



Allegheny County

Request for Proposals

Debit Card Payment Service

RFP Posting:

Thursday, March 14, 2024

Office Hours

2 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, March 28, 2024

Questions Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 5, 2024

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, April 18, 2024

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

May 2024

Allegheny County Department of Human Services
One Smithfield Street Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Allegheny County Controller's Office
436 Grant Street, Room 104, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Allegheny County Treasurer's Office
436 Grant Street, Room 108, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Contents

Acronyms and Definitions

The RFP at a Glance

Section 1: Why the County Is Issuing This RFP

Section 2: What the County Is Looking For

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

Section 5: How the County Will Evaluate Your Proposal

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

Acronyms and Definitions

Unless the context indicates otherwise, the following capitalized words are defined as follows for purposes of this RFP:

1. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
2. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3. Bonfire: The County's online procurement software. Proposers must have a Bonfire account to submit a Response to this RFP.
4. Contract Services: The specific services that the Successful Proposer agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
5. Customer Due Diligence Rules: Also known as "Know your Customer" regulations, this rule amends the Banking Secrecy Act regulations and requires covered financial institutions to institute measures to verify the identity of customers when accounts are opened and periodically throughout the banking relationship.
6. Debit Card Payment Service: The service to be contracted through this RFP, consisting of the operation and management of fund distribution for re-occurring payments provided to program participants through reloadable and one-time use debit cards, on a bi-weekly or monthly basis
7. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
8. DHS Bonfire Portal: A Bonfire webpage specific to Allegheny County Department of Human Services where Proposers can view open, past and awarded solicitations released through Bonfire
9. JDEwards: Allegheny County and DHS' financial accounting and reporting system
10. PCI DSS: [Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards](#)
11. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
12. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
13. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
14. RFP: Request for Proposals
15. RFP Opportunity Page: The Bonfire webpage where the RFP and all supporting documents are listed and where the RFP submission documents must be uploaded for a Proposal to be considered for review
16. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

Other terms shall have the meaning or definition as stated in the RFP.

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

The Department of Human Services (DHS), the Allegheny County Controller's Office and the Allegheny County Treasurer's Office, on behalf of Allegheny County, are seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to provide a Debit Card Payment Service (henceforth referred to as the Service) for the County's Foster Care, Family Caregiver Support and Senior Companion Programs, as well as a pilot program for the payment of election officers and constables. The Service will consist of the operation and management of fund distribution for re-occurring payments provided to program participants through reloadable and one-time use debit cards on a bi-weekly or monthly basis.

Successful launch of the pilot program will result in the full-scale payment of all election officers and constables, beginning with the Primary 2025 election.

Award Details

The County intends to enter into a fee-for-service Agreement with one Successful Proposer for an initial term of two years, with a County option to renew for an additional two years. Proposer's cost estimates should include a schedule of costs to the County as well as potential costs to cardholders. Preference will be given to Proposers minimizing costs to cardholders.

Who can submit a Proposal

Anyone, including but not limited to non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals, is eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. Proposers do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to apply, but they must meet all of Allegheny County's contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capabilities to provide the Contracted Services.

Proposals must be submitted electronically by logging into or creating an account on [Bonfire](#) (See Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal).

Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more organizations partner together submit to one Proposal, are permitted. See Section 4.2.c for details.

What's important to us

We're interested in a Successful Proposer with the ability to:

- Ensure accurate and timely implementation of the Service.
- Provide a Service with the capacity to grow and be modified for service enhancement.
- Ensure system and operational security.
- Provide fail-safe disaster recovery and associated business continuity services.

Timeline

RFP Posting	Thursday, March 14, 2024
Office Hours (see section 4.1 for details)	Thursday, March 28 at 2 p.m. Eastern
Questions Deadline	Friday, April 5 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Last Website and Q&A Update	Thursday, April 11 at 6 p.m. Eastern
Submission Deadline	Thursday, April 18 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Estimated Award Decision/Notification	May 2024

Who we are

DHS is the largest department of Allegheny County government and provides publicly funded services to more than 200,000 people annually, in areas including child welfare, behavioral health, aging, developmental supports, homelessness and community services.

