



Request for Proposals

Be Strong Parent Cafés

RFP Posting: Thursday, August 24, 2017

Deadline for Questions: Thursday, September 21, 2017

Submission Deadline: 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, September 28, 2017

Estimated Award Decision/Notification: Wednesday, November 1, 2017

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

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Definitions

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

1. ACHD: Allegheny County Health Department
2. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
3. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4. Contract Services: The specific services which 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. CSC: Center for Schools and Communities, an organization that aims to improve outcomes for children and families through training, technical assistance, program evaluation, research and resource development
6. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
7. Family Support Center: A neighborhood-based site where parents with young children can attend programs, receive services, access resources and connect with other families
8. OMHSAS: [Pennsylvania] Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
9. Parent Café Series: Three sessions of the Be Strong Parent Café Program
10. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
11. Project LAUNCH: Linking **A**ctions for **U**nmet **N**eeds in **C**hildren’s **H**ealth, a five-year grant-funded program to promote the social and emotional health of families with children from pregnancy through the age of eight from the federal Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration.
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. SAMSHA: [Federal] Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration
16. Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors: A framework designed to increase family stability, enhance child development, and reduce child abuse and neglect. There are five Protective Factors: 1) parental resilience, 2) social connections, 3) knowledge of parenting and child development, 4) concrete support in times of need and 5) social and emotional wellbeing.
17. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

Allegheny County, on behalf of its Department of Human Services' (DHS) PA Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to become trained in and implement a program called Be Strong Parent Cafés.

The Be Strong Parent Cafés Program (also referred to as Parent Cafés or Cafés) is designed to provide a safe space for parents and caregivers to explore their strengths, examine their lives, and evaluate for themselves the areas that need to be strengthened. The primary target population for these proposed Parent Cafés is parents with children ages birth through eight. Allegheny County is seeking four Successful Proposers to plan and host monthly Parent Café sessions where parents and caregivers will learn about a framework called the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors, which are intended to increase family stability, enhance child development, and reduce child abuse and neglect.

Who can Submit a Proposal

Non- and for-profit entities or individuals that serve or support families and that can identify an appropriate venue to host the Parent Café are encouraged to respond to this RFP. Proposers can include, but are not limited to, education organizations, churches, community recreation centers, Family Support Centers, hospitals, libraries, and other service providers. Entities do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to submit a Proposal, but a Proposer must meet all of Allegheny County's contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capability to provide the Contract Services.

Collaborative Proposals are encouraged but not required. Entities may participate in more than one collaborative Proposal.

Award Details

DHS expects to enter into Agreements with four Successful Proposers. The term of each Agreement shall be for a period not to exceed one year. The term shall begin on the date of the first scheduled Parent Café and shall end on the date of the last scheduled Parent Café. The agreement may be renewed at the County's discretion through September 2019. Each Successful Proposer will host four Parent Café Series (consisting of three sessions each) over the course of a year; each Successful Proposer will host one Café session per month (12 sessions per year).

In consideration for hosting the Parent Café, the County will pay each Successful Proposer \$650 per month when a Parent Café is successfully implemented. Each Successful Proposer will receive \$7,800 total for one year of 12 successfully implemented Parent Café sessions.

Timeline

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions is Thursday, September 21, 2017.
Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, September 28, 2017.
Proposers will be notified of their selection status on approximately November 1, 2017.

A two-day CSC training for all team members will take place either November 15-16, 2017 or November 20-21, 2017; final dates TBD.

Successful Proposers

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, intellectual disability, homelessness and community services.

More information about DHS is available at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/human-services/index.aspx>

The Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) awarded the Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) grant in September 2014, and Allegheny County is the implementation site of this five-year grant. DHS, in partnership with the Allegheny County Department of Health (ACHD), is working with OMHSAS to demonstrate strategies that support and advance the wellness of young children so they can thrive in school and beyond. The focus population for Project LAUNCH is children ages birth through eight, their families, and pregnant women, living at or below 200% of the poverty level.

Project LAUNCH provides an opportunity to promote a more comprehensive definition of health that includes a broad understanding of social and emotional development as an important element of overall wellness. Activities are primarily focused on prevention and wellness promotion, which may be child-focused, family-focused, provider-focused or community-focused. For example, Project LAUNCH communities work to increase knowledge about healthy child development through public education campaigns and cross-disciplinary workforce development.

