

## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

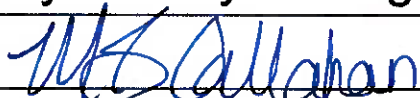
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Henrico County  
Program Title: Hydration Station  
Program Category: Health & Human Services

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Name: Monica Smith-Callahan  
Title: Deputy County Manager for Community Affairs  
Signature: 

## **Program Overview**

The Hydration Station initiative was developed to address hydration needs among individuals with developmental disabilities, including an aging population, within the group day program Hermitage Enterprises at Henrico Area Mental Health & Developmental Services. The program encourages participants to increase their water intake by offering a variety of flavored, sugar-free options and electrolyte-enhanced beverages, making hydration both accessible and enjoyable. Dehydration is one of the top five conditions linked to preventable deaths of individuals with developmental disabilities.

It is a simple concept - introduce drinking water several times a day, using a modern barista model. Staff use water cups and fill them with different low sugar flavorings for individuals to enjoy.

Outcomes of the program include increased water consumption, improved energy levels, and strengthened social connections among participants. The addition of participant feedback forms has further personalized the experience, empowering individuals to influence flavor selections and program development. The Hydration Station has become a cornerstone of health and social engagement within the program, demonstrating how a simple yet innovative approach can deliver meaningful and measurable benefits.

## **Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality**

The Hydration Station initiative was prompted by the need to address low hydration levels among individuals with developmental disabilities, including an aging population, within the day program. Dehydration poses significant health risks, including fatigue, confusion, and urinary tract infections, particularly for aging individuals who may already face additional health

challenges. Staff observations indicated that many participants were not consuming adequate fluids, highlighting the need for a proactive solution to encourage increased water intake. Many individuals have this risk of hydration in their medical information.

By addressing hydration needs through the Hydration Station, Hermitage Enterprises demonstrated its commitment to preventative health measures and equitable access to essential resources for individuals with developmental disabilities.

### **How The Program Fulfilled Award Criteria**

The Hydration Station initiative is a testament to innovation, inclusivity, and health promotion within our program for individuals with developmental disabilities. The program has successfully improved participants' well-being by addressing a fundamental need for increased hydration while fostering social engagement and a sense of community.

What sets the Hydration Station apart is its simplicity and scalability. The initiative has delivered measurable health benefits with minimal resources and created a positive cultural shift toward hydration-focused habits. Its adaptability to different program areas and its role in enhancing social interactions demonstrate a holistic approach to meeting health and social needs. The Hydration Station has become integral to Hermitage Enterprises and could be easily replicated. It is now mobile, moving to different areas of the building as a social activity.

This mobility allows the Hydration Station to reach more people and have a greater impact. Individuals with disabilities can interact with people without disabilities. For instance, they can encourage people in the building to try the Hydration Station, and they can assist in flavor selection. This gives those with disabilities experience with self-advocacy and talking to

members of the public. At the same time, it provides an opportunity for those in the general public to have interactions with individuals with disabilities.

### **How The Program Was Carried Out**

One station was set up in one area. Bottles of flavored syrup were set out, looking almost like a “mocktail bar”, giving the ambience of something special. Individuals were invited over to test different flavors, even mixing for added fun. Once they decided on a flavor, they were given a cup of water with flavoring. The atmosphere was one of celebration.

This was then replicated in other areas of the building. It was clear this station needed to be mobile, so a small cart with wheels was purchased, allowing the station to more easily move through the building and ultimately to other locations.

This mobility is a highlight to getting the Station engrained in the program culture. It is now used for many activities throughout the building and set up for most social events. There is a plan to continue to take the station to other locations throughout the year.

### **Financing and Staffing**

The Hydration Station initiative was designed with a focus on affordability and sustainability, ensuring that its implementation and ongoing operations could be maintained within existing budgetary constraints. This approach reflects the county’s commitment to delivering impactful programs that address critical health needs without incurring significant costs. There were initial investments in a rolling cart, and inventory. Ongoing costs are less than \$50 per quarter for the purchase of the flavorings.

The initial development costs for the Hydration Station were minimal, with many expenses directed toward purchasing sugar-free flavored water options, electrolyte-enhanced beverages, and reusable dispensers. The program also utilized existing program spaces and lightweight, portable equipment, which eliminated the need for infrastructure investments. Total setup costs were estimated at \$250. This one-time investment allowed the program to launch successfully.

## **Program Results**

Quantitative measures of success include increased water consumption and decreased reports of dehydration-related health issues. Licensure requirements for programs now include tracking individuals who are at risk of dehydration. This station has assisted staff in reporting on the improved drinking habits of individuals.

Qualitative outcomes, such as participant enthusiasm and positive feedback from staff, further underscore the program's impact. When the Hydration station was set up at the annual holiday party, everyone enthusiastically lined up for holiday-named drinks after very energetic dancing. The Hydration Station was highlighted during the Developmental Disability Awareness month. The station was taken to three different County of Henrico locations. The individuals who manned the station not only shared their favorite flavors, but they also distributed a zine, a small magazine that described what they learned in their self-advocacy training. It was exciting to see their engagement with the public and other County employees. The Hydration Station has not only improved participants' physical health but also enriched their quality of life by creating a supportive and engaging environment.

## **Executive Summary**

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Outcomes of the program include increased water consumption, improved energy levels, and strengthened social connections among participants. The addition of participant feedback forms has further personalized the experience, empowering individuals to influence flavor selections and program development. The Hydration Station has become a cornerstone of health and social engagement within the program, demonstrating how a simple yet innovative approach can deliver meaningful and measurable benefits. It has also become a traveling showcase for the individuals, sharing their station experience outside training rooms, and other county locations during staff events.