More information about DHS is available at <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Services/HumanServices-DHS/About>

As the County’s top fiscal officer, Controller Corey O’Connor leads the fight against inefficient and inequitable spending, working to root out fraud, waste and abuse in County government.

More information about the Allegheny County Controller is available at <https://alleghenycontroller.com>

The County Treasurer is Erica Rocchi Brusselars.

More information about the Allegheny County Treasurer is available at <https://alleghenycountytreasurer.us>

Section 1: Why the County Issuing This RFP

DHS

For the purposes of this RFP, DHS has three distinct programs for which we provide funds for participants through reloadable prepaid debit cards. The prepaid card replaces the need for check issuance and redemption, as funds are automatically deposited onto the card. As a component of these programs, participants work with caseworkers to ensure they have the resources and tools necessary to support themselves and family members. Thus, these funds are crucial for program participants to live their everyday lives.

As the current provider’s contract term is set to be completed by the end of our fiscal year (June 30, 2024), we are seeking a Successful Proposer to take ownership of the Service to foster the growth of the Service and facilitate process improvements, when necessary, in collaboration with DHS.

The amounts allocated each month will vary, however, in total, the programs and their average respective scales are outlined below:

Foster Care Program

- Approximately 3,900 cardholders

- Payments are made monthly on a predetermined schedule, which is shared and communicated with the current Provider.
- Total monthly payments average \$3 million.

Family Caregiver Support Program

- Approximately 525 cardholders
- Payments are made once a month
- Total monthly payments average \$110,000.

Senior Companion Program

- Approximately 75 cardholders
- Payments are made bi-weekly.
- Total bi-weekly payments average \$15,000.

The Controller and Treasurer

The Allegheny County Controller and Treasurer processed 225,883 payments to third parties in 2023. Most of these payments are issued by check incurring printing and mailing costs. A goal of the Controller and Treasurer is to increase the number of payments made electronically, including the use of debit cards.

Election Officers and Constables Pilot Program

In addition to payment for these specific programs, the County would like to extend the Service to include payments for individuals who serve as election officers and constables for County elections. This pilot will begin for the November 2024 election cycle and will consist of payment for approximately 25 individuals. The pilot will help identify potential issues and solutions with scaling up to paying all election poll workers and constables via debit cards.

Until now, these payments have been dispersed by check. However, we are now interested in making these payments via debit cards, as we do with the other programs outlined, through either reloadable or one-time use debit cards. Payment for all election officers and constables is \$150, per election day, except for election officers working as Judges of Elections. Payment for Judges of Elections is \$175 plus mileage, per election day.

In 2023, approximately 15,000 payments were made for the Primary, General and Special election-related services with a total cost of approximately \$2.3 million.

Expansion

If successful, the Election Officers and Constables Pilot Program will result in the full-scale payment of all election officers and constable payments, beginning with the Primary 2025 election. A successful pilot may also afford the Successful Proposer the opportunity to provide payments for juror services for the Court of Common Pleas via debit card. The expansion to juror payment by debit cards would be negotiated to begin in late 2025 at the earliest.

If the pilot is unsuccessful, the Successful Proposer will continue to process payments for the Foster Care, Family Caregiver Support and Senior Companion Programs, and the initial two-year term will stand, with a County option to renew for an additional two years based on performance during the initial two-year contract period.

