

Transitioning to an Equity-Based Nonprofit Funding Process in Arlington

Community Meeting
Monday, January 9
6:30 pm

Follow up and learn more:

www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/Equity-Based-Nonprofit-Funding-Reform

Introductions

- Context for reforming County Board-awarded human and community services funding

Equity Resolution

Adopted by the Arlington County Board on September 21, 2019

Whereas, Arlington County's vision is to be a diverse and inclusive world-class urban community with secure, attractive residential and commercial neighborhoods where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important; and

Whereas, Arlington County has achieved great success in attaining "secure, attractive, residential and commercial neighborhoods" with engaged citizenry and resilient, sustainable communities, but recognizes this is not the experience of all Arlingtonians: Disparities exist; and

Whereas, Arlington's Destination 2027 April 2019 Report concludes that residents likely to experience poorer outcomes and other disparities include people of color, women, those living in poverty, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ+ community members, and those living with disabilities, in addition to those residents living in certain neighborhoods of the County; and

Whereas, community conditions that affect individual opportunity and well-being include the economy, environment, housing, land use policy, public facilities and infrastructure, healthcare, neighborhoods, education, and social connectedness; and

Whereas, equity is defined as all populations having access to community conditions and opportunities needed to reach their full potential and to experience optimal well-being; and

Guidance to the Manager

The Board gave direction to the Manager in several areas including Metro, cultural affairs and environmental sustainability, for the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

Non-profit funding: The Board directed the Manager to develop a submission tool and methodology to evaluate non-profits with service contracts with the County to evaluate requests they make for more or supplemental funding for substantially the same scope of work, and for a separate evaluation of non-profits that request funding from the Board for scopes of work not currently supported by public funds.



Arlington County Racial Equity Project

WHAT

A working group to center BIPOC(*) community voices in making recommendations for changes to Arlington County's funding processes.

WHY

To **reform** Arlington's community services funding by:

- Integrate BIPOC voices and lived experiences
- Confronting challenges with "The Arlington Way" identified in the 2020 Dialogues on Race and Equity
- Seeking to co-create solutions with community

To **develop** funding decisions that are:

- ✓ More transparent
- ✓ More accessible
- ✓ More racially equitable

WHO

- BIPOC community leaders and representatives of community-based service providers
- Representatives from Arlington County government
- External (national and regional) SMEs and facilitators, incl. UWNCA
- Funded by E Pluribus UNUM Fellowship

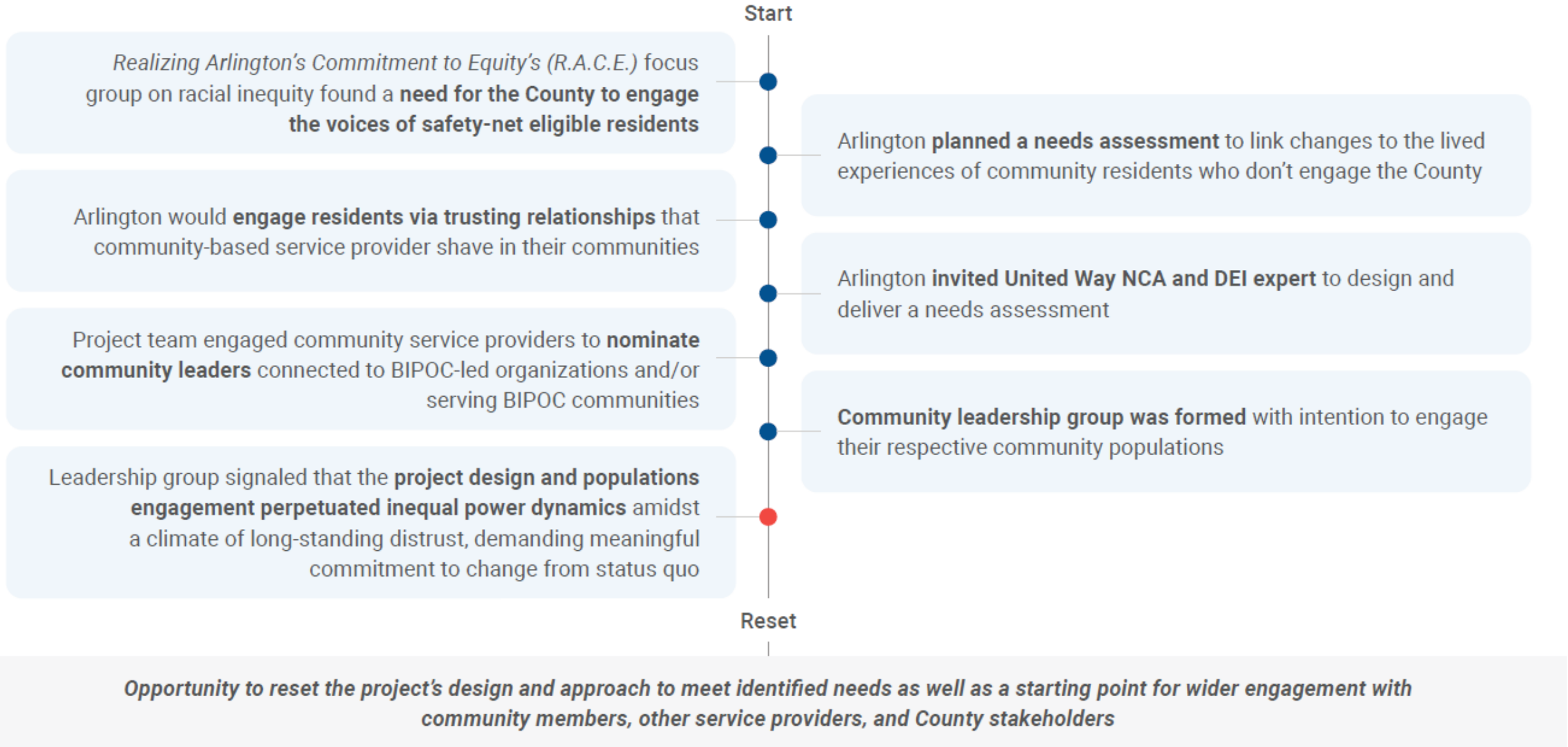
Challenges with "the Arlington Way" identified by participants in 2021 DRE and 2021-2022 Community Leaders Group:

