



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

**Small Grant Opportunities for Community-Based Providers of Services and Supports for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:
*Engagement and Connection during the COVID-19 Pandemic***

Background & Purpose:

The COVID-19 pandemic is continuing longer than expected, and continues to create unprecedented responses by federal, state, and local governments that impact the lives of all Marylanders, including people with developmental disabilities and their families. Specifically, people remain socially distant, isolated, and sometimes in quarantine. Many providers remain closed, especially for day programs and employment supports, and continue to take other actions necessary to protect the health and safety of the people with developmental disabilities. As a result, people continue to experience isolation, away from friends and family, and the many interactions and engagement of which people were formerly accustomed.

In March, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and The Arc Maryland acted quickly to identify effective strategies that people with developmental disabilities, families, and provider agencies could institute to ensure people continued to engage with peers during this period of social distancing and isolation.

In response, the Council funded \$85,000 to The Arc Maryland. The Arc Maryland provided matching funds and in kind support to provide small grants to 46 community-based provider organizations statewide to identify strategies and activities that ensure people with intellectual and developmental disabilities remain meaningfully engaged, connected to family and friends, and as calm and comfortable as possible during COVID-19. Those small grants directly supported 2,946 people with developmental disabilities in 21 of the 24 counties in Maryland, including Baltimore City, with close to 650 people living in rural, underserved areas.

As a result of the grant activities and the Council's investment, more people stayed connected to families and friends, people with IDD experienced increased access to and knowledge of technology, there was decreased anxiety and increased satisfaction among agency Direct Support Professionals, and people with IDD increased their community engagement.

Due to the success of the former initiative and the continuing connection needs of people with IDD, the Council is once again partnering with The Arc Maryland to distribute \$121,500 to serve residents of Maryland with IDD. We hope this additional opportunity will support providers to purchase technology equipment and subscriptions that will be used to help people remain connected, to alleviate the anxiety caused by social distancing, and promote continued engagement with others.

The small grants (up to \$5,000 per organization) are available to DDA-licensed, certified, or registered providers.

In the capacity of a grant reviewer/small grant administrator of this Small Grant Opportunity, The

Arc Maryland is tasked with soliciting, reviewing, and awarding applications to community-based organizations interested in purchasing technology items and services, such as those listed above and clarified in the FAQ document, to be used by people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Examples of items that may be considered for funding through the Small Grant Opportunity include, **but are not limited to**, assistive technology, Apps, online social opportunities, zoom or other virtual platform subscriptions, and internet service (if grantee details direct connection between the service and the need).

Items may be purchased for single recipients or for use by more than one individual and are intended to promote increased connection, socialization, anxiety-reduction, and increased positive shared experiences. Grants shall be awarded for proposals of \$500 to \$5,000 as approved for funding by The Arc Maryland's Grant Committee, in consultation with the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council.

The Arc Maryland and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council will host an information zoom call on Thursday, February 4 at 12 pm (Noon) to answer questions from interested applicants about the Provider Small Grants Program, use of funds, the application process, reimbursement process and more. If you would like to participate in the call, please register [HERE](#), or contact Arylon Brooks at abrooks@thearcmd.org.

The Arc Maryland, through its solicitation attempts, shall endeavor to secure state-wide impact of the fund, and shall make awards throughout the state (Eastern, Southern, Central, and Western regions).

FAQs

What is the average Grant Award Amount?

This is no “average grant award” as grant funding will be based on the applicant’s ability to demonstrate need and alignment with the Council’s goal for statewide impact and serving underserved populations. We hope to reach as many people as possible with maximum impact to their lives. No grant requests under \$500 or over \$5,000 will be considered.

When is the Request for Funding Proposals open and when is the deadline for proposals?

The RFP opens directly after the information session on February 4, 2021. There is no deadline for proposals. That said, the total fund is LIMITED and will cease to be available once all funds are committed. Proposals will be accepted and reviewed as received (and funding awarded for selected proposals) on the following schedule:

When will decisions be made and awardees notified?

February 22, 2021 First Round Decisions Made. First Round Applicants will be notified of decisions no later than March 1, 2020.

