



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

# Request for Proposals

## Methadone Treatment Program for the Allegheny County Jail

**RFP Posting:**

Thursday, February 29, 2024

**Office Hours:**

2 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, March 14, 2024

**Questions Deadline:**

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, March 29, 2024

**Submission Deadline:**

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, April 11, 2024

**Estimated Award Decision/Notification:**

June 2024

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

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# 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. ACJ: Allegheny County Jail (also referred to in this RFP as “the Jail”), operated by the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections
3. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4. Bonfire: The County’s online procurement software. Proposers must have a Bonfire account to submit a Response to this RFP.
5. COD: Co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder
6. 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
7. Continuation: Maintenance services, typically administered by a “guest doser” (the Successful Proposer in the case of this RFP), continued in the Jail for those who are active in methadone treatment in the community prior to being booked into the Jail
8. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
9. DHS Bonfire Portal: A Bonfire webpage specific to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services where Proposers can view open, past and awarded solicitations released through Bonfire
10. DOJ: [United States] Department of Justice
11. FDA: Federal Drug Administration
12. Induction: The first phase of Medication-Assisted Treatment that involves initiating medication treatment. Induction aims to stabilize individuals who are in active opioid withdrawal or at risk of withdrawal, transitioning them onto the medication in a safe and controlled manner. Induction is focused on achieving a therapeutic dose of medication while minimizing withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
13. Maintenance: Once individuals have stabilized on an appropriate dose of medication and are experiencing reduced cravings and withdrawal symptoms, they enter the Maintenance phase. During Maintenance, patients continue to receive the prescribed medication at a stable dose to support ongoing recovery and prevent relapse. This phase is characterized by regular monitoring, counseling and support services to address psychosocial and behavioral factors contributing to the substance use disorder.
14. Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT): an evidence-based treatment approach in which medication for opioid use disorder is used in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies
15. MOUD: Medications for Opioid Use Disorder
16. Methadone: Methadone is a long-acting full opioid agonist and a schedule II controlled medication. It is FDA-approved to treat those with a confirmed diagnosis of opioid use disorder (OUD) and can only be dispensed through a SAMHSA certified OTP.
17. Methadone Treatment Program: the Contracted Services (Program) to be procured through this RFP, which include onsite Induction and Maintenance services at the Jail,

including medically monitored services for pregnant individuals and services that continue people on methadone treatment who were receiving methadone prior to being booked into the Jail. The Program must also have a community-based location where individuals at the Jail's Alternative Housing facilities and individuals released from the Jail can be served.

18. OTP: Opioid Treatment Program
19. ODU: Opioid Use Disorder
20. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
21. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
22. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
23. RFP: Request for Proposals
24. 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
25. Successful Proposer: The Proposer selected by the County to provide the Contract Services
26. SUD: Substance use disorder

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

# The RFP at a Glance

## *Purpose*

Allegheny County, through its Department of Human Services (DHS), is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to provide a comprehensive **onsite** Methadone Treatment Program (henceforth referred to as the Program), 7 days a week, 365 days a year, for the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ), as part of the Jail's broader Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) services. The Program will consist of the implementation and management of onsite Induction and Continuation of methadone, including assessment, diagnostic testing for prescription and Maintenance, and administration of methadone; the Program will also include clinical outpatient services at the Successful Proposer's community-based treatment location. The Successful Proposer must have the capacity to staff licensed prescriber(s) and offer onsite, medically monitored Induction and Continuation services for eligible pregnant individuals.

MAT combines medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) with counseling and behavioral therapies to address substance use disorders. MOUD is backed by evidence and has proven to be effective in reducing drug use, lowering infectious disease transmission rates, preventing overdose and decreasing criminal activity among individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD). (Pew Charitable Trusts, *Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Improve Patient Outcomes*, 2020).

There are three forms of FDA-approved MOUD: methadone, buprenorphine and naltrexone. While all forms of MOUD are offered at ACJ, methadone is currently only offered onsite for Continuation of individuals who were receiving treatment prior to incarceration, and Induction services are only available to pregnant individuals who must be taken offsite.

Through this RFP, we will ensure that the Jail can offer all FDA-approved MOUD for Induction and Continuation on-site, so that individuals with OUD can access the treatment and medication most medically appropriate for them. However, the Successful Proposer will only be responsible for the administration of methadone treatment as described in the RFP.

## *Award Details*

DHS seeks to enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer to implement the Program at the Jail. We anticipate that total funding for the Contract Services will not exceed \$2,100,000 annually.

DHS and its project partners will routinely assess program operations and outcomes and adjust as needed to ensure optimal operation of the service. While initially program-funded, the Successful Proposer should prepare for and be able to adapt to scenarios in which this service becomes billable under Medicaid.

