



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Operator of the Low-Barrier Shelter and Drop-in Center at Second Avenue Commons

RFP Posting:

Friday, April 30, 2021

Information Session:

Wednesday, May 19, 2021 from 3 to 4 p.m. Eastern Time

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, June 17, 2021

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, June 25, 2021

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

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

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Acronyms and Definitions

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

1. Active Listening: A pattern of engaged, attentive listening while someone else speaks, paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said, and withholding judgment
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. Allegheny Link (the Link): The single access point for the Coordinated Entry system in Allegheny County, providing diversion from homelessness, assessment, and referral to housing programs
5. Chronic Homelessness/Chronically Homeless: An individual or household with a disabling condition who 1) has continuously experienced homelessness for a year or more or 2) has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years that total at least 12 months of homelessness
6. Continuum of Care (CoC): The network of housing options and services covering the geographic entirety of Allegheny County for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including shelter, housing and supportive services; outreach, engagement, and assessment; and prevention strategies.
7. Coordinated Entry: A standardized method for connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to the resources available in a given geographic area
8. 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
9. Crisis Response Stakeholder Group (CRSG): A group of Allegheny County community stakeholders convened in 2020 to focus on improving existing services and piloting new ones to address the overreliance on law enforcement and incarceration for people with behavioral health needs, including individuals experiencing homelessness
10. Cultural Humility: The lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique that allows for the examination and recognition of personal and cultural biases as well as the learning of other cultures and awareness and sensitivity to significant cultural issues of others
11. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
12. DHS Field Unit: DHS's street outreach team that works to find individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness within the community and engage them in services inside and outside of The Commons
13. Drop-in Center: A community space within The Commons that the Successful Proposer will operate where people experiencing homelessness can rest, use services and connect to longer-term resources during day-time hours
14. Harm Reduction: An approach to reducing the negative consequences of substance use and other behaviors for those that are not interested nor able to practice abstinence
15. Homeless Advisory Board (HAB): The public-private partnership that oversees the CoC. The HAB sets the local strategy to end homelessness and reviews public policy,

programs, activities, data and all other efforts to eliminate homelessness and improve the well-being of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

16. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): An information technology system used to collect Client-level data on the provision of housing and supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
17. Housing First: A low-barrier approach to service delivery grounded in the knowledge that everyone is housing ready, the solution to homelessness is affordable permanent housing, and everyone has choice and the agency to make their own decisions
18. LGBTQIA+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and/or Asexual,
 - a. including other non-heterosexual and non-cisgender orientations
19. Low-Barrier Shelter (the Shelter): The year-round, 24/7 facility and its supportive services for those experiencing homelessness that the Successful Proposer will operate according to a low-barrier shelter model, i.e., without any additional criteria required to enter or stay
20. Motivational Interviewing: An evidence-based intervention that uses a conversational approach designed to help people address their ambivalence to change
21. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): A type of housing program that offers a rental subsidy plus case management support for an indefinite period. The goal of PSH is to help individuals experiencing homelessness with a disability navigate their path to housing stability.
22. Point-in-Time (PIT) Count: The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.
23. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
24. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
25. Rapid Re-Housing (RRH): A type of housing program that provides time-limited rental subsidy and case management services for up to two years while a household stabilizes
26. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
27. RFP: Request for Proposals
28. Second Avenue Commons (The Commons): A facility that DHS expects to open in early 2022, The Commons will be located on Second Avenue adjacent to the Liberty Bridge and will house human services providers, the Shelter and Drop-In Center. The Commons will offer a comprehensive set of services and programs to help individuals who are experiencing homelessness find safety and stability while moving towards permanent housing.
29. Self-Sufficiency Wage: The lowest hourly wage at which an adult in a given region can meet their basic needs without subsidies. The Allegheny County Self-Sufficiency wage is determined by the Pittsburgh region's workforce development organization, Partner4Work. The current Allegheny County Self Sufficiency Wage is \$15.48 per hour.
30. Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Unit: A type of permanent housing that offers small, private, furnished rooms along with a shared bathroom and kitchen facilities. SROs are the type of housing unit located on the fourth and fifth floor of The Commons.