Project LAUNCH grantees are guided by its advisory council, the Young Child Wellness Council, which brings families and public and private partners together to improve policies, programs, and approaches to using data and funds effectively. Each Project LAUNCH community implements a core set of five prevention and promotion strategies drawn from current research. Project LAUNCH also integrates strategies to address access, benefit and availability of services in order to promote health equity.

More information on the Pennsylvania Project LAUNCH Partnership is available at <http://www.pasocpartnership.org/additional-grants-and-partners/project-launch/>

More information about Project LAUNCH from the national perspective is available at <http://www.healthysafechildren.org/grantee/project-launch>

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) identifies parent education as a core prevention service for child abuse and neglect.¹ Programs that offer opportunities for parental peer support have a positive impact on children's cognitive outcomes; peer support also strengthens family bonds and gives parents an opportunity to share their experiences in constructive settings.²

Parent Cafés provide a forum for both parent education and parental peer support. The Be Strong Parent Café³ model was created in 2007 and developed by Strengthening Families Illinois to educate parents about the five research-based Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors, a framework designed to keep children safe and families strong.⁴ The five Protective Factors are: 1) parental resilience, 2) social connections, 3) knowledge of parenting and child development, 4) concrete support in times of need, and 5) social and emotional wellbeing. The purpose of a Be Strong Parent Café is to build a family's Protective Factors by teaching parents about them through individual deep self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning. The Parent Café model is based on the principles of adult learning and family support.

Allegheny County approaches human services from the framework that families know what is best for their support. The Be Strong Parent Cafés are a natural extension of the supports offered to families in Allegheny County and will be an important pillar in DHS's prevention network.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking four Successful Proposers to plan and host Be Strong Parent Cafés. Each Successful Proposer will host four Parent Café Series over a one year period. Each Parent Café Series shall consist of three sessions with one session being held each month. Successful Proposers will host Café sessions according to the Be Strong Parent Café model. Each session has a theme, activities, one-to-one parent conversations and table conversations. Table conversations are led by a table host who welcomes parents and encourages productive conversations within the Parent Café model. Food and drinks are usually served at a Parent Café session. The food can be snacks or a full meal, if alternative funding sources are available. See more details in Section 2 E, Budget. The Successful Proposer may provide child care and/or transportation for participating parents.

DHS is seeking Successful Proposers that have a track record of successfully implementing community-related projects. While DHS will provide technical assistance calls, Successful Proposers will be responsible for all aspects that are integral to the success of Parent Café including parent outreach and Café implementation and evaluation.

A. Target Population

The primary target population is parents with children ages birth through eight who live in Allegheny County. Successful Proposers must engage community members and recruit parents to participate in the

¹ <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/parented.pdf> (full quotation)

² Layzer, Goodson, Bernstein, & Price, 2001

³ For more information, see <http://www.bestrongfamilies.net/build-protective-factors/parent-cafes/>

⁴ For more information, see <http://www.pa-strengthening-families.org>

Parent Cafés, working to ensure that a minimum of 15 adults attend each Parent Café session. Successful Proposers also must have strategies to sustain a parent’s participation in Café sessions over time.

Successful Proposers must have an organizational commitment to serving a diverse population. All parents and caregivers should feel welcomed, well-served and supported during a Parent Café, regardless of their ethnic or racial heritage, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, intellectual or physical disability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

The content discussed in Parent Cafés can be emotionally challenging for some parents. Successful Proposers must have a solid understanding of and established ties with community organizations to which they will be able to refer families who need additional resources when appropriate.

Parent Cafés can act as a gateway to providing leadership opportunities for the target population. Participating parents can become table hosts, be part of the Café planning committee, and take on a facilitating role before, during and after a Café session.

B. Parent Café Venue

Proposers must have access to an appropriate venue within Allegheny County to host the café. In other localities, Parent Cafés have been held in an organization’s office building, small restaurants, conference spaces and church basements. The venue should have round tables with chairs; tables should seat no more than five people (four parents and the table host). The venue should have a flexible space where furniture, visuals and decorations can be moved and changed according to the Café session’s theme or activity. There should be enough space for parents to move freely throughout the event. If childcare is provided, it must be in a separate space. Children do not participate in the adult conversations and should not be present during the session.