DHS intends to enter into a contract with the Successful Proposer by June 1, 2024, with services to begin on or before October 2024, consistent with the timeline laid out under Allegheny County's [agreement](#) with the Department of Justice DOJ.

### ***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.

**However, Proposers must be an accredited and certified Opioid Treatment Provider (OTP) at the time of submitting the proposal and have the ability to provide licensed services that meet all federal regulations as well as the expectations of other governing bodies (those that regulate or have recognized standards for OTPs). Proposers with provisional certification may be considered and should supply details about the timeline for their accreditation as part of their RFP submission. Information about becoming an accredited and certified OTP can be found on [SAMHSA’s website](#).**

Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more organizations partner together submit to one Proposal, are permitted. See Section 4.2.c for details. In any collaborative Proposal, the lead entity must be an accredited and certified OTP and will be responsible for ensuring all federal regulations and any other required expectations of other governing bodies, are met accordingly.

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

### ***What’s important to us***

DHS is interested in a Successful Proposer:

- Committed to providing high quality, compassionate, and culturally responsive substance use treatment and supports to individuals involved in the Jail.
- Experienced in working within difficult settings to provide evidence-based care.
- With a strong track record of collaborating with partner organizations across multiple systems.
- With the organizational ability and commitment to implementing the program on a mutually agreed upon timeline, consistent with the County’s obligations under the [DOJ agreement](#).

### ***Timeline***

RFP Posting	Thursday, February 29, 2024
Office Hours (see section 4.1 for details)	Thursday, March 14, at 2 p.m. Eastern
Questions Deadline	Friday, March 29 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Last Website and Q&A Update	Thursday, Thursday, April 4 at 6 p.m. Eastern
Submission Deadline	Thursday, April 11 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Estimated Award Decision/Notification	June 2024

## ***Who we are***

On behalf of Allegheny County, DHS is the issuing office for this RFP.

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/Human-Services-DHS/About>.

## **Section 1: Why We Are Issuing This RFP**

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is an evidence-based approach shown to be effective in decreasing drug use, infectious disease transmission, overdose and criminal activity among people with opioid use disorder. Given the large percentage of individuals with opioid use disorders (OUD) who enter the criminal-legal system and also have opioid overdose incidents [immediately after release](#), access to MAT services in jail and post-release helps reduce both overdose incidents and recidivism, and is critical for the safety and health of individuals coming out of jail.

Accidental fatal overdoses are increasingly common in Allegheny County. In 2020 and 2021, the most recent years for which complete data are available, there were a combined total of 1,411 fatal overdoses, a 33% increase from 2018 and 2019. Opioids, usually in combination with other drugs, were involved in 87% of accidental overdose deaths in 2021. Fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid, was present in 80% of cases. As of January 1, 2024, 75 individuals booked into the Jail in 2022 and 47 individuals booked into the Jail in 2023 died from a fatal overdose since their release. (<https://analytics.alleghenycounty.us/quickcount-data-tool/>).

Individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) or co-occurring SUD and mental illness (co-occurring disorders or COD) who are *also* involved in the criminal-legal system are among those in Allegheny County at the highest risk for overdose and other negative outcomes.

Of the 2,684 accidental overdose deaths in Allegheny County from 2016 through mid-2020, 30% (805) were involved with adult probation and 19% (510) were booked in the ACJ at some point during the prior year. Increasing access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) in prison and jail settings is anticipated to significantly decrease overdose deaths.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, a recent meta-analysis and systematic review of the effectiveness of MOUD in prison and jail settings found reduced non-medical opioid use and increased treatment entry in the community post-release when the medications were provided in the jail or prison.

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<sup>1</sup> Macmadu, A. *et al.* Optimizing the impact of medications for opioid use disorder at release from prison and jail settings: A microsimulation modeling study. *Int J Drug Policy* 91, 102841 (2021).

In 2023, over half of the individuals booked into ACJ (4,503 of 8,286 or 54%) had prior involvement with publicly funded substance use services in Allegheny County. The number of individuals testing positive for methadone at jail intake increased dramatically between 2022 and 2023 (from 124 to 209) but remains significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels (307 in 2018 and 279 in 2019). This may indicate a growing need for increased access to methadone Induction to those entering the jail.

Since 2016, the Allegheny County Jail has expanded MAT services to include continuation of naltrexone, buprenorphine and methadone for individuals who have an active prescription when brought to the Jail. The Jail also provides Induction of naltrexone and, since December 2023, buprenorphine. Continuation of methadone began in October 2022, but onsite services are currently limited (to pregnant individuals with OUD and continuation for individuals who were active in methadone treatment in the community prior to jail booking), which has highlighted the need for the Program. In this final phase of MAT expansion, we are seeking to add onsite methadone Induction and to provide onsite Continuation services 7 days a week/365 days annually.