31. Street Outreach: A program designed to identify and serve individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Street Outreach workers identify and address immediate needs and provide connection to longer-term forms of support.
32. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services
33. Trauma-Informed: An organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma and their impact on human behavior
34. Unsheltered Homelessness: When a person resides in a place not meant for human habitation such as cars, parks, sidewalks, streets and abandoned buildings
35. Winter Shelter: A temporary emergency shelter operated during the evening hours of the coldest months of the year

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

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

Allegheny County, through its Department of Human Services (DHS) is seeking a partner to operate a Low-Barrier Shelter and Drop-in Center in downtown Pittsburgh as part of the new Second Avenue Commons facility (henceforth referred to as The Commons). The Commons, which is expected to open in early 2022, will offer a comprehensive set of services and programs to help individuals who are experiencing homelessness find safety and stability while moving toward permanent housing. The Low-Barrier Shelter (henceforth referred to as the Shelter) and Drop-in Center are key aspects of The Commons. DHS envisions that the Shelter will be open 24 hours a day, year-round and will offer a safe place to sleep, personal hygiene facilities, a pet-friendly environment and storage for personal items. DHS envisions the Drop-in Center as a welcoming space offering a place to sit and rest, showers, laundry facilities, charging stations, light refreshments, computers and free Wi-Fi. The Successful Proposer must employ and supervise staff, develop policies and manage programming and services for the Shelter and Drop-in Center.

In this RFP, the individuals served at the Shelter and Drop-in Center will be referred to as “Clients.”

Award Details

DHS intends to enter into one Agreement with one Successful Proposer for an initial term of one year with DHS having the sole discretion to extend the term of the Agreement. The estimated annual budget for the Shelter and Drop-in Center is approximately \$2,000,000.

Who can apply

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.

What’s important to us

The Successful Proposer must have a service delivery philosophy that aligns with DHS’s values and the vision of The Commons, as described in the RFP. Specifically, we are looking for a Successful Proposer that:

- Is Client-centered and treats everyone with dignity and respect
- Recognizes and values lived experience and Client voice
- Acknowledges the system trauma that a person or community may carry and strives to improve Client-provider-system trust, rapport and relationships

- Firmly believes in a Housing First approach, which is grounded in the knowledge that everyone is housing ready, the solution to homelessness is affordable permanent housing, and everyone has choice and the agency to make their own decisions
- Is a proponent of Harm Reduction, an approach to reducing the negative consequences of substance use and other behaviors for those that are not interested nor able to practice abstinence
- Recognizes diverse Clients have diverse needs, and does not employ a one-size-fits-all model
- Encourages creativity and does not do things a certain way just because it is the way they have always been done
- Is committed to reducing racial inequities, maintaining Cultural Humility and promoting inclusivity
- Has a staff whose diversity reflects that of the clients served and prefers to hire individuals with relevant lived experience at all levels of the organization
- Is data-driven
- Is strengths-based
- Is an eager collaborator

Timeline

The deadline for Proposers to submit questions about this RFP is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, June 17, 2021. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, June 25, 2021. We expect to notify Proposers of the County’s decision to award an Agreement in August 2021.

There will be an information session about this RFP from 3 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 via Microsoft Teams. Attendance is not required in order to submit a Proposal, but Proposers are encouraged to attend. Preliminary answers will be provided orally for questions asked during the session. Final, definitive answers to questions asked during the session will be posted in writing on the DHS Solicitations webpage. Please join the information session by:

- Calling 267-368-7515 and using phone conference ID: 570 319 586#
- 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_YTgxNjU4ZmItNWE3Zi00MzFILWFiMDEtYmUwM2ZkMWRmOWRi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%224c7924c5-3d5a-494b-ba54-242fc5f6db86%22%7d

Who we are

DHS is issuing this RFP on behalf of Allegheny County.

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 We Are Issuing this RFP

DHS serves as the infrastructure organization and unified funding agent for the Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC). The CoC is the community-based network of service providers engaged in ending and preventing homelessness in Allegheny County. For the past several years, the CoC has continued to increase the amount of funding available for homeless services due in large part to the high-quality performance of our service providers. The 21-member Housing Advisory Board (HAB) is the decision-making body responsible for ensuring that the CoC meets the needs of families and individuals experiencing homelessness or housing instability within our community.¹ HAB members are a diverse group of community leaders and includes representatives from service providers, government, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, mental and behavioral health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement and individuals with lived experience with homelessness. In July 2017, the HAB embarked on a year-long community planning process. This process culminated in a five-year strategic plan that identified as a top priority the development of a Low-Barrier Shelter that successfully serves any adult experiencing homelessness, including those with behavioral health needs and substance use disorder (SUD).

