



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Targeted Rental Assistance and Supportive Services to Reduce Homelessness in Allegheny County

RFP Posting:

Thursday, August 25, 2022

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 7, 2022

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, October 19

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

January 2023

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

Contents

Acronyms and Definitions

The RFP at a Glance

Section 1: Why DHS Is Issuing This RFP

Section 2: What DHS Is Looking For

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

Section 5: How DHS Will Evaluate Your Proposal

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

Acronyms and Definitions

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

1. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
2. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3. Allegheny Link: Allegheny County's single access point for its homelessness system, providing fair and equal access and referrals to homelessness and other services
4. Contract Services: The specific services that the Successful Proposer agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
5. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
6. ERAP: U.S. Department of Treasury's Emergency Rental Assistance Program
7. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
8. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
9. Rental Assistance Program: Targeted rental assistance and supportive services to assist renter households with paying their rent and/or utilities to avoid eviction and reduce homelessness
10. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
11. RFP: Request for Proposals
12. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

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

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

The Department of Human Services (DHS), on behalf of Allegheny County, is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to develop and administer a targeted rental assistance and supportive services program for people at risk of eviction and homelessness (henceforth referred to as the Rental Assistance Program or the Program). This RFP is part of a larger, comprehensive community response to preventing evictions and the homelessness that they can cause. DHS and its community partners are already funding several components within this prevention system and will fund additional components as funding becomes available in the future.

Award Details

The County, through DHS, intends to enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer for a term of one year for an estimated \$3 million. DHS intends to award a single Agreement to the Successful Proposer but encourages collaboration among multiple organizations under a single Lead Agency (see Section 4.2.c). DHS anticipates sustaining the Program for more than one year; funding for the Program beyond the initial one-year period may be extended by mutual agreement and based upon the Successful Proposer's performance.

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.

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

DHS encourages Collaborative Proposals with community-based organizations, minority- and women-led organizations, and other smaller organizations that may currently lack the capacity or experience to lead this effort, but who would be valuable members of the Proposer's team. Entities may participate in more than one Collaborative Proposal from different lead agencies.

What's important to us

Serving the highest-need population: DHS wants to ensure that rental assistance reaches those most in need and at the highest risk of eviction or homelessness, especially those who encounter barriers to receiving such assistance (e.g., limited English proficiency, limited technological, phone or email access). Individuals served through the Program will henceforth be referred to as Participants.

Collaboration: DHS expects that the Successful Proposer will be part of an overall community-wide effort to reduce evictions and homelessness in Allegheny County. The Successful Proposer must be willing to collaborate with DHS and the Allegheny Link, the courts, mediation and legal assistance providers, foundations and other key partners.

Having a creative and knowledgeable thought partner: Post-award, the Successful Proposer must work with DHS and its partners to craft the design and implementation of the Rental Assistance Program.

Customer service and quality: The Successful Proposer must have adequate staff (or a plan to hire adequate staff) to review Program applications in a timely manner, reach out to tenants and landlords to help them complete applications, and issue payments within one week of approval. The Successful Proposer must ensure that they are available to applicants, landlords, the courts, DHS and other partners to answer questions.

What we want

DHS is seeking one Successful Proposer to lead this effort in partnership with community organizations and other organizations that provide non-monetary eviction-prevention services. The Successful Proposer will be the County’s main partner in working to reduce evictions based on non-payment of rent. The Successful Proposer must be responsive to the community: residents, the courts, legal and mediation service providers, and political leaders—and to the renters who apply to the program.

Timeline

RFP Posting	Thursday, August 25, 2022
Office Hours (see section 4.1 for details)	Monday, September 12 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern
Questions Deadline	Friday, October 7 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Last Website and Q&A Update	Thursday, October 13 at 6 p.m. Eastern
Submission Deadline	Wednesday, October 19 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Estimated Award Decision/Notification	January 2023

Who we are

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

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

Section 1: Why DHS Is Issuing This RFP

DHS has provided rental assistance in Allegheny County through various funding sources for many years and is taking the lessons learned from that experience, as well as from our recent administration of the U.S. Department of Treasury's Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), to develop an improved rental assistance program for Allegheny County. These experiences have demonstrated that:

- The scale of renters who are at risk of housing instability, eviction and homelessness is great. In the first year of ERAP, Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh spent nearly \$100 million in direct rental and utility assistance for 15,000 households.
- DHS cannot sustain such a program with its typical funding. We must be more targeted in providing this assistance, but still effective in helping to stabilize as many renter households as possible.
- Targeting rental assistance to households at highest risk of eviction or those that have struggled to access programs in the past does not occur naturally; it requires work and intentionality.
- Rental assistance can be delivered quickly and efficiently.

