

# Allegheny County

## Department of Human Services

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

#### Rent Subsidy Program

<b>RFP ISSUED</b>	<b>March 9, 2015</b>
<b>QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL</b>	<b>Until 5 Business Days Before Proposal Due Date</b>
<b>RESPONSES (Q &amp; A) POSTED ON WEBPAGE</b>	<b>Ongoing- Final Q&amp;A Posted 1 Business Day Before Proposal Due Date</b>
<b>PROPOSALS DUE</b>	<b>April 17, 2015</b>
<b>ESTIMATED AWARD DECISION / NOTIFICATION</b>	<b>June, 2015</b>
<b>ESTIMATED START DATE</b>	<b>August, 2015</b>

## GLOSSARY

Agreement: The contract negotiated between the County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services

Allegheny County or County: Allegheny County, a political subdivision and home rule county under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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

CYF: The Allegheny County Department of Human Services' Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) is responsible for protecting children from abuse and neglect, preserving families (whenever possible) and providing permanent, safe homes for children either by assuring safety within the child's own family, or by finding an adoptive home or another permanent setting for those children who cannot be reunified with their family. CYF provides a wide range of preventive, protective, supportive and direct services through caseworkers, case aides and other support staff, as well as a network of contracted agencies.

DHS: Allegheny County's Department of Human Services (DHS) is responsible for providing and administering publicly-funded human services to Allegheny County residents. DHS is dedicated to meeting these human service needs, most particularly for the county's vulnerable populations, through an extensive range of information exchange, prevention, early intervention, case management, crisis intervention and after-care services.

Proposal: The response submitted by a Proposer to this Request for Proposals

Proposer(s): The entity or entities submitting a Proposal to the County in response to the RFP in an effort to become the Successful Proposer

RFP: Request for Proposals is a solicitation in which an organization announces that funding is available for a particular project or program, and outside entities can submit proposals to implement the project or program.

Successful Proposer: The Proposer selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

### Purpose

Allegheny County is soliciting Proposals for the implementation and management of a Rent Subsidy Program (Program) to bridge the housing affordability gap for individuals who are currently living in long-term, residential placement provided by DHS, or transitioning out of residential child welfare placement, and are able and willing to live on their own with limited supports. The Successful Proposer will connect eligible individuals (20 in the first year) to housing units in the community, pay the cost of rent minus 30% of each individual's income per month (individuals will be expected to contribute 30% of their income toward rent) and provide supports to help participants remain successfully housed. The

County, on behalf of DHS, intends to enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer, with funding not to exceed \$225,000 per year for a term of three years with the option to renew.

### General Information about a Request for Proposal

Allegheny County issues Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to identify entities with the ability to meet the identified needs and quality standards within specified program and funding guidelines. Evaluation criteria are included in an RFP to measure how well a Proposal meets these criteria. The County may request additional information and/or a presentation from the Proposer during the Proposal evaluation period. Following the evaluation period, an Agreement to provide the Contract Services may be awarded to the most qualified Proposer, that is, the Successful Proposer.

***The issuance of this RFP does not obligate the County to enter into an Agreement with any Proposers.***

### Communication about this RFP

DHS is the “Issuing Office” for this RFP and is the sole point of contact for all questions and communication regarding this RFP. All communication about the RFP, including requests for additional information or clarification, should be submitted via email to: [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).

All questions and/or requests for clarification concerning this RFP must be submitted no later than five business days prior to the proposal due date in order to guarantee a response on the website.

All information about the RFP, including changes, clarifications and responses to Proposer questions, will be posted on the RFP website at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.aspx>

### Eligibility

Entities eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP include non-profit organizations and for-profit organizations or businesses. In order to be considered under this RFP, Proposers must be willing and able to meet all of Allegheny County’s contract requirements. These contract requirements are available at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/contracting.aspx>.

### Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (M/W/DBE) Requirements

This RFP contains requirements for Proposers to assist Allegheny County in meeting its M/W/DBE goal (all contracts and other business activities entered into by Allegheny County having overall goals of 13% for MBEs and 2% for WBEs). A listing of M/W/DBEs certified by Allegheny County and the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program can be found at [www.county.allegheny.pa.us/mwdb](http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/mwdb)

For more information about M/W/DBEs, please review the following. An M/W/DBE Participation Statement or Waiver Statement is **REQUIRED** with proposal submission

[MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)

[MWDBE Participation Statement form](#)

[MWDBE Waiver Statement form](#)

## Proposal Preparation Costs

The Proposer is responsible for all costs related to the preparation and submission of a Proposal. Allegheny County is not obligated, in any way, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a Proposal.

## **BACKGROUND**

### About DHS

DHS was created in 1997 to consolidate the provision of human services across Allegheny County. It is the largest department within Allegheny County government. In addition to its Executive Office, DHS encompasses five program offices (Behavioral Health; Children, Youth and Families; Community Services; Intellectual Disability; and the Area Agency on Aging) and three support offices (Administrative and Information Management Services; Community Relations; and Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation). Last year, DHS served more than 210,000 individuals (approximately one in six County residents) through an array of 1,700 distinct services.

DHS is responsible for providing and administering publicly-funded human services to Allegheny County residents and is dedicated to meeting these human service needs, particularly for the County's most vulnerable populations, through information exchange, prevention, early intervention, case management, crisis intervention and after-care services.

DHS provides a wide range of services, including: services for older adults; mental health and drug and alcohol services (includes 24-hour crisis counseling); child protective services; at-risk child development and education; hunger services; emergency shelters and housing for the homeless; non-emergency medical transportation; job training and placement for public assistance recipients and older adults; and services for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

DHS provides services to eligible individuals without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation, disability, familial status, military service, or religious, community or social affiliations.

### Issue

DHS has identified a number of individuals who 1) currently live in a long-term, residential placement provided and/or supported by DHS or who are about to transition out of a child welfare placement; 2) are able and willing to live on their own with limited supports; and 3) are unable to afford the full market rate of rental units within the County. Most receive income from a low-wage job or through Supplemental Security Income (SSI), neither of which provides the resources necessary to pay a security deposit and a monthly rent at market rates.

Currently, the only options available to these individuals are rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program, which has a closed waiting list, or temporary (up to one year) rental assistance through the small Emergency Solutions Grant Rapid Re-Housing Program (RRH). The capacity of both of these programs is inadequate to meet the needs of this population. Because the lack of options means that these individuals remain in resource and service-intensive residential

placements much longer than necessary, they are preventing others from being able to access them.

In providing the Program, the Successful Proposer will connect individuals described above (20 in the first year) to housing units in the community, pay the cost of rent minus 30% of each individual's income per month (individuals will be expected to contribute 30% of their income toward rent) and provide supports to help them remain successfully housed, as detailed in the Scope of Services section. By providing these individuals with rental assistance, DHS hopes to bridge the gap between their available income and the actual cost of renting a home of their own.

DHS anticipates that individuals will participate in the Program for a maximum of two years, in most cases, as they 1) secure employment (or better-paying employment), 2) find a roommate who can share the cost of the apartment, or 3) secure a Section 8 voucher for supplemental housing assistance after a period of time on the waiting list. In any case, nobody will be terminated from the Program before an acceptable alternative is in place.

### Target Population

In the first year of the Program, DHS intends to support 20 individuals with rental subsidies. To be eligible for the Program, individuals must:

- Have a mental health diagnosis that required a high level of care AND/OR an intellectual disability AND/OR be a youth transitioning from a child welfare placement
- Reside in a residential setting funded by DHS (either a 24-hour structured facility, a child welfare placement, or – for individuals with an Intellectual Disability – be living with family or in a semi-independent living situation) at the time of referral to the Program
- Be willing to participate in the Program
- Be able to live independently, as determined through assessment by their service coordinator or treatment team.
- Receive income from SSI or employment, but not enough to be self-supporting

It is at the discretion of DHS to determine which candidates who meet the criteria above will be referred to the Program. Because the eligible population far exceeds the capacity of the Program, Proposers are asked to define further eligibility criteria or a method of prioritizing acceptance into the Program.

