Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

Assessment of Information Access

Target Area:

Community Supports

**2021-2022 Competitive Grant Program
Request for Proposals (RFP)**

(Awards to begin September 1, 2021)

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Request for Proposals
Competitive Grant Program

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (the Board) is the Commonwealth's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council. The Board's mission is to **advance opportunities for independence, personal decision-making and full participation in community life for individuals** with developmental and other disabilities. The Board's grant and contractual investments are designed to advance its mission and support the tenets of full inclusion by working with organizations at the local, state, and national levels to achieve our goals.

Overview and Purpose

Through this RFP, the Board seeks to support statewide efforts that are culturally and linguistically competent, and results in assessment recommendations that address needed changes to policies programs and systems, to improve information access. To view past grants, go to: Grants Highlights.

The Board considers cultural competence to include the following: the organization has defined values, principles and policies that demonstrate that (1) diversity and differences are valued; and (2) the organization is able to work effectively across cultures and adapt to the cultural context of the communities being served.

Available Grant Funds

The Board may fund up to **$100,000** to one selected grantee for the current grant cycle. The Board may award all or a portion of available funds. The Board may choose not to award grant funds if budget limitations are encountered or if it determines that none of the grant proposals received will achieve the desired systemic change. The grant period for this RFP will be approximately **9 – 10 months**.

Grantees are required to contribute a **minimum match** (cash or in-kind) of **25 percent of total project costs** (grant funds + match). Federal funds cannot be used as match.

Entities with a federally negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) agreement may elect to charge indirect costs to the project and a copy of the ICR agreement must be included with the application. Board staff will review the ICR agreement to determine the most appropriate cost rate. Entities that do not have a negotiated cost rate agreement may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC definition can be found in the Grants Manual). In light of the Board's limited funds availability, **applicants are strongly encouraged to use indirect costs towards the minimum match requirement.**

Through the Board's grants process, we will <u>not</u> support the following:

- ✓ Existing projects or services that are a part of an organization's current program or budget;
- ✓ Projects that would supplant or replace existing federal, state, or local dollars to conduct the project;
- ✓ Projects which have a federal, state or local mandate to be delivered by the applicant organization;
- ✓ Projects which include capital expenditures for the acquisition of land or buildings, new construction or major repair.
- ✓ Projects that do not directly align with one or more of the Board's State Plan Objectives specified in the RFP.
- ✓ Projects that do not ensure meaningful diversity and inclusion, and are exclusive of an individual's race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, disability, and veteran status
- ✓ Projects that take place in restrictive, isolated, or segregated settings that do not promote community integration for children or adults with disabilities.

Board Objectives and Target Population

Projects should be designed to **achieve systems change**, i.e., to transform fragmented approaches into a coordinated and effective system which ensures that individuals with DD and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, needed community services, individualized supports, and other assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life. The project must focus on the ability of **people with developmental disabilities**, in particular, and **their support networks**, to access information on community services and supports. The definition and all **submission requirements** can be found in the Grants Manual. Be sure to review the Grants Manual prior to submission of a proposal.

Projects that will be Considered for Funding

Applications must address the target area, listed below.

Target Area	Description
Community Supports	Support improved **community infrastructure, services and supports, including paid and unpaid supports** for individuals with developmental and other disabilities. **Goal**: By October 2026, more Virginians with developmental disabilities and their families, reflecting the state's geographic and cultural diversity, will have increased ability to access paid and unpaid services and supports that enable community living

TARGET AREA: Community Supports

State Plan Objective 1: By October 2026, the Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives to improve how people with DD and their families identify, understand, plan, access, and utilize available community services and supports.

Background: People with developmental disabilities and their families have difficulty accessing reliable and understandable information about the system of services and supports that are available in Virginia. Currently, information is inconsistently provided through a fragmented network of local entities, service providers, schools, and state agency websites and information bulletins. The system in Virginia is complex and is not user-friendly, resulting in a lack of information, confusion, misinformation, and/or concerns about access to needed services and supports.

