

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2026 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

April 2, 2025

Question:

What is the short-term solution to bridge the gap between the Northern Virginia Dental Clinic services that is proposed for elimination, and a future dental care model? What is the eligibility requirement to receive NVDC services, and what is the total cost to run the program? Please include background from prior years' discussions for additional context.

Can staff estimate the funds required to contract with Neighborhood Health to expand service offering at the Del Pepper Center, for example providing a specialist dentist either weekly or twice a month?

Response:

The adequate provision of dental care for low income and uninsured individuals and families across Northern Virginia has been a long-term ongoing challenge. The Northern Virginia Health Foundation produced two major studies focused on the issue in 2009 and 2019 that illuminated the major challenges including: access, cost, and coverage and the special needs of children and pregnant women. These issues persist today.

In Alexandria, there have been multiple efforts to increase and coordinate dental care for residents. The Alexandria Health Department, Neighborhood Health and the Northern Virginia Dental Clinic (NVDC) have been the leaders in the provision of this care over the last decade plus. The Health Department operated the dental clinic until 2014 and then transferred the program to Neighborhood Health. NVDC has been receiving City funding for more than 15 years to provide preventative and specialty care. In previous efforts, the City and these partners have worked to address the challenges of access, cost, and available type of care. Some progress has been made reflecting referrals across the programs, increased specialty care, and enhanced dental space available to Neighborhood Health.

Development of Future Dental Care Model

Over the course of FY 2026 DCHS proposes hosting a series of meetings with internal and external stakeholders to include, but not limited to the Alexandria Health Department, Neighborhood Health and NVDC and neighboring county jurisdictions to explore leveraging existing community resources and partnerships. This includes collaborating with local dental professionals, non-profits, and social service agencies to provide interim care.

Factors to consider include:

- Focus on vulnerable populations: Prioritize access to care for low-income individuals, seniors, services to those individuals who do not qualify for subsidy programs and those with disabilities.
- Effective coordination among healthcare providers, community organizations, and government agencies is essential.
- Mapping a comprehensive oral health continuum of care to include all aspects of prevention.
- Addressing disparities using data. Develop tracking instruments to measure oral health needs and trends in our community to allocate resources and where interventions are needed.

Northern Virginia Dental Clinic Information

The Northern Virginia Dental Clinic (NVDC) total monetary annual support provided by the City of Alexandria is \$61,125. NVDC has been the annual general fund recipient of \$25,000 since 2010 and is a current Alexandria Fund for Human Services (AFHS) grant recipient in the amount of \$36,125 through FY 2026. Over the course of FY 2024, a total of 47 City residents were served by NVDC. ***Based on the number of individuals served in FY2024, and noted decrease in service utilization in prior years, AFHS funding would be more than sufficient to cover this service cut without impacting client services.***

NVDC Eligibility Criteria

NVDC accepts only those individuals deemed eligible through an established network of referring social service agencies based on where they live in Northern Virginia. DCHS is the designated social service agency for the City of Alexandria. Individuals must be aged 18 or older, individual/family income must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Number of City of Alexandria Residents Served in FY 2024 by NVDC				
July 2023-June 2024	Appointments Allotted*	Appointments Made	Appointments Kept	No-show
New Patients	168	62	38	24
Existing Patients (FY 23)			8	
Urgent Appointment			1	
Total	168	62	47	24

*168 new patient appointments are allocated annually to DCHS (72 Center for Adult Services/96 Center for Economic Support)

Total Cost to Run the Program

The total cost to operate the NVDC-Fairfax facility where Alexandrians are served is \$1,785,400.

Northern Virginia Dental Clinic Funding		
Source of City Funding	General Funds	AFHS
Annual Funding	\$25,000	\$36,125
Funding Cycle	Annual	Grant funding for 2024-2026
Funding Support*	Dentist (1 FTE)	Receptionist (2 FTE) Part-time Dentists (2 FTE) Dental Assistant (6 FTE)
Proposed Number of Appointments/Individuals Served	168 Appointments	135 individuals

*Funding supports a portion of the salaries of staff listed.

Neighborhood Health Dental Service Sustainment and Expansion

Neighborhood Health currently provides dental services at Mark Center 5 days a week. In calendar year 2024, Neighborhood Health provided 3,827 dental visits to 1,688 City of Alexandria residents in their dental clinics, predominately at the Mark Center. These included 1,945 dental visits to 812 uninsured patients. Neighborhood Health is working to increase their scope of service offerings. They began

offering anterior root canals a few years ago and more recently added a pediatric dentist and nitrous sedation. They hope to expand services further and are glad to join discussions to advance this work.

Based on the current funding challenges faced by Neighborhood Health (loss of pandemic funding, high cost of care for the large number of uninsured patients) it will be necessary to develop a plan to sustain their current services and then to look toward expansion. This could take place as a part of formulation of the future Dental Care Model.