DHS has been a partner in developing a comprehensive response to the eviction problem in Allegheny County for several years. Many service components are currently available in the community and should be considered part of a comprehensive response to eviction and homelessness prevention:

- An Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Homeless Prevention Program that provides short- and medium-term rental and utility assistance to households at risk of eviction (although similar in scope to the Program in this solicitation, this is not a part of this RFP)
- A legal assistance program that provides limited legal advice via a telephone hotline and more in-depth representation in court for tenants that need that level of support
- A mediation program that works with landlords and tenants both before and after eviction cases are filed with the courts
- Housing and court advocates who assist tenants with evictions filed in court to ensure that 1) they know about upcoming hearings and their rights at those hearings and 2) they have necessary information to present a defense against their eviction
- The City of Pittsburgh's Financial Empowerment Centers that assist renters, after rental assistance has been provided, with credit repair, budgeting and other supportive services to prevent future evictions
- A Housing Stabilization Center in downtown Pittsburgh where individuals and families in a housing crisis can receive in-person support and referrals to services to help stabilize their housing
- A Prepared Renter Program that trains service providers to offer "how to be a good tenant" lessons to their program participants

In addition to the resources mentioned above, DHS currently supports the following initiatives within Allegheny County. While not part of this RFP, these services are part of DHS's ongoing commitment to prevent evictions and homelessness.

- DHS court liaisons, at Magisterial District Courts, who can connect parties in landlord-tenant complaints with available resources, including rental assistance
- A team of data analysts at DHS that monitors landlord-tenant cases and shares that information with various programs that support tenants, including rental assistance programs
- Landlord education through DHS's housing navigators, who share information about programs and services as alternatives to eviction filings

Despite the availability of these services, evictions are a persistent problem in Allegheny County. In a typical year, approximately 14,000 renter households have an eviction case filed against them in Magisterial District Courts, with an average claim of \$2,000. Although not always the same people, Allegheny County typically sees nearly 4,000 people enter the homelessness system each year.

The most effective way to address these problems is through a coordinated, community effort that includes an adequately funded, easy to access, well managed and efficient Rental Assistance Program that leverages the services outlined above. DHS envisions that this new Program will result in a streamlined application process and a positive customer experience for those at risk of eviction and homelessness in Allegheny County.

Section 2: What DHS Is Looking For

DHS is seeking one Successful Proposer to lead the County's efforts to prevent eviction and homelessness based on non-payment of rent by developing and implementing the Rental Assistance Program. The Program must provide rental assistance and supportive services to people most in need and at the highest risk of eviction or homelessness. The Program will be an administrative challenge with multiple funding sources, eligibility requirements and referral pathways. The Successful Proposer must meet and overcome these challenges by designing and operating a Rental Assistance Program that is efficient, effective and seamless to all who encounter it, including Participants, landlords and community service providers.

Eligibility

In general, Allegheny County households facing housing instability are eligible for support from the Rental Assistance Program. However, each contributing funding stream has its own eligibility criteria and different funding caps per household. DHS is looking for a Successful Proposer who can weave together at least three funding sources into a single coherent Program:

1. Pennsylvania Homeless Assistance Program
2. Pennsylvania Needs-Based Budget (child welfare funding)
3. City of Pittsburgh Urban Redevelopment Authority's Housing Opportunity Fund's Housing Stabilization Program

In addition, in the first year of the award, the Successful Proposer must operate a significantly larger Program with a fourth funding source consisting of any remaining or reallocated funds from the State American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). ARPA funds may not be available after the first year of the Program.

The Successful Proposer must handle the differences between these funding streams behind the scenes while presenting one coherent Program to the community. The criteria and parameters of the four key funding sources are as follows:

1. Homeless Assistance Program: Household must be homeless or near homeless, at/or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and able to sustain the rent moving forward. This fund can only be used by a household once every two years. The maximum amount of assistance for this funding is \$1000 and if there is more owed there must be a plan in place to address the remainder of the arrears.
2. Needs-Based Budget: Household must have at least one minor child and be homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The household must be able to sustain the rent moving forward and can only use this fund once every two years. The maximum amount of assistance for this funding is \$1500 and there must be a plan in place to address any remaining arrears.
3. Housing Opportunity Fund's Housing Stabilization Program: Household must be within the City of Pittsburgh, homeless or near homeless, and at or below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI). This fund can be used by a household once every five years. This funding can assist with up to six months of arrears and/or a maximum of \$3,000. These funds can also be used to support a household prior to entering eviction proceedings.
4. ARPA: Household must be unable to pay rent and have an income at or below 80% of AMI. The household must have a written or oral lease and demonstrate COVID-19-related financial impact. Maximum assistance is 10 months or \$10,000, whichever comes first.

