations.
- ▶ Fund **incubator grants** to support the early development and planning phases of a project. These grants would be intended to help shape initial concepts, establish a foundation for future efforts, and prepare for full-scale implementation or additional funding.
- ▶ **Consider prior AFHS grant performance** when reviewing and determining awards.

Content for Future Annual Reports

- **Overview of the AFHS and funded Programs and Services**
- Total number of **individuals supported** by; Age ranges & Race/ethnicity
- Total number of **households supported**
- **Primary language** of those supported
- **Service Delivery Heat Maps** ; Zip codes of program/service delivery locations, Neighborhoods program participants & Grantee's program/service delivery locations
- **AFHS Grant Impact** ; Outcomes by grant priority area, Key strategies, Program Outputs, Percentage of grantees meeting proposed outcomes & **Storytelling**
- **Additional resources leveraged** by grantees by grant year/cycle
 - Cash (contributions, fundraising and other grants);
 - Value of Grantee In-Kind Support ; Total number of volunteers, Total volunteer service hours, Cash value of the service & Cash value of non-volunteer contribution
- **Successes, challenges and lessons learned by grant year/cycle**

Critical Dependencies

To meet the timeframes for the issuance of the Notice of Funding Availability, Request for Grant Proposals publication and grant making and awards announcement dependent on the FY 2027-2029 Grant Making Activities Timeline

The ability to meet the revised time frames is dependent upon:

- Timely approval of the recommendations,
- Successful procurement processes for the delivery of Essential Services, and
- An efficient RFGP process.

Delays in any of these areas could result in service delivery delays and/or a compressed grants process. All efforts will be made to ensure the timeframes will be maintained.

Summary

- ▶ Staff recommends an operational framework for the FY 2027-2029 grant cycle that incorporates aspects of the recommendations from the independent evaluation, community stakeholder feedback and guidance from City Council.
- ▶ Staff commits to best practices in grant-making as proposed in the independent evaluation.
- ▶ The funding recommendations include the new features of a dedicated procurement process for essentials services and supporting mini and incubator grants.
- ▶ Community partner concerns include level funding and the proposed funding model.
- ▶ An annual impact report will be created to focus on community impact and investment.
- ▶ Delays in any steps could result in service delivery delays and/or a compressed grants process. All efforts will be made to ensure the timeframes will be maintained.