Over the past two years, the CoC has worked in partnership with PNC Bank, Highmark and UPMC, as well as other government agencies including the City of Pittsburgh, other businesses, and community-based organizations to bring to life the vision of a Low-Barrier Shelter. Together, this group envisioned a place where anyone over the age of 18 can go to receive immediate access to shelter and housing assistance that is not contingent on sobriety, income requirements, criminal records or program demands. The group envisioned a Shelter where adults experiencing homelessness are empowered and supported to quickly obtain stable, permanent housing.

The result of this collaboration is Second Avenue Commons (The Commons), a brand new 45,000-square-foot, five-floor facility currently under construction on Second Avenue in the downtown corridor of Pittsburgh. The Commons is scheduled to open in early 2022, pending the completion of construction. The new building will house four complementary services that do not currently exist elsewhere in Allegheny County:

1. A 24/7, 92-bed Low-Barrier Shelter with space to add 40 additional beds when needed
2. A daytime Drop-in Center
3. A clinic staffed and operated by UPMC that provides routine physical and behavioral health services
4. 45 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units, which are a type of permanent housing that offers small, private, furnished rooms along with shared bathroom and kitchen facilities

¹ <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/About/Advisory-Bodies/Homeless-Advisory-Board.aspx>

This RFP is seeking a Successful Proposer to operate the Low-Barrier Shelter and the daytime Drop-in Center only. See Appendix A for mock-ups of the space and an overview of where these services will be located within The Commons.

Through the provision these four services, The Commons will offer a comprehensive set of programs that will help those who are experiencing homelessness find safety and stability while moving towards permanent housing. The planning and design for each of the four services within The Commons has been guided by research on trauma-informed design principles, best practices and lessons learned from comparable facilities across the country, and by local experts, including individuals who have experienced homelessness/housing instability.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking a Successful Proposer to partner with DHS, the HAB and our community partners to plan, implement and operate the Low-Barrier Shelter and Drop-in Center located within The Commons. The other services co-located within The Commons, including the health clinic and the SRO units, will be operated by other entities. In alignment with the vision for The Commons, the Successful Proposer will partner with DHS, the HAB and other stakeholders to provide services that are equitable, effective and in alignment with Housing First, Trauma-Informed care and Harm Reduction principles.

The Successful Proposer must lead the development of Shelter and Drop-in Center policies, programming and services. The Successful Proposer must be an active participant in the remaining planning discussions and decisions related to the Shelter and Drop-in Center. The Successful Proposer must be fully staffed and ready to operate when The Commons is complete. DHS will work with the Successful Proposer to finalize specific details and requirements of the Shelter and Drop-in Center after selection. Just as The Commons will evolve and grow over time, the responsibilities of the Successful Proposer also may change over time in response to the needs of the Clients that it serves. DHS will work with the Successful Proposer to ensure any changes are reflected in the Agreement.

2.1 The Commons

A. Priority Population

As captured by the Allegheny County Annual Point-In-Time Homelessness Count, in 2020, 887 people were identified as experiencing homelessness in Allegheny County—a 15% increase from 2019—with 583 people in emergency shelter, 163 people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and 141 people residing in transitional housing. Of these individuals, 209 had SUD, 257 had a mental health disorder and 183 were experiencing Chronic Homelessness.² Additionally, in Allegheny County in 2020:³

² [Allegheny County Annual Point-In-Time Homelessness Count](#)

³ [Allegheny County Continuum of Care for the Homeless Dashboard](#)

- 1,524 people were actively engaged by Street Outreach programs, in which service coordinators identify individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness and assist them with their immediate, as well as long-term, needs.
- 1,127 people were in Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) programs that assist individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness to move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and to achieve stability in that housing through a combination of rental assistance, housing search and supportive services.
- 2,327 people were in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs that provide long-term housing with supportive services to homeless individuals with disabilities.