Referral Process

The Rental Assistance Program will have three referral pathways:

1. Allegheny Link: Allegheny Link staff will screen callers for the most appropriate funding source and refer eligible households to the Successful Proposer.
2. DHS: DHS is currently developing its approach to identifying those most at risk of eviction/homelessness. Those whom the Successful Proposer is asked to serve may change throughout the term of the Agreement as DHS hones its targeting approach. DHS expects to share a list of at-risk renter households and/or households currently in eviction proceedings with the Successful Proposer.
3. Mediation providers: Pre-filing mediation providers may send applicants to the Successful Proposer if rental assistance is necessary to execute a mediation agreement that keeps the applicant housed.

Program Description

The Successful Proposer must perform the following tasks:

Intake: Accept the referral and contact the applicant, some of whom may be difficult to reach. The Successful Proposer must have outreach mechanisms to ensure that difficulty in contacting

referred households does not impact their eligibility or acceptance into the Program. The Successful Proposer must contact referred applicants and, in many cases, assist applicants to overcome obstacles in the application process. This may include – especially with the households DHS identifies as most at risk of eviction/homelessness through its targeting process – outreach to ensure applicants are aware of program requirements, assistance with submitting documentation to prove eligibility, and communication with applicants and their advocates to move the application forward toward payment.

Eligibility Determination: Verify that households are eligible for rental assistance by collecting required information and documentation from both the applicant and the landlord.

Funding Determination: Determine the amount and duration of rental assistance for eligible households. The different funding sources in this RFP have different amounts and duration of assistance permitted. The Successful Proposer must have adequate internal controls in place to prevent exceeding those limits.

Household Enrollment: Enroll households into the Rental Assistance Program and enter required information in the Allegheny County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and any other database required by the funding source. Ensure that payments are attributed to the appropriate funding source.

Landlord Payments: Issue payments to landlords within one week of eligibility determination.

Supportive Services Connections: In addition to rental assistance, the Successful Proposer must offer related supportive services that are essential for promoting housing stability. These can be provided directly by the Successful Proposer as part of this Agreement, by sub-contracted partners or via existing services in the community. Support services may include voluntary limited case management, budgeting and other self-sufficiency services to reduce the likelihood of the Participant facing a future eviction. Support services also may include assisting Participant with re-housing or to apply to more affordable housing options as well as help in identifying ways to reduce expenses and/or increase income. The Successful Proposer must describe and justify any supportive services they believe are critical to ensure that Participants that receive rental assistance do not become homeless and indicate which services will be budgeted for in the Contract Services and which will be provided via referral to existing community services.

Policy and Procedure Development: After contract award, the Successful Proposer must work with DHS, the Urban Redevelopment Authority and other community partners to design Program guidelines, including drafting a Program manual and policies and procedures for its successful operation.

Data Collection & Reporting

The Successful Proposer must enter data into the Allegheny County HMIS and any additional database required by any funder in a timely manner and with accuracy. The Successful Proposer must maintain files in accordance with DHS monitoring standards and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Treasury, Pennsylvania and Urban

Redevelopment Authority requirements, including back-up documentation that was used to determine Participant eligibility.

Performance Goals

The Successful Proposer must track and work to meet the following performance goals:

- 80% of referral eligibility determined within 10 days of receipt
- 90% of payments issued to landlord within one week of confirming eligibility
- 75% of Participants avoid eviction for the 12 months following assistance
- 90% of Participants avoid homelessness for the 12 months following assistance

Budget

DHS has allocated \$3 million per year to support the Rental Assistance Program. Proposers must develop their Proposals based on this level of funding.

DHS expects the Successful Proposer to use most of the funds under this Agreement on rental assistance payments to landlords and tenants. Proposed (one year, \$3 million) budgets must include:

- Staff costs needed to administer the rental assistance payments
- Staff and/or sub-contract costs needed to provide the supportive services to ensure that Participants do not get evicted and/or become homeless
- An assumption of a fringe benefit rate of 35% of salaries
- Administrative costs
- Funds for rental assistance payments

DHS anticipates that additional ARPA resources for the first year or two of the Agreement will total approximately \$5-10 million dollars per year. Proposers must submit a secondary one-year budget that shows how it would allocate an additional \$10 million per year.

Depending on the amount of ARPA funds, DHS and the Successful Proposer will negotiate a combined budget based upon the two budgets submitted.