- *Prioritize relationships*
- *Lack transparency/access*
- *Predetermine outcomes*
- *Have historically disadvantaged BIPOC community members and organizations in favor of the "usual" voices*

(*)BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, People of Color

Project Timeline – Phase 1

PROJECT TIMELINE



Timeline – Phase 2 – RESET

REFORM PROCESS

Redefined scope to focus on a specific funding process as evidence of **County's commitment to change status quo**

Co-design and shared decision-making power from the start provided model for true community-government partnership in reforming government practices

Discussion centered on shifting priorities in grant awards to **focus on services received by community members** over needs of organizations providing essential services.

Progress in seeking to **address the underlying root causes** rather than limiting response to latest crises and immediate need

Result is **a set of recommendations** developed to make changes to the process of County awarded funding

REPAIR TRUST

Arlington County and community Leadership Group recognized an urgent need to **repair historic distrust** between community members and County.

Arlington County must continue to **develop internal processes and training** to ensure staff engage community members with a deep understanding of the historic and cultural drivers of inequity that persist today.

Arlington and Leadership group **commit to engaging the wider community** to invite their perspective and contribution toward collective change of structural inequity.

Recommendations

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Develop holistic evaluation approach that invites community to form central part of defining needs, evaluating applications, encouraging collaboration and community voice when selecting awardees

PROPOSALS STRUCTURE

Establish competitive NOFAs that are structured, transparent, accessible, and offer technical support throughout the process

FUNDING AWARDS

Create mechanisms for greater transparency, flexibility and feedback to term-limited awards wherever possible

ACCOUNTABILITY

Balance a system of structured accountability and reporting with responsive and supportive oversight

Recommendations: Proposals Structure



Step One: Call for Proposals

- Clear, competitive and transparent process
- Define “community service” with illustrations and examples, but not restrictive categories
- Technical assistance sessions
- Transparent deadlines and requests for follow up information

Recommendations: Proposal Evaluation



Step Two: Evaluating Proposals

- Holistic evaluation; multi-domain projects welcome
- Organizations invited to define the needs they see in the community & describe plans to meet them
- Evaluation by a panel of subject matter experts and community members, with common racial equity training
- Criteria should explicitly include racial equity and social justice
- Organizations asked to provide details on how they and their proposals reflect “closeness to the community”
- Joint ventures welcome if demonstrated partnerships (vs. sub-contractors)