The Commons is intended to serve anyone over age 18 in need of shelter (referred to here as Clients). All services within The Commons are envisioned to have no requirements for identification, background checks or sobriety. The Commons will be particularly suited for individuals that have historically not readily accepted available supports, including those who are experiencing Chronic Homelessness. An individual or household experiences Chronic Homelessness when they have a disabling condition and have continuously experienced homelessness for a year or more or have at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years that total at least 12 months of homelessness. The Commons also will be especially suited for individuals who tend to avoid existing housing resources due in part to their rules, curfew limitations, and other requirements. This includes individuals and couples that avoid all shelters, opting instead to sleep outside or in places not meant for human habitation; individuals that have faced challenges in other settings due to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression; and individuals with severe mental illness that experience challenges following the rules at other shelters. It is envisioned that Clients will be able to access The Commons by walk-in, calling in or by referrals from grassroots and community organizations and Street Outreach workers.

In addition, The Commons is intended to focus on serving groups of people that that are overrepresented in the County's homeless population – Black people, multi-racial people and LGBTQIA+ people. Of the 887 people identified as experiencing homelessness in 2020, 63% (557 people) identified as Black or multi-racial;⁴ Black people comprise just 12.4% of the entire population of Allegheny County and only 1.1% of the County population identifies as multi-racial. More than 20% of respondents to the 2020 Pennsylvania LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment⁵ report having experienced homelessness in their lifetimes, and the number increases to over 30% among respondents of color and respondents who are transgender, non-binary or gender queer. The Successful Proposer must be responsive to the disproportionate harm that has been systemically inflicted on these communities.

The Commons is intended to be a place that is inclusive to people who are non-English speaking or who have limited English speaking ability, regardless of citizenship status. The Successful Proposer will be responsible for establishing partnerships with translation services and hiring culturally competent and bilingual staff.

⁴ [Allegheny County Annual Point-In-Time Homelessness Count](#)

⁵ [2020 Pennsylvania LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment](#)

This facility is **not** suitable for families; households with children are better served at other shelters within the CoC. The Successful Proposer must connect families with more appropriate services if they call or appear at The Commons.

B. Low-Barrier Philosophy

The Successful Proposer must ensure that all policies and practices implemented within the Shelter and Drop-in Center support The Commons' low-barrier philosophy. The Commons is intended to be a welcoming place where all people—particularly those who are most marginalized—can be comfortable, feel valued and easily access supports on their own terms. Recognizing that individuals with complex mental health issues often experience the greatest barriers when attempting to access services, the Successful Proposer must be an advocate for low-barrier services and have demonstrated success achieving positive outcomes for Clients.

Adhering to The Commons' low-barrier philosophy, the Successful Proposer must ensure that the Shelter and Drop-in Center adopt the following:

- Clients and other visitors will be asked to leave only if they pose a threat to the safety of themselves or others
- Rules shall be few and consequences for violations of the rules shall be clear and logical
- Unless all beds are full, a bed must be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365/6 days a year
- Couples stay together
- Clients determine which sleeping room is best for them
- Pets can stay with their owners
- All staff shall be trained in Trauma-Informed practice, Harm Reduction principles and de-escalation strategies
- Behavioral issues shall be met with clinical interventions, saving any law enforcement-related response as a very last resort to ensure safety of the Client or others

Although it is envisioned that The Commons will eliminate most barriers to make shelter more accessible to those most in need, the possession and use of drugs, alcohol and weapons in The Commons is prohibited. The facility is planned to have a metal detector to screen visitors to the Drop-in Center. The Successful Proposer must monitor and address the metal detector. If Proposers wish to reposition the metal detector to scan all entrants to The Commons building, this should be discussed in the Proposal narrative and include rationale. Lockers are planned to be located prior to going through the metal detectors to allow Clients and other visitors to lock up any banned items and retrieve them again when they exit the building. The Successful Proposer must encourage Clients and other visitors to use the lockers when needed.

2.2 The Low-Barrier Shelter

The Successful Proposer must staff and operate the Shelter and the services described below. The Shelter will offer 92 beds in six pet-friendly congregate sleeping rooms with bathrooms/showers and storage for personal items. The Shelter will have the ability to add 40 temporary beds for winter overflow. Shelter services are described below and include: diversion

services, housing-focused case management, collaboration with DHS's Coordinated Entry System, and meal service. Based on historical data trends, DHS expects the Shelter to accommodate approximately 75 Clients per day, with the potential to serve 132 Clients when the Shelter and winter overflow space are filled.