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 www.allegHENYcounty.us/dhs/solicitations. The maximum score that a Proposal can receive is 100 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Organizational Experience (25 points)

- Clear and concise statement about why the Proposer feels that it is the best candidate for administering the Rental Assistance Program and how the proposed Rental Assistance Program fits within the Proposer's mission (5 points)
- Experience partnering with other organizations to implement programs, especially partners in government and community/neighborhood-based organizations (5 points)
- Evidence of client satisfaction in current programs and mechanisms to learn from clients to improve services (5 points)
- Commitment to providing high-quality services to all individuals and families so that everyone feels welcomed, well-served and supported regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences; demographics of Proposer's leadership and staff (5 points)
- Experience maintaining databases/using software for reporting/analysis, tracking service interactions and/or staff management (5 points)

Homelessness Prevention, Eviction Prevention and Housing Experience (40 points)

- Experience providing rental assistance to households facing eviction (10 points)
- Experience providing homelessness prevention services (not including rental assistance focused on eviction prevention) to households (10 points)
- Familiarity with challenges that low-income households face in maintaining housing and avoiding homelessness (10 points)
- Experience working with landlords, property owners, real estate firms and other stakeholders involved in local housing markets, especially as it relates to assisting low-income households (10 points)

Implementation Plan (25 points)

- A plan to administer and track rental assistance to landlords on behalf of households (10 points)
- A plan for supportive services, in addition to rental assistance (10 points)
- Anticipation of implementation challenges and a plan to overcome them (5 points)

Budget (10 points)

- Two detailed line-item budgets that reflect a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Rental Assistance Program, as described in the RFP: one for the core \$3 million and one for the potential addition of \$10 million more (5 points)

- Two budget narratives that clearly explain and justify all line items in the proposed budgets (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Prepare

- a. Office Hours
 - DHS will hold a “RFP open office hours” at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, September 12, 2022, 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: 786 298 389#
 - 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_OGEzYzY1NGMtY2FmYy00M2JiLThkNTEtODU5NDIyYjhmZkz%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22d14c6dca-47dd-45a0-a62e-11bf0cce95e0%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 at our Active Solicitations website with the RFP announcement at www.allegHENYcounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- 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
 - Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 7.1 and 7.2)
 - Applicants who do not have current Allegheny County DHS contracts must submit the DHS New Provider Application and its supporting documents (see section 4.3 for details)
- e. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or in the Response Form.
- f. If a Proposer does not have audited financial reports for the last three years, then the Proposer must submit other financial documentation that attest to the Proposer’s financial health of your organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing adequate financial documentation is a requirement of contracting with Allegheny County.
- g. Proposers must 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.
- h. Proposals must be submitted electronically to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 to be considered for review.**
- i. All Proposals must be submitted before the deadline! 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.
- j. Proposers will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their Proposal. If a Proposer does not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting their Proposal, please contact: DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

4.3 New Provider Requirements

Proposers who do not have current Allegheny County DHS contracts must submit the DHS New Provider Application and its supporting documents with their Proposal.

- a. The DHS New Provider Application is available at our Active Solicitations website under the “Required documents” bar at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- b. The DHS New Provider Application asks for audited financial reports for the last three years. If a Proposer does not have audited financial reports for the last three years, then the Proposer may submit other financial documentation that attest to the Proposer’s 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.

4.4 How to Contact DHS about this RFP and RFP Communications

- a. If you have any questions about this RFP, please email us at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.
 - a. All content-related questions must be emailed by the Questions Deadline at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 7, 2022.
 - 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 at our Active Solicitations website at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
 - a. Please check this 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, October 13, 2022 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.

4.5 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 not to enter into an Agreement for the Contracted Services.**
- b. Any Agreement originating from this RFP is subject to all the Terms and Conditions specified in Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers.
- c. Proposers are responsible for all costs related to the preparation and submission of a Proposal.
- d. Proposals become the property of the County and may become part of any subsequent Agreement between the Proposer and the County.
- e. Successful Proposal(s) will be posted online in the DHS Solicitations Archive after an Agreement has been fully executed by the County and the Successful Proposer(s).

4.6 Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law

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

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

Section 5: How DHS 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. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer's references.
- j. As part of determining a Proposer's eligibility to enter a contract with Allegheny County, all Proposers' financial audits or other documentation will be reviewed by DHS fiscal analysts to ensure a Proposer's financial stability.
- k. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with a Proposer as a result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**
- l. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
- m. Proposers that are not awarded an Agreement but who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

5.2 Other Requirements

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

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

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

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, 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. 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% 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:
 - [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](#).

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:
 - [VOSB Participation Statement](#)
 - [VOSB Waiver Request](#)

6.3 HIPAA Compliance

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

6.4 Cyber Security

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

6.5 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Requirements

By submitting a Proposal, a Proposer agrees to not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, client or any other person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation,

disability, marital status, familial status, age (40 or over), or use of a guide or support animal because of blindness, deafness or physical disability.

6.6 Language Diversity Requirements

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