MAT expansion at the Jail is a priority for Allegheny County, particularly given that this treatment is known to reduce the risk of overdose and recidivism and to improve the individual's ability to work towards long term goals and recovery. In December 2023, Allegheny County entered into an [agreement](#) with the Department of Justice (DOJ) that details the importance of access to MAT and outlines the expected timeline for program implementation.

Expansion of the Program through this RFP will ensure that the Jail can offer all FDA-approved MOUD for Induction and Continuation onsite, so that individuals with OUD can access the most medically appropriate treatment and medication.

### ***Related Efforts***

While this RFP is focused on a specific set of MAT services to be offered to individuals at the Jail, it is important for Proposers to understand that DHS and the County are engaged in a set of broader, related efforts focused on improving outcomes for people with substance use disorders, including efforts to connect and reconnect them to community and evidence-based care in lieu of criminal legal system involvement whenever possible. A sampling of key efforts follows:

- 2021
  - Pathway to Care and Recovery, a 24/7/365 low barrier walk-in center for SUD crisis and stabilization that also provides phone support, opened in downtown Pittsburgh.
- 2022
  - The harm reduction-based Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) pilot program launched and has since expanded to more than ten municipalities and counting.
  - Unity Recovery opened the Pittsburgh Recovery Community Center, which now offers 24/7 peer-led support to anyone in Allegheny County.



- 2023
  - In October, the County launched a contingency management pilot program for people with OUD and/or stimulant use disorder, testing the pairing of cash payments with completion of treatment milestones to improve adherence rates and outcomes.
  - In December, as MAT services continued to expand at the Jail, the County launched a reentry peer support service for individuals being initiated to buprenorphine, with a vision to provide peer support and release-navigation services to anyone with an SUD leaving the Jail.

## Section 2: What We Are Looking For

### *Overview*

DHS seeks a Successful Proposer to implement and manage a comprehensive **onsite** Methadone Treatment Program (henceforth referred to as the Program), 7 days a week, 365 days a year, for the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ), as part of the Jail’s broader Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) services. The Program will consist of the implementation and management of onsite Induction and Continuation of methadone, including assessment, diagnostic testing for prescription and Maintenance, and administration of methadone; the Program will also include clinical outpatient services at the Successful Proposer’s community-based treatment location. **The Successful Proposer must have the capacity to staff licensed prescriber(s) and offer onsite, medically monitored Induction and Continuation services for eligible pregnant individuals.**

The Successful Proposer must provide licensed services that meet all federal regulations as well as the expectations of any other governing bodies that regulate or have standards for Opioid Treatment Programs (OTPs). Information about becoming an accredited and certified OTP can be found on [SAMHSA’s website](#).

DHS recognizes that federal regulations governing methadone are evolving and expects the Successful Proposer to stay abreast of policies, adapting as needed. Additionally, although the provision of methadone services via telehealth is now permissible, the Successful Proposer will be expected to provide **onsite (in-person)** services. Should it be determined that telehealth provision of methadone services to individuals in jail is feasible in the future, the County will work with the Successful Proposer to adjust the Program accordingly.

The Successful Proposer will also be expected to meet DHS standards and requirements, which may include use of County computers and email accounts by the Successful Proposer’s staff to facilitate compatibility with the Jail’s IT and security requirements.

### *Program Management and Coordination*

The Successful Proposer will be responsible for implementing the Program throughout ACJ for all eligible participants and for continuing Program service in the community for participants who begin the Program in the Jail but are then transferred to one of two Alternative Housing facilities.

Implementation and management of the Program will consist of:

- Coordinating successful implementation of Program service seven days a week, 365 days per year. While the Successful Proposer must have the capacity to staff the Program seven days a week, 365 days per year, we do not expect round the clock, or 24/7 staffing to be necessary.
- Developing a plan and policies for Program service in collaboration with the Jail's Healthcare Service Department and DHS, including a plan to staff the Program and proposed qualifications for team positions
- Recruiting, hiring and retaining diverse, high-quality staff committed to providing compassionate, and culturally responsive substance use treatment and supports to individuals involved in the Jail
- Developing a plan and/or policies for onboarding and training staff in collaboration with the Jail's Healthcare Service Department and DHS, including how staff will receive new hire and ongoing training
- Monitoring Program service through data collection, reporting and participant feedback to measure success and for quality improvement

Program service will consist of:

- **Assessment and diagnostic testing for prescription and Maintenance.** This includes:
  - Acceptance of all referrals of individuals eligible for the Program
  - Completion of intake assessments, including any necessary diagnostic testing
  - Creation of a plan of care
  - Prescription of methadone
  - Completion of follow up assessments and testing throughout Maintenance as required by medical necessity or regulatory guidelines
- **Methadone passes to Program participants throughout the jail.** Medication passes occur in the units and will require staff to travel throughout the facility. Any staff providing on-site services at ACJ must maintain active Jail Clearances and follow all ACJ policies.
- **Maintenance services to any Program participants who are transferred to one of the Jail's Alternative Housing facilities at a community-based treatment location.** Alternative Housing participants will present to the Successful Proposer's identified community-based treatment location weekly for services. The Successful Proposer will **NOT** be responsible for transporting Alternative Housing residents to their community-based treatment location. Services provided to Alternative Housing participants at the Successful Proposer's community-based treatment location are expected to be Medicaid reimbursable from the outset.

Based on existing data, we estimate that the Successful Proposer should expect to provide Induction services for up to 100 individuals per month while providing Continuation services to another 35 individuals at any given time. Overall, the Successful Proposer should expect to provide services to approximately 150 individuals per month. Although these numbers represent estimates, it is expected that the Successful Proposer will serve all eligible individuals who select methadone from among the MOUD options at the Jail.

Additionally, Program service will also include:

- **Service as the "home clinic" for participants receiving Induction until the time they are released from custody** (whether from the Jail or an Alternative Housing facility). The Successful Proposer will serve as the “home clinic” for all Program participants receiving Induction, as these participants will be new to methadone treatment. Upon release from custody, these individuals may choose to select a different methadone provider in the community.
- **Service as a "guest doser" for participants who need only Continuation services.** Guest dosing will continue until the person is released from custody (whether from the Jail or an Alternative Housing facility), at which point they will resume services with their home clinic.
- **Facilitation of continuity of care for all Program participants as they leave custody.**
- **Working closely with the Jail’s Health Care Services Department and DHS, as well as other ancillary staff.** This includes participating in planning meetings to develop procedures and standard operating protocols prior to beginning services. The Successful Proposer will need to develop a strong, collaborative relationship with the Jail, including contracted medical staff and community providers. Since individuals will be incarcerated at the time of referral, creating a partnership with the Jail and its treatment teams is of utmost importance.

Additional context about the Jail is below:

- ACJ is located at 950 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in downtown Pittsburgh. Program participants may also reside at one of three Alternative Housing facilities operated by Renewal Inc. and Passages to Recovery.
- ACJ, including its three Alternative Housing locations, has an average daily population of approximately 1,700 incarcerated individuals (males and females).
- The Jail is comprised of 35 housing units. Two (2) of those are specialty units designated to support the recovery process of individuals who have a history of substance use; however, Program participants may be located throughout the facility, including in other specialty and non-specialty units.

- Other specialty units within the facility include intake housing units, PREA Juvenile units, program pods (HOPE, Veteran’s Service Unit and Reentry), acute/chronic mental health units and restrictive housing units.

### ***Eligibility and Referrals***

All individuals booked into the Jail are screened for OUD. Individuals who screen positive for OUD and meet clinical eligibility criteria will be offered MAT and permitted to select, in collaboration with a healthcare staff person who specializes in SUD treatment, which MOUD best meets their individual needs. Those who elect to use methadone to treat their OUD will be referred to the Successful Proposer for Induction. Additionally, those who are already active in methadone treatment in the community will be referred to the Successful Proposer for Continuation of methadone treatment during their incarceration.

### ***Data Collection and Reporting***

The Successful Proposer is expected to collaborate with DHS, the Jail’s Healthcare Services and other involved stakeholders to determine what program metrics will be collected and shared, as well as how to satisfy the technical requirements for data collection in a manner that accommodates the Jail’s security needs. The Successful Proposer may be expected to use County computers and email accounts to facilitate compatibility with the Jail’s IT and security requirements. Data will be reported to stakeholders within Allegheny County and at the State and Federal levels.

### ***Budget and Award Details***

DHS intends to award up to \$2.1 million annually to one Successful Proposer to implement the Program at ACJ and their community-based treatment facility. While initially program-funded, the Successful Proposer should prepare for and be able to adapt to scenarios in which this service becomes billable under Medicaid.

**The budget should reflect all costs of providing these services onsite at the Jail. It is anticipated that maintenance services provided at the proposer’s community location will be Medicaid reimbursable and thus should not be included in the program budget.**

DHS intends to enter into a contract with the Successful Proposer by June 1, 2024, with services to begin on or before October 2024, consistent with the timeline laid out under Allegheny County’s [agreement](#) with the DOJ.

