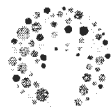


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Volunteer Alexandria
GLOBAL NETWORK AFFILIATE

June 13, 2025
Alexandria City Council
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Subject: AFHS Independent Evaluation

Officers

Nicole McNally
Board Chair

Kevin Greenlief
Vice Chair

Georgina Malloy
Secretary

Veronica Floyd
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Taneika Taylor Tukan

Executive Director

Marion Brunken

2202 Mt. Vernon Ave.,
Suite 200, Alexandria,
VA 22301 | Tel:
703.836.2176

www.VolunteerAlexandria.org



Dear Honorable Mayor Gaskins, and Members of City Council:

Volunteer Alexandria (VolALX) and its Board of Directors would like to express our sincere appreciation of the city's commitment to continue supporting the agencies that provide necessary support for Alexandrians and to evaluate the current grant process.

While we may not be a direct service agency in the traditional sense, the work we do underpins, supports, and in many cases, makes direct service delivery possible. The recommendations in the report are of concern to us and we hope that as the only volunteer center in the city, that we will be considered for a direct contract outside of the AFHS process.

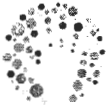
Each day, our organization ensures there is a network of volunteers who are primed and ready to respond to critical needs across the City of Alexandria. When a family faces food insecurity, when a newly arrived immigrant needs translation support, when a nonprofit falls short on staff or a disaster strikes, Volunteer Alexandria is the response team. Our database of trained, reliable volunteers is mobilized in real-time to meet these challenges, filling critical service gaps across the city.

Last year alone, our volunteers completed over 12,000 hours of service assisting in the annual toy drive, collecting and distributing 30,000 pounds of food and supporting over 500 agencies with vital assistance. We are the city's volunteer backbone that quietly but consistently ensures services are delivered swiftly, equitably, and compassionately.

We understand the intention to focus on *Essential Human Services (EHS)*, those that meet the fundamental needs necessary for survival, stability, and well-being. But we ask you to consider this: what happens to essential services when no one is available to carry them out? We can mobilize in a very short time to address pressing needs. We are the infrastructure that allows people to distribute food to hundreds of families, enables agencies to accept 300 children who need a reading tutor, and aid to reach our most vulnerable neighbors.

This isn't hypothetical—our impact is tangible.

- We mobilize 140 volunteers to sort over 3,500 toys to help 600 families referred to by the City of Alexandria and other agencies.



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- Volunteers step in at a considerably cheaper amount than hiring staff to do the work agencies are being asked to do.
- When COVID struck, we didn't shut down—we ramped up.

Increasing funding and limiting it to a smaller pool will most likely exclude Volunteer Alexandria from becoming a grantee and may have wide-reaching consequences.

A direct contract would allow us to recruit, manage, and deploy volunteers needed to support any needs of city and nonprofit agencies in the City of Alexandria and Alexandria serving Alexandrians. We are not a nice-to-have. We are a must-have.

We look forward to continuing this discussion and finding the best ways to support our community.

Thank you for your leadership and ongoing commitment to supporting the well-being of Alexandria's community. We look forward to hearing from you.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Nicole McNally
Board Chair

Marion Brunken
Executive Director