DHS encourages Proposers to propose a venue that is accessible to transportation lines. Successful Proposers must have a strategy to support attendance for parents for whom transportation is a challenge.

C. Staffing and Training

Successful Proposers must recruit a team of six to eight people, split evenly between staff and parents, who will be trained in the Be Strong Parent Café model and Mental Health First Aid by the Center for Schools and Communities (CSC). This team will lead the planning and implementation of the Parent Café sessions monthly over the course of a year.

All team members are expected to participate in CSC’s two-day Be Strong Parent Café training in its entirety. The Be Strong Parent Café training is a two-day experiential and highly interactive training. It prepares the team to plan and implement Parent Cafés and serve as table hosts at a Parent Café. By the end of the training, teams will know the framework of a Parent Café, the philosophical foundations and research underlying Parent Cafés as a parent education and engagement strategy, how to create an environment conducive to maximizing the effectiveness of the Parent Café process, and how to build on the Parent Café experience to enhance programming for parents.

The two-day training for all team members will take place either November 15-16, 2017 or November 20-21, 2017.

Successful Proposers must recruit additional staff and parents to plan Parent Cafés and serve as table hosts. These additional staff do not need to attend the intensive CSC training.

D. Data Collection and Reporting

Successful Proposers must administer short evaluations to participating Parent Café parents and provide data to the PA Project LAUNCH team for purposes of evaluation. Data collected can include, but is not limited to, Café attendance and satisfaction surveys administered before and after a Parent Café.

E. Budget

The County will pay Successful Proposers \$7,800 total for one year of 12 successfully implemented Parent Café sessions. Successful Proposers will receive \$650 per month when a Parent Café session is successfully implemented to cover the costs of outreach, door prizes, food, childcare, transportation and staff/parent time. Federal funding restrictions will only allow \$3 per person to cover light food and refreshments for the Parent Cafés. Proposers may seek alternative funding or collaborative partnerships for any food/beverage related costs above this amount.

The Successful Proposers must have an organizational commitment to hosting Parent Cafés. DHS anticipates offering Successful Proposers a renewal on their Agreements through September 2019, contingent upon performance.

Successful Proposers are not responsible for training costs. DHS will provide up to \$10,000 per Successful Proposer to CSC for the two-day training.

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Proposers must meet the following evaluation criteria and should address their qualifications by responding to the specifically-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 www.allegHENYcounty.us/dhs/solicitations. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 100 points, as outlined in the following sections.

A. Organizational Experience (40 points)

- Experience working in the community with demonstrated success in engaging and recruiting parents to events (10 points).
- Explanation of how implementing the Be Strong Parent Café model fits well within the Proposer's mission and business model (15 points).
- A strong understanding of community resources so that appropriate referrals can be made (10 points).
- Experience providing culturally-competent, linguistically appropriate and gender-responsive services (5 points).

B. Meeting Program Standards (40 points)

- A team of six to eight individuals split evenly between parents and professionals who are committed to implementing Parent Cafés and a plan for recruiting additional staff and parents to plan Parent Cafés and serve as table hosts (15 points).
- Access to an appropriate venue to host Parent Cafés and a plan for how to effectively use the space (15 points).
- Strategies and activities aimed at recruiting at least 15 parents per monthly Café session and retention of parent participants (10 points).

C. Data (10 points)

- Organizational experience collecting and reporting data (5 points).
- A plan of how the organization will report data required by the child welfare office on behalf of PA Project LAUNCH (5 points).

D. Financial Management and Budget (10 points)

- A budget which reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing the Parent Cafés (5 points).
- A budget narrative that describes and justifies the proposed Parent Cafés budget (5 points).

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submission Process

- a. Proposers should take time to review and understand the RFP in its entirety including:
 - The background (see Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP)
 - The narrative (see Section 2: What We Are Looking For)
 - The requirements (see Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)
 - The evaluation process (see Section 5: How We 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 at our Active Solicitations website with the RFP announcement at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- c. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal, which includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
 - Response Form
 - MWDBE documents
 - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
 - W-9
- d. Proposer should not send any attachments other than those listed above and on the Response Form.

