

**Allegheny County
Department of Human Services
Request for Proposals Q&A
RFP for Foster Care Agencies**

January 8, 2021

1. How many contracts will be awarded?

That has yet to be determined. There will be multiple contracts, depending on the number and quality of the proposals received and the number of Foster Care homes and beds proposed.

January 19, 2021

2. Do you imagine that 30-50% of homes will be MA billable through a treatment model or just 30-50% will be foster care homes that are certified for level 4 placements? (page 14 of the RFP)

No. The goal is for 30-50% of Foster Care homes to be certified as a Therapeutic Foster Care model. We do not anticipate that the selected TFC model will be Medicaid billable. The new rate structure will not be based on use of the Placement Assessment Test (PAT) and resulting levels.

3. On page 15 you mention MATP. Do you imagine any specific arrangement between MATP and Foster Care agencies?

We do not expect there to be a specific arrangement between MATP and Foster Care agencies. Rather, Foster Care agencies will communicate relevant transportation needs to the Allegheny County child welfare caseworker, and the caseworker will make the appropriate arrangement.

January 22, 2021

We received the following questions at the pre-proposal conference:

4. Can we recruit families from surrounding counties or are they requiring them to stay within Allegheny County?

Yes, you can recruit families from surrounding counties. Children enter foster care from all over Allegheny County and while the goal is to have placement homes in or near their home community, there may be situations where a home outside the County is close and/or may be the best placement for a specific child. While recruitment does not need to be restricted to within the County, the majority of available homes should be within Allegheny County.

5. RE the state budget packet, if we have an extension granted through FY 21-22, are you requiring a new submission anyways or are you accepting the extension the state issued us?

A state budget packet extension allows for rates to continue at the previous year's levels. However, since this program is unique, we assume that costs and rates from a prior year will not apply. Therefore, Successful Proposers will be required to submit a budget packet to OCYF that reflects the specifics of Foster Care in Allegheny County.

6. If we have a specialty service (i.e., any additions or modifications to Foster Care services that that would add cost to the budget) that we want to propose in addition to a baseline service, what would be the recommended format? Should that be a separate proposal or should we submit one proposal with two separate budgets?

Please submit just one Proposal. In the space allotted, you can share your additional ideas and modifications that were not included in the RFP. Please also include them in your line-item budget and be careful to note in your budget narrative the components that are additional.

7. Aftercare is not expected but if we have a proposal/ideas may we include it now?

If you have ideas for aftercare, please find a way to work it into your Proposal using the method described in question three and note the specific and related costs and infrastructure in the line-item budget and budget narrative.

8. For the mental health expertise required for TFC staff supporting placement - can you define the credentials you are looking for?

We are not specifying required credentials. We are asking Proposers to make a recommendation about the mental health expertise required of staff supporting TFC placements based on the TFC model they select. Please describe your recommendation in your Proposal and include it in the budget.

9. Is the intent to develop a fee rate based on level of care for the child? If so, how does the State assigned rate apply to the Provider?

The rate methodology is described in the RFP, see pages 17 and 18. The exact maintenance rates for Foster Care and TFC placements are being finalized based on broad funding considerations and will be shared with Successful Proposers. If there's a reason that Proposers would benefit from knowing this information sooner, we are open to hearing that feedback.

The Administrative portion of the per diem rates for Foster Care and TFC will be based on a Successful Proposer's costs, vetted by PADHS for allowability and then discussed with DHS for reasonableness.

10. The RFP refers to a character count per section and you shared there is a page limit of 30. What should we follow; if it is a character count where do we locate it on the form?

Occasionally we have RFPs with a character count, but most of the time we have just page limits, like we do for this RFP. Your Proposal is limited to 30 pages. There are no character

count limitations. You can use as many characters as you feel is necessary to answer each question, as long as you stay within the 30-page limit.

11. The RFP indicated incentives in the area of recruitment. Can you explain more about this? Does the county have a desirable percentage of the budget for recruitment efforts?

Yes, DHS plans to provide incentive payments targeted at recruitment and retention. The terms of these incentive payments have not yet been finalized. DHS will work with Successful Proposers to create and implement appropriate incentives. If Proposers have ideas about recruitment and retention incentive payments, we welcome those in your proposal. We are not specifying what percentage of the budget should be allocated to recruitment efforts, but ask Proposers to be realistic about their needs.

