



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact [Gage Harter](#) with any questions.

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: Monica Smith-Callahan

Program Overview

Henrico County Recreation and Parks (HCRP) and Henrico Area Mental Health and Developmental Services (HAMHDS) partnered to launch a mobile work crew program that provides meaningful, competitive-wage employment for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) while simultaneously filling critical custodial needs across county recreation facilities. Sparked by the employment journey of a Hermitage Enterprises participant, the collaboration created structured, supported custodial roles, set schedules, and clear expectations, delivering reliable facility maintenance and inclusive workforce opportunities.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

During the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic, HCRP faced unprecedented operational challenges. Demand for sanitation and facility cleanliness surged as public health guidelines required enhanced cleaning protocols, yet the department struggled with persistent staffing shortages for custodial roles. These positions, historically prone to high turnover, became even harder to fill as the labor market tightened and interest in part-time custodial work declined. The county needed a dependable, sustainable solution to maintain its recreation centers at the high standards expected by the community.

At the same time, individuals with IDD continued to encounter systemic barriers to employment. Common obstacles included a lack of accessible transportation and limited on-site supports to reinforce task sequences and workplace routines, barriers that often ended employment opportunities prematurely. Hermitage Enterprises, a program within HAMHDS, sought dignified, competitive-wage positions for its clients, where they could demonstrate their skills and feel valued as team members.

The mobile work crew model emerged as a creative response to these dual challenges. By embedding transportation and job coaching into the workday, the program eliminated two of the most significant barriers to employment for individuals with IDD. This structure ensured participants could arrive reliably, receive guidance when needed, and perform their duties successfully. For the county, the model provided consistent custodial coverage without increasing overhead or compromising service quality. In short, the program transformed a systemic staffing problem and an equity challenge into a shared opportunity, delivering cleaner facilities, inclusive employment, and a replicable framework for other localities.

How The Program Fulfilled Award Criteria

This program exemplifies innovation by transforming a traditional custodial staffing model into a dynamic, inclusive workforce solution. Rather than relying on conventional hiring practices alone, Henrico County reimaged service delivery by integrating transportation, on-site coaching, and structured scheduling into a mobile crew system. This approach converts common employment barriers, such as lack of transportation and limited job supports, into built-in program strengths, ensuring consistent facility maintenance while creating equitable employment opportunities for individuals with IDD.

The program also demonstrates exceptional collaboration. HCRP and HAMHDS, through Hermitage Enterprises, worked hand-in-hand to design and implement the model. This partnership included shared training, coordinated scheduling, and integrated supervision, ensuring that crews function as part of the county team. The collaboration extended beyond logistics to include joint problem-solving and continuous improvement, reinforcing the county's commitment to interdepartmental cooperation and community inclusion.

As a model for other localities, the program is both replicable and scalable. Its structure, monthly invoicing, standardized schedules, and clearly defined roles can be easily adapted to other departments or jurisdictions. The program requires no additional operational costs beyond wages, making it economically sustainable. It addresses multiple award criteria by improving operational efficiency, advancing diversity and inclusion, and enhancing public trust through visible, community-centered outcomes. By meeting critical staffing needs while promoting healthy living environments and equitable employment, Henrico County demonstrates how local governments can achieve measurable results through creativity and collaboration, an approach that is both economically prudent and socially impactful.

How The Program Was Carried Out

The program originated from a single success story. Initially, HCRP hired an individual with an IDD through a traditional inclusive employment approach. This employee demonstrated strong motivation and capability but encountered common barriers faced by individuals with IDD, such as transportation challenges and the need for occasional on-site task support. Rather than allowing these obstacles to end the employment journey, HCRP partnered with HAMHDS and Hermitage Enterprises to develop a creative, sustainable solution.

Together, the agencies designed the mobile work crew model, which integrates transportation and job coaching into the daily workflow. Under this model, a Hermitage Training Specialist transports and supervises a team of three workers with IDD, ensuring they arrive on time and receive guidance as needed. The crew rotates through multiple recreation facilities, two on Mondays, two on Tuesdays, and one on Fridays, performing light custodial tasks such as cleaning baseboards, floors, windows, restrooms, and removing debris. As the program proved

successful, additional centers were added, and today seven individuals rotate among five facilities each week.

