



## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2018.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Category: \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

In a new initiative launched in November 2017, the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) partnered with Fairfax County Public Schools' Homeless Liaison Office to deliver 300 backpacks full of books and fun early learning materials to displaced and homeless children in five Fairfax County shelters. One of the reasons for this partnering initiative is that it is difficult for the library to provide outreach programming to children who are in family emergency shelters and not enrolled in any child care program. However, by working with a partnering agency, FCPL was able to provide library bags to this population, enabling the library to both promote literacy and use of the library and our many resources.

Another reason for this focus is that the library is dedicated to helping all children in Fairfax County get ready to read. "Half of children from low-income communities start first grade up to two years behind their peers," according to *Generation to Generation: Realizing the Promise of Family Literacy*. FCPS's Homeless Liaison Office is responsible for ensuring that homeless FCPS students (preschool through 12th grade) are identified, enrolled, and granted equitable access to education. After joint discussions of ways to promote literacy and library awareness, FCPL decided the best approach, based on budget and resources, was to create book bags that the Homeless Liaison Office and the library worked together to prepare and then distribute to five homeless shelters.

The Fairfax Library Foundation provided the funds to purchase book bags, puppets, crayons, Play-Doh™ and various print materials to encourage parents and caregivers to engage in reading, talking, singing, writing and playing with their young children, which is a successful way for them to learn and get ready for reading.

Some initial research was conducted to match the appropriate number of backpacks with the projected need. According to the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, from October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016, there were 293 children age birth to five in homeless family shelters. Based on this

number, the library created 300 library bags for families who seek shelter at one of the five family emergency centers. This enabled FCPL to put directly into the hands of many families resources that can help parents interact with their children in ways that support early learning. The book bags also serve as a reminder that the library is a valuable neighborhood resource. FCPL feels this program is a strategic use of agency resources and is a model could easily be replicated around the state. FCPL will be providing this service on a biannual basis for new and incoming families at shelters across the County.