12. If a provider was to adopt a model suggested in the RFP would there be financial support from DHS to offset the startup and on-going cost?

Yes. Please include in your budget the startup and on-going costs specific for your organization.

13. The RFP references the use of the recruitment toolbox. We have not been able to locate this. Can you provide guidance for locating and sharing how to access?

DHS is still preparing the recruitment toolbox and it is not available now. It will be rolled out with Successful Proposers.

14. The RFP references a possible need to present live. If this would occur how much notice would the provider be given to prepare?

The evaluation process is described in section 5.1 of the RFP. The evaluation committee may request selected Proposers to give an oral presentation. The presentation will be remote over Microsoft Teams and the audience will be the evaluation committee. We will give selected Proposers a series of questions to answer during their presentation with two weeks to prepare. We also may give selected Proposers questions to respond to in writing due a couple days before the presentation. At the end of their presentation, Proposers will have an open question and answer session with the evaluation committee.

15. Is there any cost associated with the technology platforms referenced in the RFP?

No, for DHS's required applications, there are no costs. However, if Proposers want to use any additional technology platforms internally for Foster Care services, they need to include them in their budgets.

16. Will Foster Care for Young People (teen) be phased out and included in this RFP?

Yes, we are including teens in this RFP. Providers who service all age groups, 0-20, will follow the same phasing in and phasing out process.

17. Some of the attachments require the IFB or RFP number but we have been unable to find it. Where can we find this?

This RFP does not have an IFB or RFP number. If you are asked for one (for example, in the MWDBE forms), please leave that section blank.

18. Any thoughts on how the RFP would overlap with CRR (Community Residential Rehabilitation) Host Home providers? Will CRR Host Home be able to continue and function as it is?

Yes, CRR Host Home will be able to continue to function as it is.

19. Will short term emergency respite care be reimbursed at a higher rate?

DHS is not planning to include a separate rate for emergency respite care. However, if a Proposer feels strongly about a need for an additional payment for emergency respite care homes, please include in the proposal; DHS may consider an incentive payment with this focus.

20. If a proposal was submitted in a partnership/collaboration with another agency - would there be one budget submitted for each agency or would the expectation be that they were combined?

Please submit just one budget. If you submit a Proposal in partnership with one or more agencies, you will have only one contract with DHS. One agency in your partnership should be identified as the lead agency who would hold the contract with DHS. Please format your budget with this in mind.

21. Can Affirm and CSEC training be included in Parent Pre-Services Trainings or do need to be separate?

They don't need to be separate, but you need to fulfill the state mandated requirements.

22. Can a proposer do regional work within Allegheny County? (Asking as an agency that is not based in Allegheny County).

Proposers do not have to be located within Allegheny County in order to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. However, we are not dividing the County into regions that Proposers can choose to serve. The RFP is for Foster Care services encompassing all parts of the County. Proposers should have a plan to service all regions of the County.

We do encourage agencies to partner in submitting proposals. This may be an opportunity to partner with another agency in order to serve all parts of the County. We would welcome that in a Proposal (see also question 20).

23. Question 19 in the Response Form asks about contracts with DHS and other PA counties. For Per-Diem and Fee for Service contracts there is no specific contract amount –

how would you like that entered? If we have contracts with many different counties throughout the state for multiple services the list can become quite lengthy can we condense it to the county level instead of listing each service for each county?

For Per-Diem and Fee-for-Service contracts, you may list the per-diem and fee-for-service rate. If your organization has too many contracts to list and would like to condense it, please list only your major contracts (largest dollar amounts) and the contracts that are most relevant to Foster Care. You also may include a comprehensive list as an attachment. We will consider this an allowable attachment that will be given to the evaluation committee. (Please submit only the attachments listed in the RFP. If you submit additional attachments that are not listed, the evaluation committee will not receive them and will not consider them during the evaluation process.)

24. Can you post updated data on the areas that the children are entering foster care from?

See question 31 below.