Current Process for the DHS Programs

1. Currently, new program participants are entered into the program and enroll for their debit card through completion of an application, filled out by DHS staff, that includes:

- a. Cardholder Name
 - b. Cardholder Address
 - c. Cardholder Social Security Number
 - d. Cardholder Phone Number
2. These data are used to build a database of all eligible participants, including initial amounts to be paid, timeline for future payments and necessary contact information, which is then shared with the current Provider.
 3. Because payment amounts are unique each month, DHS uploads payment data each month to JDEdwards, the County and DHS's official financial accounting and reporting software, to appropriately schedule and record the payments to be distributed.
 4. Data uploaded to JDEdwards is reviewed for accuracy by all necessary County employees and then shared via a .csv file with the current debit card provider so the debit card provider will be able to upload funds to the appropriate cardholders' accounts on the date agreed-upon with DHS. The total cash needed to fund the cardholder balances is also transferred to the current provider at that time.

Program participants are able to manage funds and process inquiries through the current provider's online platform or by phone with DHS employees, although many of the participants in these programs still prefer telephone communication.

Through this RFP, we hope to find a Successful Proposer who can provide the Service in a manner similar to our current provider so that payments can continue to be made seamlessly through the transition from the current provider to the Successful Proposer. However, we're also open to finding ways to build out the capacity, security and efficiency of the system to make it appropriate for other County-related payments, if decided between the Successful Proposer and the County.

Section 2: What the County Looking For

We are seeking one Successful Proposer to provide a Debit Card Payment Service (henceforth referred to as the Service) for the County's Foster Care, Family Caregiver Support and Senior Companion Programs, as well as a pilot program for the payment of election officers and constables. Preferably, we're interested in a Successful Proposer with relevant experience providing this Service to other government entities.

The Successful Proposer must provide a Service that provides payments in an accurate, timely and secure manner. In addition, the Service should have the capacity to expand as the programs expand and the flexibility to be customized or modified for service enhancements.

2.1 Program Administration and Cardholder Capabilities

The Successful Proposer must propose a Service with a reloadable prepaid card platform, in which:

- The prepaid card can be reloadable to support recurring payments to individual cardholders or as single-load to support one time disbursement of funds.
- The prepaid card is available in a widely accepted and branded (e.g., Visa, Mastercard) debit card that can be used for a wide range of purchases.
- The prepaid card can be used to access cash at ATMs or cash back at point of sale.
- No cardholder credit check or bank approval is required prior to card issuance.

Preference will be given to Proposers who can propose a system that offers capability for the cardholder to set up automatic transfer of funds from the debit card to another banking service

(e.g., bank account, PayPal).

2.2 Security and Controls

The Successful Proposer must provide a Service that adheres to the highest standards of security protocols associated with financial transactions in the United States. Proposers must also understand and be able to comply with [Customer Due Diligence Rules, also known as “Know your Customer” regulations](#). The County will collaborate with the Successful Proposer to ensure that “Know your Customer” regulations are met.

In addition, the Successful Proposer must ensure there are measures in place for disaster recovery and any associated business continuity services.

2.3 System, Training and Support, and Customer Service

The Successful Proposer’s proposed Service must provide a self-service platform for cardholders that allows them to perform customer service inquiries, such as reporting lost or stolen cards, activating cards, reissuing or replacing cards, or investigating cardholder activity.

Currently, many of these inquiries are handled directly by County staff to eliminate potential bank fees for the cardholder. Proposers must detail all costs that may be incurred by the card holder for any customer service inquiries, if applicable. Preference will be given to Proposers with the ability to eliminate as many of these costs as possible.

The County is willing to continue to collaborate with the Successful Proposer to provide administrative support for customer service inquiries agreed upon in collaboration with the Successful Proposer. The Successful Proposer must be able to work in strong collaboration with the County to ensure the Service can be provided to program participants with as little cost to them as possible.