- e. If you do not have audited financial reports for the last three years, you may submit other financial documentation that attest to the financial health of your organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing financial documentation is a requirement of contracting through Allegheny County.
- f. Make sure to complete each section of the Response Form and to stay within any word counts or page limits that may be specified in the Response Form.
- g. **Proposals must be submitted electronically to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, September 28, 2017 to be considered for review.**
- h. Please make sure to get your Proposal in before the deadline! If your Proposal is late, it will be rejected and will not be presented to the evaluation committee for review and scoring as described in Section 5 below.
- i. You will receive an email when your Proposal is received. If you do not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting your Proposal, please contact DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us

4.2 How to Contact DHS about this RFP

- a. All inquiries and questions must be submitted via email to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us
- b. All information about the RFP, including answers to questions, changes and clarifications will be posted at our Active Solicitations website at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations
- c. Please be sure to check this website regularly for answers to questions, additional information or changes to the RFP or the RFP process.

4.3 Other Information

- a. **THE ISSUANCE OF THIS RFP DOES NOT OBLIGATE THE COUNTY TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH ANY PROPOSERS. THE COUNTY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS.**
- b. Any Agreement originating from this RFP shall include all of 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. The Successful Proposal will be posted online in the DHS Solicitations Archive after an Agreement has been fully executed by the County and the Successful Proposer.
- f. Proposers also should be aware that all documents and materials submitted in response to this RFP are subject to requests made pursuant to Pennsylvania's Right-To-Know Law and that the County may have to make submitted documents and materials available to a requestor after an award of an Agreement is made.

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

Proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation committee convened by DHS. The evaluation committee will assign scores based on the evaluation criteria in Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria using the scale listed in Section 5.1 b.

5.1 Evaluation Model

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. An Evaluation Committee will be formed by DHS and may consist of some or all of the following:
 - Content experts from within DHS and the ACJC, selected for their expertise and/or experience.
 - Representatives of foundations, educational institutions, community and civic organizations and businesses and/or non-profit agencies.
- 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 according to their 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. The Evaluation Committee members then will meet collectively to discuss the individual scores and evaluations of each committee member.
- d. DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have 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. The Evaluation Committee will score the oral presentation and add it to the Proposer's Proposal score. The oral presentation will be scored using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that an oral presentation can receive is 15 points:
 - Presentation demonstrates Proposer's ability to implement the proposed Program effectively (5 points).
 - Proposer answers Evaluation Committee's questions (5 points)
 - Proposer's presentation is thoughtful and professional (5 points).
- e. At any time during the review process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
- f. The Evaluation Committee will submit their recommendation for award of an Agreement to the Director of DHS for his approval, who in turn will submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
- g. **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.**

- h. All Proposers will be notified of their status following the final determination of which Proposer(s) will be awarded Agreements.
- i. Proposers not awarded an Agreement 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:

- Received by the due date/time
- Properly formatted and include responses to all requested information
- 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, Proposers must be willing to 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. Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County are provided in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.

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

Allegheny County has MWDBE goals of 13 percent participation for Minority Business Enterprises and 2 percent participation for Women 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 either of the following:
 - If your organization is able to meet the MWDBE contract goals, a completed MWDBE Participation Statement and MWDBE Contact Information form is required. You must also attach the MWDBE certifications of the firms you intend to use with the Participation Statement.
 - If your organization will request a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, a completed MWDBE Participation Statement, MWDBE Contact Information form and MWDBE Waiver Request are required.
- b. MWDBE forms and resources can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations:
 - MWDBE Forms
 - [MWDBE Participation Statement](#)
 - [MWDBE Waiver Request](#)
 - [MWDBE Contact Information form](#)
 - MWDBE Resources
 - [MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)
 - [MWDBE Response Checklist](#)
 - [Guide for completing the MWDBE Participation Statement](#)

- [Sample Diversity Policy](#)
- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County MWDBE website](#).

6.2 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.

6.3 Cyber Security

- a. Successful Proposers must meet the minimum computer specifications which 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).

6.4 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.

6.5 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](#), available at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Prospective-Providers.aspx>. While not required as part of your Proposal, Proposers may wish to review the requirements of this application.