## **Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria**

DHS 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 180 points, as outlined in the following sections.

**A. Organizational Experience (75 points)**

- Demonstrated experience providing Methadone Maintenance services (15 points)
- Demonstrated experience providing Methadone Induction services (15 points)
- Demonstrated experience providing Methadone Maintenance and Induction services to pregnant individuals with OUDs (15 points)
- Demonstrated experience working with currently and/or formerly incarcerated individuals (10 points)
- Experience providing services 7 days per week, 365 days per year, **or** demonstrated ability to staff-up to meet this requirement (10 points)
- Ability to establish a billing infrastructure from the outset and to transition to Medicaid billing for Program services should Medicaid funding become available (10 points)

**B. Program Management and Coordination (75 points)**

- A description of the challenges anticipated in developing the ACJ Methadone Program envisioned by this RFP and a strategy to mitigate those challenges (15 points)
- A proposed project plan and timeline for implementation of the Program including the earliest possible start date for services (15 points)
- A plan to staff the Program, including proposed qualifications for team positions, a plan for recruitment and retention of staff, and a strategy for staff training, supervision and quality assurance, including how staff will receive new hire and ongoing trainings (15 points)
- A plan for collecting data and the outcomes measures that will be tracked to measure performance (10 points)
- A description of how racial equity will be included in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the program (10 points)
- Ability and willingness to work with partner organizations to ensure connection to and continuity of care (10 points)

**C. Budget (30 points)**

- A detailed line-item annual budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Program. The budget should reflect all costs of providing these services onsite at the Jail. It is anticipated that maintenance services provided at the proposer's community location will be Medicaid reimbursable and thus should not be included in the program budget. If any startup costs are identified, they should be submitted as a separate budget. (15 points)
- A budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed budget, including position salaries and starting salaries for staff (15 points)

## Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

### 4.1 Prepare

#### a. Office Hours

- DHS will hold a “RFP open office hours” at 2 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, March 14, 2024, via Microsoft Teams. Anyone interested in the RFP and in submitting a Proposal may drop in at any time to ask questions.
- Attendance at the 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 DHS Solicitations webpage.
- Prospective Proposers can join the office hours by:
  - Calling (267) 368-7515 and using Conference ID 549 705 730#
  - 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\\_YjAyZmJiNTUtNjFjMi00MzZkLWEyYzMtYzk5Mzg0ZDc3YWVri%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](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YjAyZmJiNTUtNjFjMi00MzZkLWEyYzMtYzk5Mzg0ZDc3YWVri%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 DHS Is Issuing This RFP)
  - The narrative (see Section 2: What DHS Is Looking For)
  - The requirements (see Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)
  - The evaluation process (see Section 5: How DHS 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 at <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com> and on our Active Solicitations web page 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:
    - 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.
    - 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
  - 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 [RFP Opportunity Page](#) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, April 11, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 [RFP Opportunity Page](#), or email us at [DHSProposals@allegHENYcounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@allegHENYcounty.us).
  - a. All content-related questions must be emailed by the Questions Deadline at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, March 29, 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 website 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 4, 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 current Allegheny County DHS contract must submit the DHS New Provider Application and its supporting documents upon receipt of the 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](http://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).

#### 4.5 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 We Will Evaluate Your Proposal**

DHS 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. DHS 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 or provider representative(s), representative(s) from key partners or funders and DHS internal 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. DHS 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 the discretion to proceed as follows: (i) to recommend to the Director of DHS that a reduced number of Proposals be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation to the Committee; or (ii) to recommend to the Director of DHS that DHS request authorization for the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Proposer(s).
- e. As described in c above, DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have the exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Proposals for more extensive review. In this case, DHS may request that shortlisted Proposers make a formal oral presentation to the Evaluation 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 professional (5 points)
- f. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee to the shortlisted Proposer formal oral presentations and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the scores, and arrive at a consensus on 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 Director of DHS for approval. The Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement or Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
- h. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
- i. 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 fiscal analysts to ensure a Proposer's financial stability.
- j. 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.**
- k. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
- l. 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](mailto: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 DHS and its offices. 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 are provided in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual and the Insurance Requirements Overview](#) at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://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” in assisting the County in meeting 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 is able to 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](http://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” in assisting the County in meeting 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 shall be exempt 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](http://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 16 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://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).

#### **6.7 New Provider Requirements**

If awarded an Agreement, Successful Proposers who do not have current Allegheny County contracts will be required to complete the DHS New Provider Application.