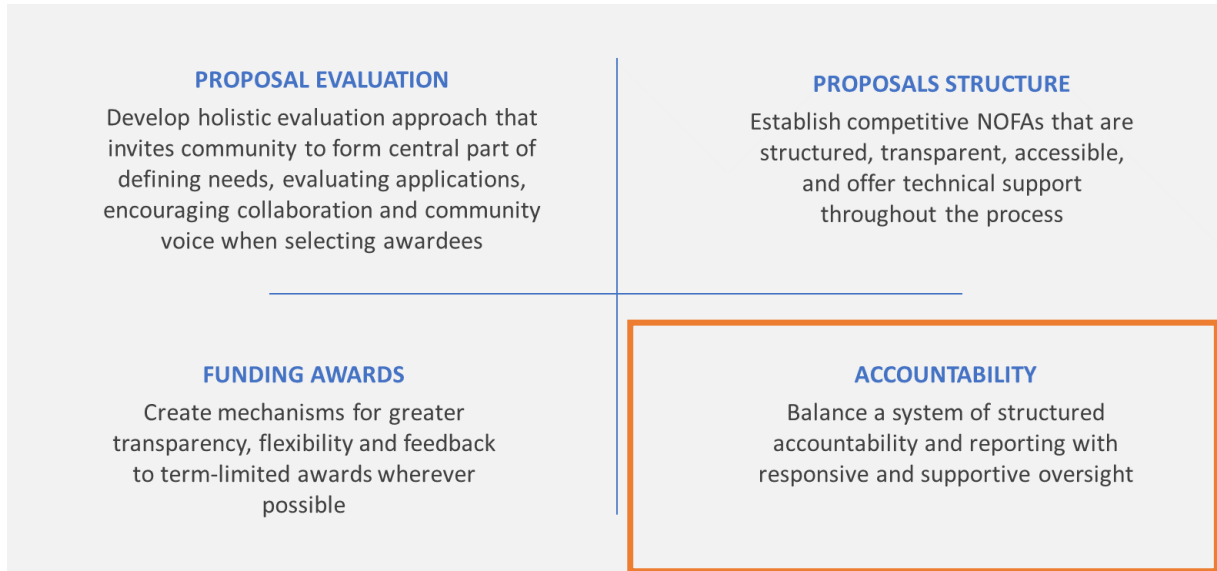
Recommendations: Funding Awards



Step Three: Funding Awards

- Recommended awards for one or multiple years and/or include recommendations for renewal timelines
- Transparent lists of current and previous grantees & amounts
- Individual feedback and written recommendations for organizations that do not receive funding
- Flexibility in use of funding as long as consistent with proposed outcomes
- Awards made by vote of County Board on full set of panel recommendations, not line items

Recommendations: Accountability



Step Four: Accountability

- Funding agreements between organizations and County specific to the grant *and* include perspectives and feedback of community members served
- Technical assistance & services to help small organizations meet their measurement and monitoring plans
- Reporting structures responsive to the grant while balancing oversight of reporting needs

Next Steps

Implement recommendations with fidelity to redesign how the County Board allocates community services funding.

The impact of changes to the grant process will take time, so small incremental changes must be consistent to demonstrate the commitment that the County and community are making in collaborating toward meaningful change and greater racial equity for all Arlington community members.

FY2023 / Q1 and Q2

- County Board engagement on transition plans
- Public engagement on transition: January 9th community meeting
- Implement principles associated with the recommendations – transparent, competitive processes; low “barrier to entry” applications; inviting community-based organizations to define services needed – through existing funding opportunities (e.g. Restorative Justice; Safety Net NOFA)

FY2023 / Q3 and Q4

- Continue to reflect principles during Feb-April 2023 process of developing FY2024 budget
- Develop, along with SME support from United Way of the National Capital Area, capacity within County Manager’s Office to run the competitive process consistent with recommendations

FY2024 / Q1 and Q2

- Run the first Notice of Funding Available competition process

FY2024 / Q3 and Q4

- Panel recommends the first formal awards under the NOFA for the Board to act upon during the development of the FY2025 budget
- Organizations work on measurement and monitoring plans and agreements with County government

FY2025

- Funds disbursed and organizations execute programs and grant agreements

Racial Equity-Based Nonprofit Funding Reform Timeline

Meeting with non-profit organizations
January 2023

County Board Approves Principles and Funding
Spring 2023 (FY '24 Budget)

Panel review and recommendations
Winter 2024

Develop work plans and agreements with grantees
Spring 2024

County Board Resolution
January 2023

Competitive NOFA process
Fall 2023

Announce Grantees
Winter 2024

Distribute funds
Summer 2024 (FY '25, Quarter 1)

Questions and Discussion

- Who's In the Room: Name and organization
- Q & A
- Find more: www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/County-Board/Equity-Based-Nonprofit-Funding-Reform