25. For the expectation of facilitating matching opportunities and pre-placement visits, should we build this into the budget or this an activity that we could leverage SWAN units of service such as the placement unit of service to help support this unfunded cost?

We recommend that you build this into your budget as well as look for other ways to help support this cost, such as leveraging SWAN units of service. In addition, we would like to hear your ideas of how we might use technology to facilitate matching opportunities and pre-placement visits.

26. We have a licensed CRR model that we developed by blending together different evidence-based components from evidence-based models. Should we reference all the different models in our proposals?

If you choose to highlight the components in your proposal, that is your decision.

27. Can we do a blend of models? It does not need to be a specific model?

Correct. It does not need to be a specific model and can be a blend of models. DHS did not prescribe specific models to provide the opportunity for Proposers to choose the best model for their agency.

28. Do we need to incorporate models with fidelity measures?

Proposers are not required to incorporate models with fidelity measures, however it's encouraged. Regardless, Proposers should be clear about why they chose a specific model, and if they're not planning to implement with fidelity, an explanation why.

We received the following questions through email after the pre-proposal conference:

29. In preparing the budget portion of the RFP, I think what I understood from the Pre-Proposal Conference is that we should include all costs associated with operating the CYF program at our agency but not to include the Stipend Payments to the Foster Family Provider, is this correct? What I heard is that County CYF will come up with a rate that will be paid to the Foster Family Provider based on the level of care of the child in the care of the program.

Correct, it is not necessary to include the stipend payments to Foster Care Families in the budget portion of the RFP. However, in the narrative portion of the RFP, the Proposers should discuss specific foster family expenses that should be covered by the maintenance rate.

The County will develop a rate for Foster Care Families based on the age of a child and if the setting is Foster Care or TFC.

30. Regarding references with relevant experience with our agency, would a foster parent be an acceptable reference?

Yes. Proposers may list any references they feel are relevant to the RFP. The one exception is that we ask that Proposers to not use DHS employees as references.

January 26, 2021

31. Can you post updated data on the areas that the children are entering foster care from?

From July 2019 through June 2020, 764 children entered foster care with known addresses active within 30 days of placement and an address within the County. Of these children, the highest percentage had an address prior to their first placement located in McKeesport, Clairton, Homewood (combining North and South) and Penn Hills. The specific counts and percentages by neighborhood are in the table below.

Neighborhood	Neighborhood where children in foster care lived prior to a first placement	
	Number of unique children/youth	Percentage
Allentown	15	2%
Arlington	2	0%
Arlington Heights	2	0%
Avalon	4	1%
Baldwin Borough	6	1%

Bedford Dwellings	9	1%
Beechview	8	1%
Bellevue	4	1%
Beltzhoover	3	0%
Ben Avon	2	0%
Bethel Park	5	1%
Blawnox	1	0%
Bloomfield	5	1%
Bluff	4	1%
Brackenridge	3	0%
Braddock	8	1%
Braddock Hills	2	0%
Brentwood	5	1%
Bridgeville	1	0%
Brighton Heights	8	1%
Brookline	5	1%
Carnegie	7	1%
Carrick	10	1%
Castle Shannon	2	0%
Central Lawrenceville	3	0%
Central Northside	1	0%
Cheswick	1	0%
Clairton	29	4%
Coraopolis	1	0%
Crafton	4	1%
Crafton Heights	7	1%
Crawford-Roberts	2	0%
Crescent	1	0%
Dormont	4	1%
Duquesne	15	2%
Duquesne Heights	2	0%
East Allegheny	5	1%
East Hills	5	1%
East Liberty	4	1%
East McKeesport	7	1%
East Pittsburgh	4	1%
Edgewood	1	0%
Elizabeth Township	1	0%
Elliott	3	0%
Emsworth	3	0%
Esplen	4	1%