## **SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUESTED**

Allegheny County is soliciting Proposals for implementation and management of a Rental Subsidy Program (Program) that will provide short-term rental assistance, as determined by income, and ancillary supports to eligible individuals as they transition from high levels of care toward independence or other housing resources. DHS expects individuals to participate in the Program until their income has increased to a level sufficient to support a market-rate unit or until they have moved off a waitlist for other housing supports. In most cases, individuals will participate in the Program for a maximum of two years, at which time those still participating in the Program will be connected to other resources and supports.

## Service Description

The Successful Proposer will be responsible for implementation and administrative oversight of the Program. In order to ensure an adequate supply of available and appropriate rental units, the Successful Proposer will utilize its relationship with landlords and knowledge of the Allegheny County housing environment to work with landlords to ensure their willingness to participate in the Program and to ensure that all units meet the Housing Quality Standards for Housing Choice Vouchers.

The Successful Proposer will receive referrals from DHS, as described below in the section entitled “Role of Existing Supports,” and work with individuals and their Existing Supports (the service coordinator or treatment team who provided support to individuals in their previous residential placement and who will continue to do so during the individual’s participation in the Program) to assess housing needs and identify an appropriate housing unit. When matching an individual with a housing unit, the Successful Proposer will consider a variety of factors, including individual housing needs and preferences. Individuals should be housed in an environment that best enables them to meet their goals and supports their path toward greater independence.

Once individuals are connected to a unit, the Successful Proposer will act as the co-signer on the lease and provide funds for the extra costs associated with moving, including the security deposit and first/last month’s rent (when necessary), and a one-time grant of up to \$500 for furniture/appliances, as needed. Each month, for the duration of the Program, the Successful Proposer will distribute to the landlord the appropriate (and verified) subsidy amount- the cost of rent minus 30% of an individual’s income. Individuals will be responsible for contributing 30% of their income towards the cost of rent.

The Successful Proposer will work with the individual’s Existing Supports to ensure that the individual remains successfully housed. Such services will include coordinating ancillary services (e.g., accompanying clients to the local laundromat and advising clients on income budgeting), that are outside the realm of the Existing Support’s responsibilities, on an as-needed basis. DHS envisions that the Successful Proposer will arrange this type of ancillary service in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, through peer supports.

## Role of Existing Supports

Individuals’ Existing Supports will continue to serve them in a variety of ways during their time in the Program, as outlined below. Proposers should consider what ancillary services individuals will require, in addition to those provided by Existing Supports, in order to develop the Proposal and related budget for ancillary services.

Existing Supports will refer individuals to a designated committee at DHS, which will review and approve individuals before referring them to the Successful Proposer (DHS referrals must be accepted). The Existing Supports will continue to provide service coordination for the individual throughout his or her time in the Program. Together with the individual, Existing Supports and Successful Proposer will develop a plan for increased independence and transition from the Program, with measureable goals and a timeline. The plan should include actions that an individual may take to:

- Improve credit history and rental stability
- Address behavioral health issues that negatively impact housing stability
- Access more affordable housing, including applying to appropriate wait lists

Further, Existing Supports will assist individuals in their move into the Program’s rental unit by setting up utilities and addressing issues around timely utility payment, including helping individuals to access the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and similar resources. They are also responsible for ensuring that the unit is adequately furnished (e.g., bed, refrigerator, stove, etc.) by connecting individuals to available community resources. Existing Supports will also assist individuals in addressing issues that require communication with the landlord, including, but not limiting to:

- Addressing sub-standard housing issues
- Preventing client removal from the unit by mediating issues that arise between the landlord and the individual

### Performance Measures

The Successful Proposer will be responsible for monitoring outcomes to assure the quality of the Program. The Successful Proposer will be expected to track quantitative and qualitative data, as determined in partnership with DHS, and enter regular, timely and accurate individual-level data into designated information systems. These data will be verified by DHS.

### Budget and Term of Agreement

DHS intends to enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer, with funding not to exceed \$225,000 per year for each of three years with the option to renew. The total funding includes rent subsidies/costs associated with rent for 20 individuals per year (e.g., security deposit and other upfront rental costs, moving costs), administrative costs and the cost of purchasing or supplying ancillary services. Proposers must submit a three-year budget for the Program.