2.4 Implementation Policy, Plan and Timeline

We are interested in a Successful Proposer with significant experience successfully implementing debit card payments services with high quality standards. The following is the proposed implementation plan and timeline for DHS’s service delivery:

- New Vendor Kick Off: Late May/Early June 2024
- Finalize DHS Client Communications Regarding New Service Provider: Mid-July 2024
- Finalize Implementation Test Plan: Late July/Early August 2024
- Begin Funding DHS Programs: Mid-August/Early September 2024

After successful implementation of the Service for DHS programs, the following is a proposed implementation plan and timeline for the Election Officer and Constable Pilot:

- Identification of data fields needed for processing payments: September 2024
- Finalizing Implementation Test Plan: Late September 2024
- Finalize Communication Plan to the 25 election workers and constables: Early October 2024
- Process and Load debit cards for 25 workers: November 5-6, 2024

The Successful Proposer must be able to work collaboratively with the County and the previous provider to successfully implement the new Service so payments can continue to be processed with little to no interruption.

2.5 Payments to Cardholders and Billing to County

Payments to Cardholders: Each month, on an agreed-upon date, the County will provide the Successful Proposer with the amounts to be loaded onto the Cardholder accounts/cards.

Billing to County: Each month, the Successful Proposer will send the County an invoice totaling the monthly fees that have been negotiated in the contract; DHS will pay invoices after approval is obtained each month.

2.6 Data Collection & Reporting

The Successful Proposer will be required to provide standard monthly reporting that includes program and client information, including:

- Card Status by Client
- Account Balance by Client
- Transaction History
- Fee History
- Lost and Stolen Cards
- Decline History
- Negative Account Balances
- Inactive Accounts
- Closed Accounts

2.7 Outcomes

DHS will provide the standard bi-weekly and monthly funding dates for the Successful Provider with the expectation that funds/cards will be issued/reloaded in accordance with these dates 100% of the time. This is key to the success of the Program, as participants depend upon receipt of these funds.

2.8 Budget

Proposed budgets and the budget narrative should be as detailed as possible, providing justification for all necessary costs.

Budgets should include any applicable Cardholder Fees, such as:

- Replacement card fees
- Fees for calling customer service
- Fees for using non-authorized ATMs
- Fees for web- or app-based account management options for cardholder
- Fees for requesting paper statements of cardholder transactions

The budget should also include any fees applicable to the County, such as:

- Transition services such as support for communication and other transition needs between the current and new programs (if specified)
- Setup fees for:
 - Initial program design
 - Initial card information setup and deployment
 - County Program Administrator training
- Ongoing maintenance fees for:
 - Funds upload on existing cards
 - Setup of additional cards
- Account closure and fund escheating service fees (if provided)
- Training: initial training for cardholders and County administrators

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

The County will evaluate Proposals based upon the evaluation criteria listed below. Proposers must address their qualifications in their Proposal by responding to the requested items or questions in the Response Form. Proposers should download and type their responses directly into the Response Form available on the Active Solicitations webpage at <https://solicitations.allegHENYcounty.us/>. The maximum score that a Proposal can receive is 165 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Organizational Experience (20 points possible)

- Description of the Proposer's experience providing Debit Card Payment Services (20 points). Please include:
 - Number of years involved in the Debit Card Payment industry
 - Number of years providing services to government agencies for similar types of payments
 - If applicable, list of current governmental clients for whom your organization provides Debit Card Payment Services

Administration and Cardholder Capabilities (40 points)

- Description of services and products to be provided (10 points)
 - Description of the card to be utilized (e.g., Visa, MasterCard) and the benefits
 - A map of in-network ATMs
- Description of the Proposer's capacity to provide scheduled and on-demand management reports, including all available report types (5 points)
- Sample of each of the top 3 reports most utilized by Proposer's clients (5 points)
- Description of the process and timing for ordering new cards (5 points)
- Description of the process and procedures for how cardholder information will be transmitted from the County to the Proposer's systems for loading funds to cards. Please include: (5 points)
 - Description of the process for adding funds to new and existing cards
 - Type of the file format used to transmit information (csv, txt, etc.)
 - Data fields necessary for each file format used, including whether the field is required or not, and the character length and data type for each field
 - Attachments for any forms necessary for completion of the process
- Description of policies and procedures for following up on inactivated or unused funds, including how dormant funds are identified, the process for contacting cardholder regarding dormant funds, and whether funds are returned to Cardholder via check, to the County, or escheated by Proposer to the state (5 points)
- Description of the Proposer's policy regarding lost or stolen cards and any processes for recovery of funds from lost or stolen cards (5 points)

