



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: DR. DAVID C. ROSE, DIRECTOR, ALEXANDRIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of a Grant Application to the National Association of County & City Health Officials to Address the Needs of People with Disabilities in COVID-19 Preparedness Planning, Mitigation and Recovery Efforts.

ISSUE: Should the City Council retroactively approve an Alexandria Health Department competitive grant application of up to \$75,000 to the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) to focus on addressing needs of people with disabilities in COVID-19 local preparedness planning, mitigation and recovery efforts.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the submission of a grant application to NACCHO; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all the necessary documents that may be required.

BACKGROUND: With support from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Division of Human Development and Disability, the National Association of County and City Health Officials is soliciting applications from local health departments across the country to fund projects that address the needs of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness, including COVID-19 planning, mitigation, and recovery efforts. If funded, Alexandria Health Department's (AHD) Public Health Emergency Management Division will build upon the strong work done by our Population Health Division with disabled residents and partner organizations in Alexandria. AHD will partner with the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia (ENCV) and other partners to strengthen our emergency operations plans and to help our residents become more prepared and resilient for future pandemics and disasters.

Access and functional needs support for those with disabilities has been noted as an area for improvement in our emergency preparedness and response After Action Reports (to analyze the management or response to an incident, exercise or event by identifying strengths to be maintained and built upon, as well as identifying potential areas of improvement). This grant will allow us to hire a Disability Specialist that will focus on editing and updating our emergency plans, as well as the training and exercises of those plans, to better include the needs of Alexandrians with disabilities.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis for an approximately 12-month period beginning January 1, 2023 to December 30,

2023. The maximum amount that may be awarded is \$75,000 per health department. This will be the first time that AHD has applied for this funding opportunity.

DISCUSSION: We realized that we were missing an underserved group in regards to preparedness planning, mitigation, and response: our disabled residents. During COVID-19's response Alexandria Health Department partnered with other organizations in our community, such as ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia and DCHS to make sure we were reaching these residents. AHD even initiated a homebound program that served the population unable to leave their home to get vaccinated for COVID-19. We need to make sure that we are not only reaching them during a response but preparing them beforehand, as well.

If a grant is awarded, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be established between Alexandria Health Department and National Association of County and City Health Officials. Our support entity will be the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia. Alexandria Health Department will be exclusively managing the grant funding and reporting.

The goal of this program is to improve local health department capability to effectively address the needs of people with disabilities when planning for and responding to outbreaks, pandemics, natural disasters, and other national emergencies. For instance, the Disability Specialist would work to ensure adequate accommodations are planned for people with disabilities to obtain vaccine or medications which are mass distributed to the population, public health emergency response personnel are educated and have the correct resources to address specific functional needs of the disabled community during a disaster, and individuals with disabilities are aware of how best to be prepared for their specific needs in case of emergencies.

Through this grant partnership, the funds can be used for a Disability Specialist to address preparedness and response needs, including to:

1. Ensure that issues impacting people with disabilities are included in public health planning, training, and exercise efforts;
2. Establish and devise a plan to support AHD's Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM) Division to maintain partnerships between organizations that serve people with disabilities and public health and emergency response entities;
3. Work with these internal and external partners to Identify gaps in public health emergency response for disabled individuals and address the gaps or identify what further resources are required for a solution;
4. Participate in evaluation activities to track and measure progress of the above activities.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no required fund match from the City and, therefore, no additional fiscal impact other than staff time to manage the grant. The maximum amount that may be awarded is \$75,000 per health department.

STAFF:

Dr. David C. Rose, Health Director
Jasmin Johnson, Public Health Emergency Management Coordinator
Ionela Lutai, Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator
Juan Martinez, Business Administrator
Antonio Cuadros, Fiscal Officer
Natalie Talis, Population Health Manager
Dr. Anne Gaddy, Deputy Health Director