

January 1, 2026

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**Web:**

[www.portocharities.org](http://www.portocharities.org)

**Email:**

[info@portocharities.org](mailto:info@portocharities.org)

**Phone:**

571-393-8043

**Mailing Address:**

10660 Page Ave #4446,  
Fairfax, VA, 22038



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Dear School Leaders,

On behalf of Porto Charities, it is my pleasure to invite you to apply for a school grant for the 2026/2027 academic year as we seek to partner with and financially support schools in the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia that enroll students with intellectual and developmental disabilities having skills significantly below grade level and/or requiring a combination of social and academic support with a modified curriculum.

Just as your schools continue to grow and change to best meet your mission and the needs of your students, Porto Charities continues to grow and change, as well. Over the past several months the grant application has been reviewed and edited, bringing it to this current iteration.

Some of the changes that will be evident as you move through the application include:

- a greater emphasis on data collection in order to aid Porto Charities with grant writing and development
- the requirement of a joint letter from the principal and pastor speaking to the school's commitment to inclusion (program director and head of school on the high school level)
- movement away from providing grant money for physical items and instead centering on salary support and professional development
- an interest in understanding the use of paraprofessionals in order to develop methods of training and supporting those individuals.

Applications are due by January 31, 2026. A schedule of interviews will be put together for February and grant announcements will be made in March 2026.

Porto Charities is honored to partner with you and is so very grateful for the dedication of school leaders and educators across the Diocese who each and every day make a difference in the lives of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [mashby@portocharities.org](mailto:mashby@portocharities.org).

Blessings always,

*Maureen Ashby*

Maureen Ashby  
Grant Committee Chair