Security and Controls (35 points possible)

- Description of the process for authorization of changes to cardholder account information and/or authorization of fund transfer activities (5 points)
- Description of the Proposer's resolution policy and process (5 points)
- Description of all Spending, Security and Fraud Controls available in the proposed Service (5 points)

- Description of the Proposer’s disaster recovery plan (5 points)
- Description of how the Proposer will comply with (5 points):
 - Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS)
 - Customer Due Diligence Rules
- Description of security measures that will protect data transmitted between the County and your systems, including the security measures used to store and protect sensitive data (5 points)
- Description of the privacy policy applied to the data being collected. This policy should describe all the business activities that such data will be used for and list any business activities that are prohibited, such as selling the data or information derived from the data to third-party brokers. (5 points)

Implementation Policy, Plan and Timeline (30 points possible)

- Provide your organization’s implementation policy, plan and timeline from the execution of the contract through the initial use of the cards. (30 points)
 - Each task to be accomplished for complete program implementation and start up, including those necessary to support the transition from current provider to initiation of your organization’s Service
 - Specific dates and time periods identified for the completion of tasks
 - Identification of responsibilities to be completed by County staff, your organization or in collaboration

Training and Customer Service (20 points possible)

- Description of training/onboarding offered as part of the Service, including how the training will be conducted (e.g., in-person, web-based) and what training materials will be provided (e.g., videos, manuals, presentations). Please include a description of the initial training prior to Service rollout, as well as a description of ongoing trainings for existing and new cardholders and County staff. (10 points)
- Description of the Proposer’s process and timeline for providing customer service/support through all applicable methods (telephone, email, web chat, etc.) (10 points)

Budget & Budget Narrative (20 points possible)

- Detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs to the County associated with implementing and sustaining the Service, including a list of any potential costs to cardholders (15 points)
- A budget narrative that clearly explains all assumptions and justifies all line items in the proposed budget (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Prepare

a. Office Hours

- DHS will hold “RFP open office hours” at 2 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, March 28, 2024, via Microsoft Teams. Anyone interested in the RFP and in submitting a Proposal may drop in during this time to ask questions.
- Attendance during office hours is not required in order to submit a Proposal. Preliminary answers will be provided orally for questions asked during the office hours. Final, definitive answers will be posted in writing on the RFP Opportunity Page and the DHS Solicitations webpage.

- Prospective Proposers can join the office hours by:
 - Calling (267) 368-7515 and using Conference ID 104 087 696#
 - Or following this link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)
 - Or copying and pasting this link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZDgxYTA5MWQ0NTI0Yy00ZDdkLWEzNDYtODQ3YmIwZGJiMDI2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2214304098-3e8b-4bb4-b68e-65e6055b37bf%22%7d

4.2 Submit a Proposal

- a. Proposers should take time to review and understand the RFP in its entirety including:
 - The background (see Section 1: Why the County Is Issuing This RFP)
 - The narrative (see Section 2: What the County Is Looking For)
 - The requirements (see Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)
 - The evaluation process (see Section 5: How the County Will Evaluate Your Proposal)
- b. Proposers must use the Response Form to develop your Proposal. Type your responses to each requested item directly into the Response Form. It is available on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) on our [DHS Bonfire Portal](#) and on our Active Solicitations webpage with the RFP announcement at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us>.
- c. Collaborative Proposals
 - Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more entities partner to apply together, are permitted. Collaborative Proposals can include:
 - i. Lead Agency: The County can enter a contract with only one partner of a Collaborative Proposal. Therefore, a Collaborative Proposal must identify one entity as the Lead Agency that will be the contracting party with the County. The Lead Agency should be the Proposer.
 - ii. Partners: Partners must be committed to a role in carrying out the Contract Services and will be compensated for that role. Collaborative Proposals must attach a signed letter of commitment from each Partner that details and agrees to their role in the Contract Services.
 - Entities may participate in more than one Collaborative Proposal.
- d. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal that includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
 - Response Form
 - Partner commitment letters, if applicable
 - Sample of each of the top 3 reports most utilized by Proposer’s clients
 - W-9
 - Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 7.1 and 7.2)
- e. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or in the Response Form.
- f. Proposers must make sure to complete each section of the Response Form and to stay within any word counts or page limits specified in the Response Form.
- g. **Proposals must be submitted electronically by logging into or creating an account on Bonfire at <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com> and uploading the required submission documents to the appropriate [RFP Opportunity Page](#) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, April 18, 2024, to be considered for review. If you are having trouble making an account or uploading your documents, please contact Bonfire Support. You can also reach out to the DHS Procurement Team at**

DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us or (412) 350-6352.

- h. All Proposals must be submitted before the deadline! Once the deadline has passed, the RFP Opportunity Page will no longer accept Proposals. If a Proposal is late, it will be rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee (as described in Section 5 below) for review and scoring.
- i. Proposers will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their Proposal. If a Proposer does not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting their Proposal, please contact: DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

4.3 How to Contact DHS about this RFP and RFP Communications

- a. If you have any questions about this RFP, please use the Vendor Discussion feature through the DHS Bonfire Portal at <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com> on the [RFQ Opportunity Page](#), or email us at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.
 - a. All content-related questions must be submitted by the Questions Deadline at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 5, 2024.
 - b. You may submit technical or logistical questions at any time, even after the Questions Deadline.
- b. All information about the RFP, including answers to all content-related questions and any changes or amendments, will be posted on the Bonfire [RFP Opportunity Page](#) and on our Active Solicitations website at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us>. Once you have created an account and indicated you are interested in this RFP, you will receive automatic email updates through Bonfire when any questions, changes or amendments are available.
 - a. Please check our DHS Bonfire Portal and the website regularly for answers to questions, additional information and changes to the RFP or the RFP process.
 - b. The webpage will be updated only on Thursdays, with any new information visible after 6 p.m.
 - c. The last Q&A and website update for this RFP will be on Thursday, April 11, 2024, at 6 p.m. We will make every effort not to post any new information after this time; however, we reserve the right to post new information in emergency circumstances.

4.4 New Provider Requirements

Any Successful Proposer(s) who does not have a current Allegheny County DHS contract must submit the DHS New Provider Application and its supporting documents upon Notice of Intent to Award. Proposers are not required to submit this documentation with their Proposal.

- a. The DHS New Provider Application is available at our Active Solicitations website under the “Required documents” bar at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- b. The DHS New Provider Application asks for audited financial reports for the last three years. If a Proposer does not have audited financial reports for the last three years, then the Proposer may submit other financial documentation that attest to the financial health of the organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing adequate financial documentation is a requirement of contracting through Allegheny County.

4.5 Other Information

- a. **The issuance of this RFP does not obligate the County to accept any Proposal or enter into an Agreement with any Proposers. The County reserves the right to reject**

any and all Proposals and to not enter into an Agreement for the Contracted Services.

- b. Any Agreement originating from this RFP is subject to all the Terms and Conditions specified in Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers.
- c. Proposers are responsible for all costs related to the preparation and submission of a Proposal.
- d. Proposals become the property of the County and may become part of any subsequent Agreement between the Proposer and the County.
- e. Successful Proposal(s) will be posted online in the DHS Solicitations Archive after an Agreement has been fully executed by the County and the Successful Proposer(s).

4.6 Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law

Proposers should be aware that all documents and materials submitted in response to this RFP may be subject to requests for access to public records made pursuant to Pennsylvania’s Right-To-Know Law (RTKL). Under the RTKL, records in the possession of a public agency like the County are presumed to be public records and the County may have to make documents and materials submitted by the Proposer available to a requestor after an award of an Agreement is made.

