![Virginia Board for People with Disabilities]

Strengthening Self-Advocacy in Virginia

2025 Competitive Grant Program
Request for Proposals (RFP)

(Awards to begin July 1, 2025)

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Request for Proposals
Self-Advocacy 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 a local, regional or statewide culturally and linguistically competent self-advocacy organization or program, the purpose of which is to advocate for changes to policies, programs and systems for individuals with developmental disabilities that encourage inclusive communities. Projects funded through this special grant program must be designed to strengthen an existing **self-advocacy organization or program led by individuals with DD**, by improving an organization's skill set, organizational structure, work to effect policy change, and/or sustainability. The Board encourages innovative proposals, based on promising or best practices.

Projects should holistically incorporate cultural and linguistic competence in project design and activities. The National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) at Georgetown University defines **culture** as "…a system of collectively held values, beliefs, and practices of a group which guides thinking and actions in patterned ways." 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; (2) the organization is able to work effectively across cultures and adapt to the cultural context of the communities being served; (3) the organization recognizes the importance of cultural sensitivity towards the target audience; and (4) it is able to incorporate these values, principles and policies in each aspect of policy-making, administration, practice, service delivery and systematically involve consumers, families and community members.

The NCCC defines **linguistic competence** as "…the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively, and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse groups including persons of limited English proficiency, those who have low literacy skills or are not literate, individuals experiencing disabilities, and those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Linguistic competence requires organizational and provider capacity to respond effectively to the health and mental health literacy needs of populations served. The organization must have policies, structures, practices, procedures, and dedicated resources to support this capacity."[1]

[1]The Cultural and Linguistic Competence Assessment for Disability Organizations (CLCADO), National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University https://nccc.georgetown.edu/assessments/clcado.php

Available Grant Funds

The Board has reserved total funding of up to **$100,000 for successful proposals from one or more self-advocacy organizations or a self-advocacy program, within an organization, led by individuals with DD.** The Board may award all or a portion of available funds. We may choose not to award grant funds if budget limitations are encountered or if we determine that none of the grant proposals will achieve our desired outcomes. The Grant period may range from **18 to 24 months**. Grantees will be required to submit an annual renewal application for multi-year funded projects in order to demonstrate project outcomes.

Under this solicitation, 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. If the project primarily serves a Designated Poverty Area, the minimum match requirement is 10 percent of total project costs. Designated Poverty Areas are listed in the Grants Manual, Appendix B.

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 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC definition can be found in the Grants Manual). **Applicants are strongly encouraged to use indirect costs towards the minimum match requirement.**

What We Will Not Fund

Through this RFP, we will not support the following:
- ✓ Existing projects or services that are a part of an organization's current program or budget unless the grant program will expand upon the project or service;
- ✓ 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 take place in restrictive, isolated, or segregated settings that do not promote community integration for children or adults with disabilities.
- ✓ Projects that do not effectively demonstrate cultural and linguistic competence through established organizational policies, structures, procedures and practices.

Board Objectives and Target Population

Target Area	Description
Self-Advocacy	**State Plan Goal:** More Virginians with developmental disabilities and their family members, reflecting the state's geographic and cultural diversity, will be better able to advocate for themselves and others so that they are able to exercise maximum choice, independence, and control in their lives. **Objective:** Establish or strengthen a state self-advocacy organization led by individuals with developmental disabilities through direct funding or other support.

Projects should be designed to strengthen the efforts of individuals with developmental disabilities to advocate for systems change that will 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, individual autonomy, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life.

Projects should also support the self-advocacy organization's work towards being sustainable without funding from the Board. Applicants are strongly encouraged to incorporate activities into their work plan that will support sustainability. Activities could include conducting a needs assessment, developing a sustainability plan, conducting outreach to potential funders, and better communicating the organization's impact.

The target population is self-advocates with developmental disabilities. The organization(s) or project(s) to be funded **must be led by individuals with developmental disabilities**. While a program or project may be part of an umbrella organization, the program's (if not an actual organization's) direction and decision-making must rest with individuals with developmental disabilities who are either serving as staff or as a governing Board or leadership team.

Developmental disability, as defined in federal law, is a severe, chronic, often lifelong disability that causes substantial limitations in several major life activities such as: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, the capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. It is attributable to a mental, emotional, sensory, and/or physical impairment that is apparent before the age of twenty-two. People with developmental disabilities often need a combination of special services, support, and other assistance that is likely to continue indefinitely.

For projects in which there will be direct benefit to individuals, **at least 60%** of the target population that will benefit from the grant, must be persons with Developmental Disabilities (DD). All **submission requirements** can be found in the Grants Manual. Be sure to review the Grants Manual prior to submission of a proposal. In addition, all required reports and other documents should be submitted to the Board in Microsoft Word format.

All project activities will be conducted in consultation with staff to the Board and subject to periodic approvals based on the needs of the organization.

Evaluation Requirements

Applicants **must** identify outputs **and** outcomes that the applicant will report on for each proposed work plan activity, to the extent possible. For information on the difference between outputs and outcomes, see the Grants Manual and tip sheets on the Board's grants webpage. Applicants must identify quantifiable targets for each output and outcome to the extent possible (e.g., 20 people with disabilities trained, at least 15 of whom have a developmental disability; 80% of project participants report increased knowledge).

