



About Network of Regional Advocacy

NORA's mission/purpose of Network of Regional Advocacy (NORA) is to serve as a grant provider to faith-based and other charitable nonprofit organizations addressing social determinants of health such as food insecurity, healthcare accessibility, housing inequity, financial literacy, workforce development, small business development and other inequities impacting historically marginalize and minoritized communities. Grants target faith-based and other charitable nonprofit organizations serving low-income households and Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) individuals within the South Hampton Roads geographic region. The goal is to provide grant funds to those who historically, have not been able to get them from traditional routes due to lack of knowledge, access, or other structural barriers. According to the Bridgespan Group, a nonprofit organization that provides management consulting to nonprofits and philanthropists, stated, "funding Black leaders and communities with the lived experience of racial oppression is the most direct path to ensuring solutions will truly address the challenges experienced. NORA will act as an intermediary between grant providers and grant recipients".

In 2020, COVID highlighted the inequities impacting the lives of Black and Brown citizens. These were not new. Chronic diseases such as hypertension, heart disease, cancer and diabetes disproportionately impact Black lives. COVID-19 exacerbated these and accelerated the death rate in the Black population as compared to White population. A group of concerned leaders came together to discuss the health of the Black community with Sentara, and it was suggested that the group form as one voice. Hence, NORA was born.

NORA'S Recent Accomplishments

NORA is a newly formed group. As individuals of the collective, the members worked with Pharmacies, HBCU's, the Urban League, EVMS, Sentara and other organizations to register and transport community members to receive COVID testing and vaccinations. They voluntarily, opened their church doors for vaccine administrations and to provide a safe space for the community to receive COVID testing and vaccinations, to remove access barriers and build trust between the community and health institutions (tens of thousands were vaccinated). Many of the church leaders provide needed resources such as transportation, food, assistance with utilities and rent, housing and counseling services. They also serve as an advocate in the court system, social services, navigating the complex health system, education and law enforcement services. The faith organizations have partnered with Sentara and other organizations to educate and engage the community in understanding and improving their health.