March 8, 2021 Second Round Decisions Made. Second Round Applicants will be notified of decisions no later than March 15, 2021

There will be a Third Round if funds remain to be awarded.

Decisions are made by The Arc Maryland's Small Grant review committee and are final.

How will decisions be made about proposals?

All complete proposals received will be properly considered and evaluated for adherence to guidelines.

Are there any restrictions on use of funds?

Incomplete proposals will not be considered. All required attachments must be submitted with proposals for them to be considered complete. Grant funds may not be used for personnel expenses but organizations may consider their personnel expenses (only state-funded portion of personnel expenses) as in-kind contributions to the project.

Who is eligible to apply?

DDA-licensed, certified, or registered Community-Based Organizations that are supporting people with developmental disabilities as a primary function of their operations.

How do you submit the Small Grant proposal?

Small Grant applications and all attachments including the Small Grant budget form must be submitted to grants@thearcmd.org no later than 5 PM on February 19th for first round consideration. If funds remain after the first round, applications received between February 19th and March 5th at 5 PM will be reviewed on March 8th for second round consideration. If there are any grant funds remaining, there may be a third round of review TBD.

What is the time period for the grant project?

It is expected that items will be purchased with grant funds within 60 days of grant award/acceptance. This is a non-recurring, OTO grant with no current opportunity for renewal from The Arc Maryland. Final Reports are due by June 30, 2021.

What agreements are required for funding and what are the reporting requirements?

Grant recipients will be required to complete standard affidavits and commitment documents for the use of the grant funding, as well as a contract for the use of the funding. The contract requires one final report however interim reports may be submitted for amounts of funding less than the full award which may be drawn down/requested for reimbursement with the submission of the completed reports. Grantees will be expected to conduct pre and post surveys provided by the grantor, and supply disaggregated demographic and other data to the grantor.

Grant recipients will also be required to obtain photo and story releases (for The Arc Maryland and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council) from grant beneficiaries. These standard release forms will be provided by The Arc Maryland to the Grant recipient.

How are grant funds distributed?

Grant funds shall be paid net 10 days after receipt and acceptance of an interim or final report and reimbursement request with matching documentation, including receipts.

What is the total amount of money being distributed through the grant?

The maximum amount of collective funding available for distribution to selected proposal awardees is \$121,500. The total amount awarded may be less depending on the quality of proposals received, and may not, in total, exceed the amount of \$121,500.

Am I eligible to apply if I am not a DDA-licensed, certified, or registered Provider?

You would not be eligible if you are not a DDA licensed, certified or registered Provider. If you are still interested in grant funds to support people with Developmental Disabilities, we suggest partnering with a DDA licensed, certified, or registered provider for this opportunity. Potential grantee organizations, who are supporting individuals **who are not connected with a provider or who self-direct their services**, obtain connection items and fulfill reporting obligations are eligible to receive an additional administrative funding amount of up to \$50 per individual (max) to offset administrative expenses of the sponsoring organizations, data collection, reporting responsibilities, and in-kind requirements. If your proposal is to support individuals who are not receiving provider services (people who are not in traditional services and people who self-direct), please indicate the number of individuals you intend to support through this project. If your proposal is selected for funding, the additional administrative award will be added to your total grant amount.

What role should DDA Providers have in the application process?

As DDA Providers are the eligible applicants, they must be the lead in the process with non-DDA licensed, registered, or certified partners taking on a support role. Only the DDA licensed, certified or registered organization may receive funding and are fiscally responsible for all funds received, data collection, and reporting requirements. Nothing in this advice is intended to be interpreted as a mandated partnership. DDA providers may submit grant requests with or without the inclusion of other community partners in their proposals.

How do I find a DDA Provider to partner with to apply?

You can talk to the CCS organizations for assistance linking with a DDA provider in your surrounding area or find listings of DDA licensed, registered, or certified Providers on the DDA website for each region of Maryland. Click each link below for your regional listings:

- [Central](#)
- [Eastern](#)
- [Southern](#)
- [Western](#)

Do we need matching funds for a project that DD Council typically requires?