If the Proposer includes any information within its Proposal that the Proposer asserts is either a “trade secret” or “confidential proprietary information,” as those terms are defined under the RTKL, the Proposer must include with its Proposal a written statement signed by an authorized representative of the Proposer identifying those portions or parts of its Proposal that the Proposer believes constitute a “trade secret” or “confidential proprietary information” and provide contact information to enable DHS to contact the Proposer in the event that the County receives a Right-To-Know request for the Proposal. The Proposer shall have five (5) business days from date of receipt of any notification from the County to provide a written statement signed by an authorized representative of the Proposer explaining why the Proposal or any portion thereof is exempt from disclosure as a trade secret, confidential proprietary information or other legal reason. The County shall consider this statement in either granting or denying a request for public access to the Proposal or any portion thereof. The County will notify the Proposer of its decision whether to grant or deny the request either in whole or in part.

Section 5: How the County Will Evaluate Your Proposal

The County will convene an Evaluation Committee to evaluate Proposals. The Evaluation Committee will assign scores to each Proposal by awarding points based on the evaluation criteria in Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria, by using the point scale listed in Section 5.1 b.

5.1 Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. The County will form an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee, which will be comprised of evaluators with expertise in the subject matter of this RFP, may include community members with lived experience, external subject matter experts, provider representative(s), representative(s) from key partners or funders, and DHS, Controller's Office and Treasurer's Office staff.
- b. All Evaluation Committee members will individually review and score each Proposal. Each Evaluation Committee member will award points for each response on a Proposer's Response Form, utilizing their personal expertise and best judgment of how the Proposal submitted by that Proposer meets the evaluation criteria in Section 3 using the following scale:
 - 0 – Not addressed in Proposal
 - 1 – Poor
 - 2 – Below expectations
 - 3 – Meets expectations
 - 4 – Exceeds expectations
 - 5 – Outstanding
- c. Each 0-5 score will be multiplied by the appropriate weight for the number of possible points noted after each evaluation criterion in Section 3. For example, for a criterion worth 15 points, the 0-5 score would be multiplied by three. An "Outstanding" response would receive 15 points, while one that "Meets Expectations" would receive nine points.
- d. The County will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the average scores, and arrive at a consensus on which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP. The Committee will have discretion to either: (1) recommend to the DHS Director, Controller and Treasurer that a reduced number of Proposals be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation to the Committee, interview or a site visit or (2) recommend for the DHS Director, Controller and Treasurer to request authorization from the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Proposer(s).
- e. As described in d above, the Evaluation Committee, on behalf of the County, shall have the exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Proposals for more extensive review. In this case, the Evaluation Committee may request that shortlisted Proposers make a formal oral presentation to the Committee. Each Committee member will individually score the oral presentation of the shortlisted Proposers using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that a shortlisted Proposer's oral presentation can receive is 15 points:
 - Presentation demonstrates Proposer's ability to implement the Contract Services effectively (5 points)
 - Proposer's answers to Evaluation Committee's questions demonstrate Proposer's ability to implement the Contract Services (5 points)
 - Proposer's presentation is thoughtful and well prepared (5 points)
- f. The County will tally the scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the scores and arrive at a consensus as to which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP.
- g. The Committee will submit its recommendation for award of an Agreement or Agreements to the DHS Director, Controller and Treasurer, for approval. The DHS Director, Controller and Treasurer will, in turn, submit a request

- to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
- h. At any time during the evaluation process, the Evaluation Committee may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
 - i. At any time during the evaluation process, the Evaluation Committee may contact a Proposer's references.
 - j. As part of determining a Proposer's eligibility to enter a contract with Allegheny County, all Proposers' financial audits or other documentation will be reviewed by DHS, the Controller and Treasurer's Office to ensure a Proposer's financial stability.
 - k. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with a Proposer as a result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**
 - l. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
 - m. Proposers that are not awarded an Agreement but who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

5.2 Other Requirements

For a Proposal to be eligible for evaluation, it must be:

- a. Received by the due date/time.
- b. Properly formatted and include responses to all requested information.
- c. Complete with all required forms and attachments.