The Shelter will replace two Winter Shelter locations in downtown Pittsburgh – one for men, transgender men and non-binary individuals, and one for women, transgender women and non-binary individuals. The Winter Shelter locations operated only from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. between November 15 and March 15, with occasional additional dates due to severe weather. Of the 623 individuals that the Winter Shelter served in 2019-20, 262 reported they would be exiting to unsheltered homelessness when Winter Shelter closed. Only 81 (13%) individuals were able to continue receiving housing services after Winter Shelter closed. These statistics demonstrate the need for a more sustainable shelter option that can assist individuals in need of shelter or housing assistance year-round. DHS expects that adding the Shelter's 92 low-barrier beds to the CoC will reduce the number of people seeking shelter in the winter months.

A. Shelter Design

The Successful Proposer must staff and operate the Shelter in accordance with the design and vision of The Commons, as described throughout the RFP. The Shelter must be free of the barriers that have historically prevented people experiencing homelessness from seeking shelter and assistance with permanent housing. As a low-barrier facility, the Shelter is designed to address the "Three P's" that most commonly prevent people from staying in a shelter: partners, pets and possessions. At the Shelter, partners may stay together, pets are welcome and possessions may be stored in the facility's secure storage units.

The Successful Proposer must not attach any unnecessary conditions to Shelter entry or stay. Terminations from the Shelter should occur only when a Client is a danger to themselves or others and discharging to homelessness shall be avoided. When the Shelter is not full, beds must be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365/6 days of the year. Experience in low-barrier shelters in other jurisdictions has shown that strict rules and curfews often serve as an impediment to bringing in individuals who are Chronically Homeless. The Successful Proposer must create a Shelter environment that allows Clients to come and go throughout the day and night with no curfew. In general, the Successful Proposer must establish rules that are necessary to ensure safety and otherwise avoid excessive rulemaking. The Successful Proposer must establish and implement equitable, written non-discrimination policies and staff training that align with Equal Access and Fair Housing regulations.

The Shelter has been intentionally designed to decrease opportunities for conflict and anxiety related to gender identity, and the Successful Proposer must adhere to this design. Shelter bathrooms and sleeping rooms are planned to be not permanently labeled by gender and able to be designated as needed. Shelter space must have the ability to be divided and used as needed to meet the needs of the Clients at any given time. Shelter staff must work with Clients to determine which sleeping room feels safest and most comfortable. To meet the needs of Clients that may be overwhelmed by being around so many people, two of the congregate sleeping rooms have been designed to have more space between Clients and increased privacy compared to the standard

bunks. The Successful Proposer must be committed to flexing Shelter space and services as needed to meet the needs of Clients.

B. Shelter Clients

DHS expects that the Shelter will serve a Clientele similar to that of the County's Winter Shelters. In 2019–20, the Winter Shelter served 623 individuals. Many of these individuals experience challenges related to mental illness or substance use that can become exacerbated and/or disruptive in a larger congregate setting. Of the 623 people served in 2019-20, 56% were active or recently active in mental health services and 25% were active or recently active in drug and alcohol services. The Successful Proposer must have demonstrated experience successfully working with individuals experiencing mental illness and/or SUD. In addition, the Successful Proposer must staff the Shelter with skilled behavioral health clinicians who can keep Shelter space safe through de-escalation and therapeutic techniques in times of active crisis. Law enforcement intervention must occur only when there is a perceived risk to safety.

C. Shelter Services

The Successful Proposer will be responsible for staffing all aspects and services of the Shelter, which must include:

- Diversion Services: In partnership with the Client, Shelter staff must creatively explore housing options that eliminate the need for accessing the Shelter whenever possible. To accomplish this, Shelter staff may need to: offer mediation with family, friends or a landlord; aid with additional grocery or utility expenses; or connect diverted individuals to programs for security deposit or rental assistance.
- Housing-Focused Case Management: Within the Shelter, the primary purpose of services is helping Clients to rapidly move out of the Shelter and into permanent housing. Shelter case managers must be proactive in engaging and motivating Clients to move to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Case managers must work with each Client to create a plan for securing permanent housing and provide support to the Client as they implement the plan. Case managers must refer Clients with a need for ongoing housing support to the Coordinated Entry System, as described below. Case managers must connect Clients that do not require or are not eligible for ongoing housing assistance with the services and providers necessary to ensure rapid exit from Shelter to permanent housing. The Successful Proposer should provide additional supportive services as needed, including access to transportation, health coverage and health care providers, and training or employment services.
- Collaboration with Coordinated Entry System: Shelter staff must ensure that Clients connect with the Coordinated Entry system for assessment and possible housing referrals within three days of entering the Shelter. The Coordinated Entry system is the standardized method for connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to available resources. In Allegheny County, the Coordinated Entry system is run by the Allegheny Link (the Link) which serves as the primary access point for the Coordinated

Entry system and ensures fair and equal access to homeless services. The Link also provides streamlined access to all benefit programs, connects Clients to disability and aging resources, counsels Clients on affordable housing, provides eviction prevention services and completes Client vulnerability assessments to determine an appropriate match for homeless housing programs. The DHS Field Unit, which will be co-located at The Commons, also may carry out Coordinated Entry assessments on behalf of the Link.

- **Meal Services:** The Successful Proposer must ensure two hot meals—breakfast and dinner—are served onsite at the Shelter daily. Clients and visitors in need of lunch will be referred to one of the several meal programs within walking distance of the Shelter. If a Shelter Client is unable to travel offsite, the Successful Proposer must ensure that a lunch alternative is available for them at The Commons. At this time, DHS does not know if the Successful Proposer will need to prepare meals or if there will be a third-party meal vendor located in The Commons. If the Successful Proposer will be required to prepare meal service, they may subcontract with a third-party vendor.

D. Additional Shelter Beds

If all permanent beds are full at any time between November and April of each year, the Shelter must add up to 40 temporary overflow beds. The Shelter may add the temporary beds at other times of the year, too, if the Successful Proposer determines that there is a need. The additional beds will be set up in shared spaces, including the dining hall and program room on the ground floor. When the additional beds are needed, the Successful Proposer must set up and take down the beds while managing the increased number of Clients. Clients that sleep in the temporary beds must have the same access to Shelter services and resources as Shelter Clients that sleep in permanent beds.

2.3 The Drop-in Center

The Successful Proposer must staff and operate the Drop-in Center at The Commons. The Drop-in Center is intended to provide a safe, welcoming and useful space during daylight hours for anyone over the age of 18 that is experiencing homelessness. Throughout this sub-section, we refer to everyone who uses the Drop-in Center as “Visitors,” as we anticipate that three distinct populations will use the Drop-in Center: Shelter Clients, residents of The Commons’ SROs, as well as individuals that do not sleep onsite. The Successful Proposer must ensure that every interaction in this space, as with the rest of The Commons, is grounded in respect for Visitors, as well as Trauma-Informed care, Harm Reduction and Housing First principles. DHS anticipates the Drop-in Center will be open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily with a menu of services, supports and resources available. In the evening, the Drop-in Center will close to the public but may remain partially accessible to Shelter Clients and SRO residents. Proposers may propose alternate hours of operation.

DHS has identified the following minimum critical functions expected of the Drop-in Center. The Drop-in Center must be a space where Visitors can sit down and rest and provide the following: showers, laundry facilities, charging stations, coffee and light snacks, computers and Wi-Fi. DHS and the Successful Proposer will negotiate and agree on the details of how these

critical functions will operate. Additionally, the Successful Proposer must employ staff at the Drop-in Center who will perform the following functions:

- Welcome Visitors to The Commons: Drop-in Center staff will acknowledge and help everyone who enters The Commons.
- Engage Visitors: Skilled staff must engage visitors within the Drop-in Center, establish rapport and offer available resources or connections when needed.
- Ensure Safety of Visitors and Staff: Staff must monitor and respond to a metal detector at the Drop-in Center entrance. Initial training on the metal detector will be provided to the appropriate staff of the Successful Proposer prior to the building opening. Going forward, the Successful Proposer must provide ongoing staff training for the metal detector.
- Facilitate Use of Showers and Laundry Facilities: Staff must teach new Visitors how to access and use the Drop-in Center shower and laundry facilities and ensure that both areas are operating safely.
- Assist with Housing and Other Supportive Services: The Drop-in Center is intended to be a place where Visitors can receive assistance resolving their housing crisis, even if they are not Shelter Clients. This should include housing navigation assistance, computers for Visitors to conduct a housing search, guidance to obtain identification and other documents, and connections to public assistance, food stamps, social security and other benefits.
- Sort and Distribute Mail: All Visitors may choose to receive mail at the Drop-in Center. The Successful Proposer must receive and sort all mail and hand out to Visitors upon request.