To ensure seamless integration, full-time county custodial staff provided initial training, while supervisors aligned expectations, supplies, and schedules to support consistent operations. This collaborative approach allowed the program to scale without disrupting existing workflows, creating a structured, inclusive employment pathway that benefits both the employees and the county.

Financing and Staffing

The program was designed to operate within the county's existing budget, requiring no additional operational or capital costs. By leveraging current resources and processes, Henrico County avoided expenses typically associated with new program launches, such as technology purchases, facility modifications, or additional full-time staff. Hermitage Enterprises submits monthly invoices to HCRP for hours worked by the mobile crew. These invoices are verified against attendance records and approved by HCRP supervisors before being routed to the Senior Controller for payment. This streamlined billing process ensures transparency, accountability, and fiscal discipline.

Staffing efficiency is a cornerstone of the program's success. Rather than creating new county positions, the initiative utilizes existing supervisory capacity within HCRP and incorporates Hermitage Employment Specialists to provide transportation and on-site coaching. This approach eliminates the need for additional county FTEs while ensuring that workers receive the support necessary to succeed. The Training Specialist model also reduces turnover risk and enhances productivity by embedding job coaching into the workflow.

From a financial perspective, the program demonstrates that inclusive employment can be achieved without increasing overhead. The only recurring cost is the hourly wage paid to crew members, which is competitive and fair, reinforcing the county's commitment to equity. This cost-neutral design makes the program highly replicable for other localities seeking to balance operational needs with social impact. By aligning fiscal responsibility with workforce innovation, Henrico County created a sustainable model that delivers measurable benefits for both the community and the county.

Program Results

The partnership between HCRP and HAMHDS has delivered measurable, lasting impact. The program successfully filled essential custodial positions that historically experienced high turnover, creating stability through a structured, supportive employment model. By embedding transportation and job coaching into the workflow, the mobile crew approach fosters longevity and reliability, two qualities that were previously difficult to achieve in these roles. This consistency has improved operational efficiency and reduced the administrative burden of frequent rehiring, while ensuring facilities remain clean and well-maintained.

Beyond operational gains, the program has transformed lives. Seven Hermitage Enterprise participants now rotate through five recreation facilities each week, earning competitive wages and working in environments where they are respected as team members. The flexible crew structure not only meets current staffing needs but also offers a scalable path for expansion into other departments and job types, reinforcing the county's commitment to inclusive employment. The program's success has been recognized publicly. In 2025, both the initiative and its participants received two awards honoring their "dedication to creating inclusive workplaces that empower individuals with disabilities" during National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

These accolades underscore the program's role as a model for equity and innovation in local government.

For the community, the benefits are clear: cleaner, better-maintained facilities, improved customer experience, and visible evidence of Henrico County's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. For participants, the program provides not just a job, but a sustainable career pathway supported by training, coaching, and a sense of belonging. This dual impact, operational excellence and human empowerment, illustrates why the program is both effective and worthy of replication.

Executive Summary of Program

Henrico County's mobile work crew initiative aligns mission-critical facility maintenance with inclusive, competitive employment for adults with IDD. Co-led by HCRP and HAMHDS/Hermitage Enterprises, the program integrates transportation and on-site coaching into daily custodial operations, ensuring workers are equipped to succeed, and centers are consistently maintained. The model is innovative in its design, collaborative in its governance, and replicable in its processes, using monthly invoicing, standard schedules, and integrated training to keep costs low and quality high. Results include filled vacancies, improved cleanliness, and dignified, sustainable employment for residents who have historically faced barriers to work. In short, Henrico County solved two pressing challenges with one practical, compassionate program. The program demonstrates public-sector innovation, interagency partnership, and a blueprint that other localities can adopt to strengthen services and advance equity.