Proposals which do not meet the above requirements will be automatically rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee.

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, Successful Proposers must comply with all contract requirements listed below and all standard terms and conditions contained in a County contract for provision of services to the County. In addition, Successful Proposers must be able to meet the insurance requirements necessary to provide the Contract Services.

Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County and the insurance requirements are available in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#) and the [Insurance Requirements Overview](#) at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations under the "Required Documents."

6.1 Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) Requirements

Allegheny County has MWDBE goals of 13% participation for Minority Business Enterprises and 2% participation for Women Business Enterprises and expects that Successful Proposers will make a "good faith effort" to help the County meet these goals.

- a. All Proposals must include a completed Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form and supporting documents. The Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form should be completed as follows:
 - All Proposers must complete Section 1 – Contact Information and attach their MWDBE Diversity Plan (see Section 4 – Sample Diversity Policy).
 - If the Proposer can meet the MWDBE contract goals, the Proposer should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement. Proposers also must attach the MWDBE certifications of the firms cited in the Participation Statement.
 - If the Proposer would like to request a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, the Proposer should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement and Section 3 – MWDBE Participation Waiver Request Form.
- b. MWDBE forms and resources can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations:
 - [Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form](#)
 - MWDBE Resources
 - [MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)
 - [MWDBE Guide for DHS Proposers](#)
- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion website](#). You can also view a listing of certified DBE vendors available at <https://paucp.dbesystem.com>.

6.2 Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) Requirement

Allegheny County also has a goal of 5% participation for veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) in all contracts. The County, therefore, expects that Successful Proposers will make a “good faith effort” to help the County meet this goal.

- a. A veteran-owned small business is defined by the County as a business having 100 or fewer full-time employees and not less than 51% of which is owned by one or more veterans, or in the case of any publicly owned business, not less than 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more veterans, and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by one or more veterans. The VOSB vendor **MUST** provide proof of veteran ownership including percentage and name and address of business.
 - For contracts under \$100,000, VOSB vendors are from all bonding requirements.
- b. All Proposals must include either of the following:
 - If the Proposer can meet the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement is required. You must also attach a copy of the VOSB vendor(s) DD 214 discharge form(s) cited in the Participation Statement.
 - If the Proposer requests a waiver from participating in the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement and VOSB Waiver Request are required.
- c. VOSB forms can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations:
 - [VOSB Participation Statement](#)
 - [VOSB Waiver Request](#)

6.3 HIPAA Compliance

DHS is a covered entity under the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Therefore, a Successful Proposer must comply with all HIPAA requirements.

6.4 Cyber Security

- a. Successful Proposers must meet the minimum computer specifications that begin on page 14 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations..
- b. All electronic devices must have sufficient security software and settings to minimize the risk of an information breach.
- c. Successful Proposers must also have policies in place to ensure that electronic devices are physically secure when not in use (e.g., locked in a vehicle trunk, password protected).

6.5 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Requirements

By submitting a Proposal, a Proposer agrees to not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, client or any other person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, familial status, age (40 or over), or use of a guide or support animal because of blindness, deafness or physical disability.

6.6 Language Diversity Requirements

Successful Proposer(s) must assure resources are secured and/or made available for participants/consumers/clients with limited English proficiency or other communication barriers. Such actions shall include but not be limited to assessing the need for interpreters, evaluating the need for alternate language materials, identifying internal and external resources to meet identified needs, and accessing services contracted by DHS through their assigned contract monitor(s).

If any resources for individuals with limited English proficiency or other communication barriers are necessary, DHS will collaborate with the Successful Proposer to make these resources available. The Successful Proposer must ensure they will collaborate with DHS to successfully meet this standard.