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Council on Developmental Disabilities offers mini-grants to fill gaps and meet individual and family needs related to COVID-19

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities is concerned about the added challenges the COVID-19 pandemic is creating for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and the organizations providing services to them. Late last week, the council approved setting aside $15,000 in a COVID-19 Relief Fund to support time-limited projects that address unique needs and gaps in services.

"The council invites individuals, families, schools, agencies, service organizations and other entities across the state to apply for the funding, which will be available in the form of mini-grants of up to about $1,000, called small innovative grants," said council Executive Director Julie Horntvedt, adding that the council may consider proposals for larger-scale projects.

She said, individuals with developmental disabilities who are living in communities across the state face social isolation and anxiety because they can't safely leave their homes or go to the store to buy needed items. Some have lost jobs. Others have very limited incomes, and they don't have the resources or the technology to stay connected to family and friends.

"Families who had therapy service providers coming into their homes before this pandemic, are now looking for ways to sustain needed therapy services while reducing the health risk to individuals with pre-existing medical issues," said Horntvedt. "Other families may be considering assistive technology or other support to help children with disabilities continue their education at home."

"We want to fund ideas that help overcome current and emerging needs and promote the health and well-being of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families," Horntvedt said.

To apply for funding, complete the Small Innovative Grant Form, which is in the grants section on www.nd.gov/scdd. Individuals with questions should contact Horntvedt at jhorntvedt@nd.gov.

Applications will be accepted until all funds are allocated, and funding will end Sept. 1, 2020.

The council advocates for policy changes that promote choice, independence, productivity and inclusion for all North Dakotans with developmental disabilities. It supports and provides funding for projects and activities that maximize opportunities for individuals and families and serves in a planning and advisory capacity to state policymakers and agencies concerning services for people with developmental disabilities.

For more information about resources for individuals and families and the department's response to COVID-19, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/info/covid-19/index.html.

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