Etna	2	0%
Fawn	1	0%
Findlay	2	0%
Fineview	6	1%
Forest Hills	4	1%
Forward	5	1%
Friendship	2	0%
Garfield	7	1%
Glassport	12	2%
Golden Triangle	1	0%
Greenfield	4	1%
Hampton	1	0%
Harrison	11	1%
Hazelwood	3	0%
Heidelberg	2	0%
Homestead	2	0%
Homewood North	14	2%
Homewood South	14	2%
Knoxville	20	3%
Larimer	1	0%
Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar	6	1%
Manchester	1	0%
Marshall	1	0%
Marshall-Shadeland	3	0%
McCandless	5	1%
Mckees rocks	10	1%
McKeesport	47	6%
Middle Hill	2	0%
Millvale	6	1%
Monroeville	15	2%
Moon	5	1%
Morningside	1	0%
Mount Lebanon	6	1%
Mount Oliver	10	1%
Mount Washington	7	1%
Munhall	9	1%
New Homestead	1	0%
North Braddock	11	1%
North Fayette	4	1%
North Oakland	1	0%
North Versailles	1	0%

Northview Heights	2	0%
Oakmont	3	0%
Oakwood	1	0%
Overbrook	1	0%
Penn Hills	25	3%
Perry North	2	0%
Perry South	11	1%
Pine	2	0%
Pitcairn	9	1%
Plum	4	1%
Point Breeze North	2	0%
Port Vue	2	0%
Rankin	3	0%
Reserve	4	1%
Ross	5	1%
Sewickley	2	0%
Shadyside	1	0%
Shaler	5	1%
Sharpsburg	4	1%
Sheraden	8	1%
South Fayette	4	1%
South Oakland	12	2%
South Park	4	1%
South Side Slopes	5	1%
Spring Garden	3	0%
Spring Hill-City View	8	1%
Springdale Borough	6	1%
Stanton Heights	3	0%
Stowe	14	2%
Summer Hill	1	0%
Swissvale	8	1%
Tarentum	4	1%
Thornburg	1	0%
Trafford	1	0%
Turtle Creek	9	1%
Upper Lawrenceville	1	0%
Verona	5	1%
Versailles	2	0%
Wall	1	0%
West Deer	3	0%
West Elizabeth	1	0%

West End	1	0%
West Homestead	1	0%
West Mifflin	25	3%
West View	2	0%
Westwood	5	1%
Whitaker	2	0%
White Oak	2	0%
Whitehall	3	0%
Wilkins	3	0%
Wilkinsburg	29	4%
Wilmerding	5	1%
Total	764	100%

February 2, 2021

32. Is it the county’s expectation that providers will acquire a behavioral health license for therapeutic foster care?

No.

33. For budgeting purposes, the maximum caseload standard in therapeutic foster care is 8, does the county have different case load standards?

No. DHS is not prescribing a specific TFC model and Proposers may follow the caseload recommendations of their chosen model.

34. For the vendor creation form, do we complete it and submit it with the application or do we need to submit it through the County for processing prior to RFP submission?

Please complete the vendor creation form and submit it with your Proposal.

35. For Question 19 in the Response Form, can proposers who are not currently providers of foster care in Pennsylvania list comparable contracts in other states?

Yes.

36. Our contract rates spreadsheet details all of the information asked for in #19 and can be sent as an attachment. Although number #19 asks us to fill out the “chart of services,” is it ok to send our rate sheet as an attachment in lieu of completing the chart?

See question 23. You may send this chart as an attachment; however, please use the column headings of the chart (Service Name, Service Description, Contracting Entity...) and do not add additional columns.

February 3, 2021

37. Are proposers required to have a current foster care license in the State of Pennsylvania in order to apply or be considered for award?

No, Proposers are not required to have a current Foster Care license in Pennsylvania in order to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. However, if awarded an Agreement through this RFP, Successful Proposers must obtain a license to operate Foster Care in Pennsylvania (see RFP page 19).

February 5, 2021

38. Providers will need to know the rates that County CYF plans to pay Foster Parents for services, as it's a cost that we have to report on the State Budget Packet to determine our "cost rate" of overall services. Can you please provide these rates as the budget packet will be due in March?

The relevant PADHS Bulletin providing guidance for the 2021-2022 budget packet process has not been published yet, but the draft indicates that providers shall submit completed budget packets by April 15th. Successful Proposers will be notified in March, at which point DHS will share maintenance per diem rates (amount passed through to Foster Care parents) for normal Foster Care homes and work with Successful Proposers to establish a maintenance per diem rate for TFC homes.