Grantees are required to show in-kind or cash contributions to the initiative. This can be accomplished through collection of timesheet data for volunteers and non-federally funded support hours, time contributions of families, or other donations or grant funds (not DD Council or other federal funds). The recommended in-kind or cash contribution to the project is 25% of the total project (value of \$1,667 contribution for \$5,000 grant proposal). Volunteer time and in-kind contributions can be used to fulfill 100% of this intended commitment. Volunteer time is calculated at a rate of \$27.50 per hour. The DD Council has guidance on calculating the in-kind contributions of staff time to research, actively purchase, provide the items or activities, and complete required billing and final reports.

Are there priorities you are looking for in the grant specifications?

We are looking for applications that would help the Council meet their goal of state-wide impact and support of underserved populations. Beyond that, there are no other priorities beyond what has already been defined in this policy document. Grant proposals should show how they will impact current systems of support, for applicability to future positive systems change. Priorities include increasing opportunities for people to remain connected, or become engaged with friends and loved

ones, thus reducing anxiety and stress related to social isolation during this time.

Can I restrict use of funds to a particular group we support (Residential Program, Self-Directed, etc.)?

We suggest using funds for whatever group you support that you believe is in need of funding the most. If you are a DDA licensed provider who has a partnership with an FMS Services provider, you may submit a separate grant request to serve that group of Self-Directed participants and that grant will be evaluated separately from the organization's original grant proposal.

How would you like Question 1 on the application formatted?

The first question in the application can be formatted in whatever way you prefer, such as in paragraphs, a bulleted list, or any other way you feel you can best make the case for support of your proposal.

How recent must my organization's Certificate of Good Standing be?

Your Certificate of Good Standing must be current within the past 30 days.

Is the application available in Spanish?

The application is available in Spanish on The Arc Maryland website. If you require assistance in order to have equal access to the application, please contact Arylon Brooks at abrooks@thearcmd.org as soon as possible and we will do our best to accommodate your translation needs.

Where can I find application materials online?

Application materials are available through the links in the constant contact announcement of the grant and on The Arc Maryland's website at www.TheArcMD.org.

Are the funding amounts of \$500 to \$5,000 per person or per agency?

The funding amounts are the total amounts awarded per DDA licensed, certified, or registered organization.

Can grant funds be used to pay staff?

Grant funds cannot be used to pay existing or new contractual or regular staff (funds cannot be used for personnel).

Can grant funds be used to pay for items I have already purchased?

No, only items and other costs incurred after notification of grant award, AND after acceptance of grant terms and conditions may be reimbursed.

Can grant funds be used for improvements to places of residence (Ramps, fencing, etc.)?

Grant funds cannot be used for housing accommodations that would already be a need outside of our current public health emergency.

Can funds be used to purchase apps or items for an existing piece of equipment?

Yes, enhancements to currently owned equipment will be considered with justification in the application showing how the enhancements, add-ons, or additional equipment would be used to meet the goals and purpose of the grant.

Can I provide virtual support to supported individuals using grant funds?

Grant funds can be used to purchase apps or equipment for virtual supports or enhancements.

Can electronic items such as iPads and digital cameras be purchased with grant funds?

As long as a reasonable justification is given for this type of item, it will be considered.

If I list sources for purchases on my budget form and end up changing the source of a purchase (switching from a store to Amazon, etc.) with a differing price, are you flexible?

As long as the sources switched are noted in your final report, and it is not considered a “material” change, they will be accepted. If you do have a substantial change, such as the types of items you are purchasing, you should contact Arylon Brooks immediately and prior to making the purchase.

If I have been approved for funding, can I make purchases at that time and before receiving the funding with the intention of being reimbursed?

After you have received notice of award AND you have signed and returned required documents, you may make reimbursable purchases.

Who do I contact if I have questions about this opportunity or the grant process?

Please contact Arylon Brooks, Director of Programs, for The Arc Maryland. Arylon may be reached via email at abrooks@thearcmd.org. If you are unable to reach Arylon, please email Ande Kolp at akolp@thearcmd.org or (for emergencies only) call 443-851-9351.

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