



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2020.** 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: Loudoun County

Program Title: A New Partnership Model to Enhance Human Services and Influence Positive Social Change

Program Category: Health and Human Services

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

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Title: Assistant County Administrator

Signature:  6/26/2020

A New Partnership Model to Enhance Human Services and Influence Positive Social Change

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of a new human services partnership model – based on true collaboration between Loudoun County government and the non-profit community – is proving to be essential to effectively and efficiently fill the emerging gaps in human services associated with the rapid growth and diversification of Loudoun County.

By collaborating with community partners on two initiatives (improving the county’s existing nonprofit grants program and developing the county’s first Human Services Strategic Plan) the partnership model has produced desired outcomes in the form of improved processes and programs. In addition, the human service strategic planning process—sitting down together and discussing shared goals, recognizing system tensions, building relationships, and gaining trust—has been instrumental in the success of Loudoun’s collaborative response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROBLEM AND CHALLENGE

Over the past few decades, Loudoun County, Virginia, has experienced dramatic economic and population growth and diversification. Though one of the wealthiest localities in the nation, the county has faced challenges in meeting the demands for increased human services associated with the county’s rapid development and growth.

Within this dynamic and challenging context, the county realized that a new approach was necessary. In 2016, the county partnered with the Virginia Tech Institute of Policy and Governance to conduct a needs

assessment to identify service, resource, and funding gaps and to develop recommendations to improve the ability of Loudoun nonprofits and public agencies to meet existing and emerging resident needs.

Gaps were identified within all areas of priority human services. While Loudoun's nonprofits and public agencies are currently providing essential services such as supportive housing, access to affordable housing, transportation, health care access, disability services, employment, and food assistance, the county's rapid growth and the increasing diversity and complexity of human service needs has outpaced providers' abilities to fulfill those needs.

Local governments cannot meet these needs alone; sustained cross-sector collaborations and mechanisms that leverage public, private and nonprofit funding are required. Central coordination of services between public agencies and nonprofits is also essential to future success.

It became clear that a new partnership model – based on true collaboration between local government and the non-profit community – would be essential to effectively and efficiently fill the emerging gaps in human services associated with the rapid growth and diversification of the county.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In 2018, 2019 and 2020, the county government and the nonprofit community have jointly implemented two recommended initiatives to put the new program model into practice:

Improvements to the county's nonprofit grants program

To improve the county's existing nonprofit grants program, several key changes were implemented, indicating the innovative, collaborative nature of this partnership:

- Direct funding relationships were established with six nonprofit organizations whose continued performance and services were deemed vital to the health and social safety net within the

county. These service areas include a federally qualified health clinic; a clinic providing free medical care; a dental clinic providing reduced-cost dental services; an emergency shelter offering domestic violence services; a volunteer-based transportation and care provider; and a center providing reduced-cost speech and hearing services.

- The nonprofit grant program's preexisting areas of need were modified to align with the most critical human services outcomes identified in the assessment:
 - Prevention and Self-Sufficiency
 - Crisis Intervention and Diversion
 - Long-Term Support
 - Improved Quality of Human Services
- Funding for the program was established at the programmatic level, rather than allocated to specific areas of need, to give the program more flexibility and to more closely reflect the changing needs of the community.
- Funding levels for each applicant organization were set at zero and applications required a minimum application score from the review team to be considered for funding.
- A mini-grant program was established to provide funds up to \$5,000 for specific, innovative projects or for small or new organizations.
- Staff developed and presented well-attended trainings focused on grant writing basics, development of strong goals and outcomes, and a detailed overview of the process. Webinars were posted on the county's website for those not able to attend, and staff provided additional guidance to nonprofit applicants, including reviewing scoring criteria and responding to applicant questions.

Ultimately, the new funding structure implemented worked as it was intended to: with direct funding for core services that the county relies on and competitive funding for high-quality human services

demonstrating how they meet community needs. Overall, nonprofits and staff appreciated the new process and supported the changes.

Human Services Strategic Plan

In 2018, a human services workgroup, which included the public, nonprofit and private/ business sectors as well as consumers of services, was charged with developing a three- to five-year strategic plan for improving and implementing collaboration among the public, nonprofit, and private sectors.

As a result, in July 2019 Loudoun County, in partnership with local nonprofit organizations, adopted the county's first, community-wide [Human Services Strategic Plan](#) (HSSP). The plan was developed through a wide-ranging, collaborative effort by the Loudoun County government, the Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties and the Loudoun Human Services Network (LHSN). The HSSP Steering Committee, an ad hoc committee of the LHSN, comprised approximately 21 representatives from government, nonprofit, philanthropies, and business, chosen to ensure representation of the county's diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual identities.

The Steering Committee represented a new approach to human services planning: by having such broad and deep participation from the human services network, the plan became a shared endeavor, rather than a "county" plan with stakeholder input.

Eight community conversations in February and March, 2019 brought together Government and Public Sector Providers, Patients and Clients, Business Leaders and Community Members, and Nonprofit Executives, Volunteers and Leaders. 133 people representing more than 60 different organizations attended at least one of these sessions. An online community survey, open from February 8 – 24, 2019 for people who could not attend a community conversation but still wanted to provide input. 390 people responded to at least one question in the survey; 67 people provided their email addresses so that they could receive additional information about the project. The purpose of this survey was to

provide an alternative to in-person meetings and to gather feedback about community needs and priorities.

The completed plan provides a roadmap for implementing improved, coordinated systems of care that meet the county's human service needs in areas such as affordable health care, child care and housing, creating a healthy, thriving, safe, and inclusive Loudoun community.

The plan has five major goals:

- Close critical service gaps for vulnerable or underserved members of the Loudoun community;
- Improve health and wellness outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health that challenge the Loudoun community;
- Optimize access for people seeking services by integrating the Loudoun human services system;
- Meet the growing needs of the Loudoun community through the development and coordination of resources and funding practices; and
- Enhance the quality, capacity and delivery of services by strengthening the network of human services providers.

To implement the strategies outlined in the plan, a Human Services Strategic Plan Advisory Committee has been appointed by the County Administrator, and is carrying out a prioritized implementation plan. The Committee is staffed by a newly created position within Loudoun County Administration, a Human Services Project Manager, who facilitates Committee and Subcommittee meetings, and coordinates work on the 28 objectives and nearly 100 strategies included in the Plan. The 16-member Committee is comprised of Standing Members with specific roles in Loudoun County Government and Loudoun Human Services Network, as well as Representative Members from philanthropic, faith-based, nonprofit, educational, business, and underrepresented communities.

IMPACT AND AWARD CRITERIA

The unprecedented level of community engagement and true collaboration has resulted in innovative solutions to Loudoun's human services challenges. By working with the public, nonprofit and private/business sectors (as well as consumers of services) as **essential partners**, rather than as peripheral contributors, identified gaps in existing services and service provision are beginning to be addressed.

With the constraints, challenges, and opportunities of the COVID-19 pandemic, the human services providers and county government have been pressed into service to meet critical human services needs.

During this time of challenge, the new model of partnership developed through this program has served the county well:

- We have a better sense of the number of families living in or on the edge of financial insecurity.
- We have more clarity about the areas with highest needs.
- We have seen the capacity of our nonprofits rise to respond to emergency situations.
- We have created or strengthened partnerships and networks during the pandemic response that can be utilized to respond to service gaps identified in the HSSP.

Although the COVID-19 crisis has created many new challenges, the human service strategic planning process—sitting down together and discussing shared goals, recognizing system tensions, building relationships, gaining trust—has been instrumental in the ongoing success of Loudoun's collaborative response.