Applicants must also demonstrate to the Board that they have the organizational capacity to collect and report the required data. If the applicant's evaluation capacity is limited, the applicant should consider allocating up to 10-15% of their proposed budget to external evaluation support. Board staff can provide general guidance about what needs to be collected, and potential collection methods, but do not have the resources to provide substantial support with designing and administering evaluation tools.

Applicants must also collect demographic data for project participants with developmental disabilities and their family members, to the extent possible. The required demographic data currently includes race/ethnicity, geographical location, and gender (see table below), but is subject to change based on federal guidance. Demographic information for other project participants is also welcome, but not required.

Race/Ethnicity
American Indian or Alaska Native
Asian
Black or African American
Hispanic/Latino or Latina
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
White
Two or more races
Other race or ethnicity
Do not know or do not want to answer the question
Geographic Location
Rural
Urban

Do not know or do not want to answer the question	
Gender	
Female	
Male	
Other	
Do not want to answer	

For successful applicants, Board staff will use the applicant's proposal and federal guidance to identify federal performance measures and other required impact data that the applicant <u>must</u> report on. The federal performance measures highlight select outputs and outcomes that are of interest to the Board's federal funders. Board staff reserve the right to require successful applicants to collect data that is not included in the grantee's original proposal but that Board staff deem necessary to demonstrate project impact, based on federal guidance.

Application Submission Process

The review of proposals will be completed as listed in the below table. 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 proposal applications. Key dates are listed below.

Application Activities	Key Dates
Technical Assistance for Proposal submission	March 17, 2025
Proposal applications due	**April 18, 2025, *by 4 p.m. ET***
Notification of funding decisions	June 13, 2025
Earliest possible project start date	**July 1, 2025**

The Board only accepts grant applications submitted <u>electronically</u> through the performance management and government resource planning site called <u>DD Suite</u>.

In order to submit a Proposal Application, applicants must first <u>register</u> 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 <u>DD Suite technical assistance page.</u>

Proposal Applications must be **<u>received electronically</u>** 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
☐ Cultural and Linguistic Competence
☐ Target Population
☐ Involvement of Individuals with DD & Families in Project Development,
☐ Collaboration
☐ Systems Change & Capacity Building
☐ Sustainability
☐ Work Plan: Project Goal, Objectives, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Stories
☐ 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. Cut off scores are at the discretion of the GRT. A project Work Plan (see page 21 in the Grants Manual for required elements) must be developed and clearly demonstrate how the proposed activities align with the Board's Goals and Objectives.

Full Proposal Scoring
Applicant Profile...5 pts
Alignment with the Board's Goals and Objectives**...10 pts
Cultural and Linguistic Competence..5 pts
Target Population...5 pts
Involvement of Individuals with DD and Families in Project Development, Implementation and Evaluation...6 pts
Collaboration..6 pts
Systems Change & Capacity Building...5 pts
Sustainability..8 pts
Work Plan: Project Goal, Objectives, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Stories ....20 pts
Strength of Evidence...7 pts
Evaluation Plan...8 pts
Budget..10 pts
Bonus Points (projects with statewide reach)..5 pts
Total Possible Points...**100 pts**

**Alignment with the Board's State Plan Goals and Objectives – In order to achieve the intended outcome(s), it is crucial for an intended grant project to align with the Goals and Objectives from the Board's 5-Year State Plan. Proposals which do not clearly align may not be recommended for funding by the Board's Grant Review Team (GRT).

Reporting Requirements

All grantees will be required to submit **quarterly and final programmatic and financial progress** reports. Grantees also will be expected to track and share aggregated data about their projects and participants, **which include federally required demographic data**. Reporting deadlines and requirements will be included in the award letter and contract. 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.

The Board requires that the selected grantee provide (in the quarterly program reports, final report, or at other times as requested) **stories about people with developmental and other disabilities and their families whose lives have improved as a result of grant activities**. Examples of the types of stories (who, what, when, where and why) the Board is looking for may include: how someone developed the confidence to speak up for themselves and others, take on leadership roles, influence policy decisions that impact their lives and others, navigate systems and advocate for their rights and the rights of others. The privacy of program participants must be protected at all times. Stories can also describe how an organization's practices were improved or how public policy was improved.

Frequently Asked Questions

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

Eligible organizations include non-profit organizations, for profit organizations and institutions of higher education, including minority-serving institutions (MSI). 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**. For this grant opportunity, the organization or program must be led by individuals with developmental disabilities**.

Where does VBPD receive its funding?

Board grants are 100% federally funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL), Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD).

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

No.

Are Board grantees required to have an active UEI number in order to be a recipient of federal funds?

Yes. An active **Unique Entity Identifie**r (UEI) number is required in order to receive federal funds. On April 4, 2022, the federal government stopped using Dun & Bradstreet Numbering System (DUNS) numbers. The DUNS Number was replaced by the new, non-proprietary identifier that is provided by the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). This new identifier is called the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), or the Entity ID. In order to request a new UEI number, please click [here](#).

Are there community types you're interested in?

We are particularly interested in projects that will strengthen self-advocacy efforts in areas of the state that reflect underserved, low-income and/or culturally diverse communities.

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.