## **PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND FORMAT**

A complete Proposal must include all of the components listed below, submitted as a word document or PDF (budget may be submitted in Excel). Use 1-inch margins, 12 point font and numbered pages. Single spacing is permissible. Please adhere to page limitations indicated below; other than required attachments, no additional attachments will be accepted (attachments may be included as a link).

### Organizational Experience

- Describe your experience working with the target populations.
- Describe your experience working as an administrative entity with private market landlords to successfully house clients with human service needs. Do you have pre-existing relationships with landlords that you believe would be willing to participate in the Program? If not, what is your strategy to build those relationships?
- Describe your experience working as part of a multi-disciplinary team.
- Describe your experience using data to measure and improve program and client outcomes.

### Approach

- Proposed staffing plan.

- Describe staff’s experience working with the target population and in the housing community.
- Describe your strategy for recruiting and retaining quality staff?
- Describe your professional development and staff training program.
- Describe your plan for staff performance management.
- Describe your plan for assessing the suitability of a home for inhabitation by an individual (e.g., safety, location), including ensuring that a home meets Housing Quality Standards for Housing Choice Vouchers.
- Describe your plan to match individuals to housing that will enable them to meet their goals and support their path toward a more independent living situation.
- How will you incorporate the individual’s preferences (e.g., neighborhood) and needs (e.g., proximity to public transit or to work) into your housing search?
- Where will the units be located within the County?
- Will you be using your existing housing stock (if applicable) or expanding to include new units?
- Describe your plan for administering the subsidy each month. How will you verify proof of client income and ensure that the client knows the correct amount to pay each month? Do you envision that the individual will pay you or make direct payments to the landlord?
- Describe your plan for working in partnership with an individual’s Existing Supports to ensure that the individual remains successfully housed.
  - What strategies will you use to work with DHS, the Existing Supports and the landlord to address any issues that may arise with the individual’s housing? Describe a time when you have had an issue with a landlord and worked with a client and their supports to address it.
  - What strategies will you use when an individual cannot pay the required 30% of their income toward rent?
  - What other challenges do you anticipate individuals may face? How will you work with DHS and the individual’s Existing Supports to address those challenges?
- What ancillary services do you anticipate will be needed? How do you plan to provide those ancillary supports?
- Describe your plan for engaging and regularly communicating with individuals. How will you ensure individuals’ satisfaction with their housing?
- What are the biggest overall challenges you anticipate in successfully implementing this Program, and how do you plan to address those challenges?

**Performance Measures**

- Describe your experience tracking and entering data into reporting systems.
- Describe the type of data you will track to support the Program, the outcomes you will look for in the data, and how you will collect the data.
- Describe how you will adjust your services/practices based on the outcomes of that data.

**Budget and Budget Narrative**

Provide your organization’s financials and describe how they reflect your financial policies and organizational stability. If your organization is for-profit and this information is not publically available, please indicate this in your budget narrative.



Please provide a detailed 3-year budget and narrative that clearly supports the Program as outlined in the Scope of Services Section AND that fits within the funding guidelines. If you anticipate that the annual operating budget will differ significantly from the budget for the start-up year, please provide both budgets, along with justification for the difference.

### **Required Attachments**

- Executive Summary (1 page)
- Proposal Narrative (8 pages)
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- References (1 page): Include name, affiliation and contact information (email address and telephone number) for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization.
- Required Attachments ( These forms are available on our website at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.aspx> )
  - Cover Page
  - MWDBE Participation Statement form
  - W9
  - Vendor Creation Form

## **SCORING AND SELECTION PROCESS**

### **Scoring Criteria**

The narrative and budget sections will be evaluated on a scale of 100 points as detailed below.

#### **Proposal Narrative (80 points)**

- Organizational Experience (20 points)
- Approach (50 points)
- Performance Measures (10 points)

#### **Budget and Budget Narrative (20 points)**

### **Selection Process**

DHS will use a formal evaluation process to select the Successful Proposer, including review of the Proposal and additional information/presentation as requested. DHS may contact individuals or entities with whom the Proposer has had dealings in the past, regardless of whether or not they are included as references in the Proposal.