Per § 51.5-33 of the Code of Virginia, the Board is required *"to submit an annual report to the Governor, through the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, that provides an in-depth assessment of at least two major service areas for people with disabilities, to be determined by the Board…".* At its June 9, 2021 Board meeting, the Board approved the Assessment of Information Access as a State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 assessment topic. The Assessment of Information Access deliverable will serve as one of the Board's required assessments per the Code of Virginia.

Scope of Project: Through this study, the grantee will deliver a clear and concise written report in an agreed-upon format to the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities ("the Board") by **May 1, 2022,** that will comprehensively assess qualitative and quantitative information about:

1. how and where people with developmental disabilities and their families currently access information about community services and supports across the life span,

2. whether the information accessed provides them with the information they need,

3. systemic barriers to accessing useful information, and

4. recommendations and strategies to improve how information about the system of services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities is accessed and used.

Research and recommendations should:

1. include examples of emerging and best practice and creative and innovative solutions,
2. address any changes needed to both individual components of information access and the service system as a whole,
3. address any systemic inequalities in information access due to accessibility (508 compliance and plain language), location, culture, language, age, and other relevant factors and suggest countermeasures to eliminate the inequalities,
4. identify current and potential information-sharing partners, like Community Service Boards, Area Agencies on Aging, Centers for Independent Living, No Wrong Door, local Special Education Advisory Councils, etc., and

5. identify any research limitations and further research that is needed.

In addition, this study should focus on accessing information about **Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services** for individuals with developmental disabilities (1915 (c) Medicaid waivers). The study should also **address accessing information on non-Medicaid-funded community-based services and supports**, which may include, but not be limited to the following: Social Security benefits e.g. SSI/SSDI; financial supports for people with developmental disabilities and families; and, family supports.

Research methods may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An environmental scan of formal and informal information access points in Virginia and other states
- Interviews or focus groups with:
    - individuals with developmental disabilities
    - family members of individuals with developmental disabilities
    - advocacy and stakeholder organizations
    - service providers
    - other states that have emerging, promising, or best practices
- A review of any relevant policies and procedures
- Surveys
- Review of any relevant and available data, such as data collected by organizations regarding how people heard about them

The Board is seeking the insight of RFP responders on how best to achieve the scope of this project including required research and recommendations. Proposals must present the proposers' current research plan in sufficient detail to demonstrate their understanding of the problem and the soundness of their approach for completing the assessment.

Performance Measure Requirements

Applicants <u>must</u> demonstrate that their project aligns with <u>at least one</u> of the federally required **Performance Measures** so that desired impacts are clear. Some of the performance measures that may be most relevant to this project are listed in the table below, and see Appendix C of the Grants Manual for a complete list of the performance measures and their meaning. Long-term measures are generally a **result of the activities** undertaken by the grantee and as the name suggests, they usually occur over a longer period of time. Applicants may select a combination of the measures but the project's scoring is weighted toward grantees that can successfully demonstrate longer-term impacts. Applicants must also demonstrate to the Board that they have the organizational capacity to collect and report the required data.

Applicants **MUST** include in their grant proposal, the specific federal performance measure(s) that it intends to meet for each activity in the work plan<u>, when applicable</u>, and the relevant

targets. <u>Applicants are not required to have a performance measure for each activity.</u> If you have questions regarding the performance measures, please feel free to contact the Board's Grants Manager, Jason Withers, at 804-786-9375 or Jason.Withers@vbpd.virginia.gov.

Target Area: <u>Community Supports</u>

Systems Change (SC) Federal Performance Measures
SC 1.3 Promising and Best Practices. The number of promising and /or best practices created or supported.
SC 1.4 Training and Education. The number of people trained or educated through systemic change initiatives. This measure does not include information like website hits, social media likes, newsletter subscribers, etc. If the people trained have a disability or are family members of someone with a disability, IFA 1.1 and/or 1.2 should be captured instead.
SC 1.5 Collaboration. The number of collaborative activities with organizations actively involved.
Individual & Family Advocacy (IFA) Federal Performance Measures
IFA 1.1 The number of people with developmental disabilities who participated in Council supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others, and/or systems. You will be required to report aggregate data regarding race/ethnicity, gender, and geographical location (urban vs. rural) of participants.
IFA 1.2 The number of family members of people with developmental disabilities who participated in Council supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect the family, the lives of others, and/or systems. You will be required to report aggregate data regarding race/ethnicity, gender, and geographical location (urban vs. rural) of participants.

Application Submission Process

Eligible applicants may submit a **Proposal application**, which will be reviewed and scored by the Grant Review Team (GRT). Final awards will be made after the review of all received proposals. Key dates are listed below.

Application Activities	Key Dates
Proposal applications due	**July 30, 2021** *by 4 p.m. ET*
Notification of funding decisions by	August 27, 2021
Earliest possible project start date	**September 1, 2021**

The Board only accepts grant applications submitted <u>electronically</u> through the performance management and government resource planning site, DD Suite, which can be accessed <u>here</u> .

In order to submit a Proposal, applicants must first [register](#) with DD Suite to create an account. Please allow sufficient time to complete your account registration. If you experience any difficulties with registration, please see the DD Suite technical assistance page found [here](#).

Proposal applications must be **received electronically** in the **DD Suite** system by **4 p.m. ET** on or before the due dates listed in the above table. **Late submissions will not be accepted for any reason.**

Proposal applications should contain clear and concise information on the following:
☐ **Coversheet**
☐ **Abstract**
☐ **Budget**
☐ **Budget Justification Narrative**
☐ **Budget Form**
☐ **Quarterly Activity Timeline & Expenditure Projections**
☐ **Narrative** (max 20 double-spaced pages)
☐ **Applicant Profile**
☐ **Target Population**
☐ **Involvement of Individuals with DD & Families in Project Development, Implementation and Evaluation**
☐ **Collaboration**
☐ **Systems Change, Capacity Building and Sustainability**
☐ **Work Plan: Project Goal, Objectives, Activities, Outcomes, Stories and Performance Measures**
☐ **Strength of Evidence***
☐ **Evaluation Plan**

Strength of Evidence: Describe in detail the evidence-based model/approach you have chosen and why it was selected for your project, i.e., what is the evidence that supports your approach.

Review and Scoring of Applications

Each *Proposal* will be date and time stamped upon electronic receipt. Late proposals will not be reviewed. After a review for technical completeness, the GRT will review all proposals. Within the dollar amount available, the highest scoring proposals will be recommended to the Board for funding. A project Work Plan (see page 19 in the Grants Manual) must be included with your proposal application and must demonstrate how the proposed objectives and activities align with the selected performances measures.

Stage II   Full Proposal Scoring
Applicant Profile...10 pts
Target Population..5 pts
Involvement of Individuals with DD and Families in Project Development, Implementation and Evaluation..7 pts
Collaboration...6 pts
Systems Change, Capacity Building & Sustainability...12 pts
Work Plan: Project Goal, Objectives, Activities, Outcomes, Stories and Performance Measures...30 pts
Strength of Evidence..7 pts
Evaluation Plan...10 pts
Budget..10 pts
Technical Submission Requirements ....3 pts
Bonus Points (projects with multiple funding sources)..5 pts
Total Possible Points..**105 pts**

Reporting Requirements

The selected grantee will be required to submit **quarterly and final programmatic and financial progress** reports to the Board for review, which include interim deliverables. Interim deliverables may include, but are not limited to, written reports and/or oral presentations on preliminary research questions, research methods, findings, recommendations, and report outlines. Grantees also will be expected to track and share aggregated data about their project and participants. Reporting deadlines and requirements will be included in the award letter and grant agreement. In some circumstances, the Board may require monthly programmatic and/or financial reporting. In addition, some grantees may be required to provide post grant reporting and more frequent reports may be required in certain circumstances.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply for funding from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities' Competitive Grant Program?

Eligible organizations include state or other public agencies, including universities, non-profit organizations or for-profit organizations. The Board encourages braided funding and partnerships. Please be sure to clearly describe the planned role and responsibilities of each partner at all stages of the project. Only one organization can receive the grant and will be contractually responsible for grant administration, reporting and delivery of the project.

Where does VBPD receive its funding?

Board grants are 100% federally funded by the U.S. Department of Health, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Can an organization submit more than one application in response to this RFP?

No.

If I currently have an active grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, can I submit an application?

Yes.

How are grantees reimbursed for project expenses?

All grant payments are processed on a cost reimbursable basis.