**DHS will perform an initial screening of all Proposals received. For a Proposal to be eligible for evaluation, the Proposal must be:**

- **Received from the Proposer by the due date/time**
- **Properly signed by the Proposer**
- **Properly formatted and include required forms and sections**

**Proposals that do not meet the initial screening are subject to rejection without further evaluation.**

After the initial screening has occurred, the evaluation process for Proposals is as follows:

- DHS will designate an evaluation committee to review and evaluate all Proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The evaluation committee may consist of some or all of the following individuals:
  - County employees/contractors
  - Representatives of foundations, educational institutions, community and civic organizations, businesses and/or non-profit agencies
  - Individuals selected for subject matter/content expertise or experience, or by virtue of other relevant experience/knowledge
- The evaluation committee will evaluate the Proposals based upon the Scoring Criteria.
- The County retains the exclusive discretion to shortlist a small number of Proposals receiving the highest or most satisfactory evaluations for more extensive review.
- If determined necessary, DHS may contact the Proposer for the purpose of clarifying any ambiguities in the Proposal, requesting Proposal modifications, or discussing Budget modifications.

#### Oral Presentations and Site Visits

DHS may create a short-list of Proposers who will be invited to give an oral presentation and demonstration of their tool(s). In that case, selected Proposers will be notified of the time and location, and will be provided with an agenda or topics for discussion. Questions asked during oral presentations or site visits will be for the purpose of clarifying the scope and content of the written Proposal.

#### Final Award Process

Following the evaluation process, which may include oral presentations and/or negotiations, the evaluation team will tabulate and submit an award recommendation to the DHS Director (the County reserves the right to recommend that none of the Proposals be selected). The DHS Director will then issue a recommendation to the County Manager who will make the final determination concerning award of an Agreement.

**NOTHING HEREIN SHALL BE CONSTRUED OR INTERPRETED IN ANY WAY AS OBLIGATING THE COUNTY TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH ANY PROPOSER. THE COUNTY RESERVES THE RIGHT AT ALL TIMES NOT TO AWARD OR ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER.**

### **SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Proposals must be submitted by email to [DHSProposals@allegchenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@allegchenycounty.us), no later than **3:00 p.m. EST on April 17, 2015**. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted. The County reserves the right to extend or postpone the date and time for RFP activities; in the event of a change, the information will be posted on the website at <http://www.allegchenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.aspx>.

If necessary, attachments may be sent via U.S. Mail, Courier or hand-delivery, by the date/time above, to:

Maria Wallace  
Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
One Smithfield Street – Suite 400  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2221

**You will receive an email confirmation of receipt of your Proposal. Please contact us (via email or by calling Maria Wallace at 412-350-7144) if you do not receive an email confirmation.**

To be considered, the Proposal must include all of the specified information. DHS may request additional information and/or conduct investigation as necessary to determine the Proposer's ability to provide the requested service. This additional information may become part of the County's final award decision-making process.

All Proposals are the property of the County and may become part of any subsequent Agreement.

## CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

### Agreement Terms and Conditions

The Successful Proposer will enter into an Agreement with the County of Allegheny, on behalf of DHS, for performance of the Scope of Services specified in this RFP and set forth in the Proposal. The Scope of Services specified in the RFP shall become the Contracted Services. Information about contracting with the County on behalf of DHS and the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts for services for DHS which will be included in the Agreement can be found on the DHS website at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/contracting.aspx>  
[HIPAA compliance](#)

DHS is a "covered entity" under the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The Successful Proposer must describe how it will comply with HIPAA requirements.

### CYBER Security

A significant portion of DHS business activities and related billing carried out under this RFP are done through information management systems or tools, including email. Proposers should meet the minimum computer specifications beginning on page 14 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#) and should make sure their computers, laptops and other electronic devices have sufficient security software and settings to minimize the risk of a breach of information. In addition, the Proposer should have policies and procedures in place to assure that their electronic devices are physically secure when not in use (e.g., locked in a vehicle trunk, password protected, etc.).

### Conflict of Interest

By submitting a Proposal, the Proposer certifies and represents to the County that the Proposer has not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of

special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Non-Discrimination

Proposer agrees to not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, consumer 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 of any individual or independent contractor or because of the disability of an individual with whom the person is known to have an association or on any other basis prohibited by federal, state or local law.