The Successful Proposer also must:

- Create a Collaborative and Supportive Atmosphere: The Successful Proposer must work with community partners to bring outside services, meetings and support groups that are useful to Visitors into the Drop-in Center. When community partners request space within the Drop-in Center to meet with Visitors one-on-one or in groups, staff must assist with scheduling the space and providing any other support needed.
- Conduct Daily Operations: The Successful Proposer must ensure smooth daily operations of the Drop-in Center, including restocking supplies and refreshments and aiding Visitors when needed.
- Maintain the Space: The Successful Proposer must ensure the day-to-day cleaning and sanitation of the Drop-in Center, including the hygiene facilities. If a third-party vendor will be contracted to provide this service, Proposers must include that expense in the proposed budget. The Successful Proposer also will be responsible for ensuring that the external doors are shut and locked when determined appropriate.

DHS negotiate with the Successful Proposer to finalize the hours, services and staffing of the Drop-in Center. Proposers should determine appropriate staffing levels and budget accordingly.

2.4 Staffing and Staff Qualifications

Proposers are required to propose a staffing plan for the Shelter and Drop-in Center. Proposers must provide an organizational chart, staff positions, number of staff and work hours for each position, and the education requirements and qualifications for each position. At this time, DHS does not have firm staffing requirements, and would like to hear from Proposers about what staffing they think is needed for the Shelter and Drop-in Center. DHS and the Successful Proposer will negotiate and agree upon the final makeup of the staff plan.

Shelter and Drop-in Center staff must engage everyone who enters, with the goal of helping each Client to return to permanent housing as soon as possible. Staff must be able to quickly assess and respond to a variety of situations, including medical emergencies, mental health issues, conflict resolution and intervention, as well as other emergencies. Key program staff must have a combination of education, training and experience that enables them to effectively serve Clients. Ideally, supervisors and leaders within the Shelter and Drop-in Center will have:

- Passion for helping individuals experiencing homelessness find permanent housing
- Previous experience working successfully with individuals experiencing homelessness or a related population, lived experience preferred
- Clear understanding of how trauma impacts behavior
- Training and/or work experience using crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques
- A toolkit for case management that includes Active Listening, Motivational Interviewing, and Harm Reduction and Trauma-Informed practices
- A laser focus on securing an appropriate alternative housing option to help Clients exit shelter as quickly as possible
- Strong and up-to-date knowledge of local social services including those that offer support for individuals experiencing homelessness with additional concerns such as intimate partner violence, SUD, HIV/AIDS and mental health resources for low-income individuals
- Knowledge of racial disparities in the emergency housing system and the ability to craft policies that respond to these disparities
- A creative and innovative approach to programs that help the overall well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness

The Successful Proposer must have a reasonable plan for providing all staff with frequent and ongoing training opportunities, including comprehensive orientation and annual training requirements. Proposers must include with their Proposal a detailed training plan that identifies the topics and annual timeline for initial and ongoing staff training. The Successful Proposer must offer wages at least as much as the Allegheny County Self-Sufficiency Wage (see Definitions section). If Proposers plan to pay any staff working in The Commons a wage below the Self-Sufficiency Wage, they must provide the rationale for this decision.

2.5 Safety and Security

The Successful Proposer must be comfortable working in an environment that grounds safety in Trauma-Informed practice and de-escalation strategies, meets behavioral issues with clinical

interventions and saves any law enforcement-related response as a very last resort. Access to The Commons will only be restricted in extremely limited circumstances (i.e., threats to safety of the individual and others). The Successful Proposer's staff must have the clinical skills needed to de-escalate situations before they result in termination of services or removal from the facility.

The safety and security of all individuals (including staff, Clients, residents, visitors and neighbors) connected to The Commons is paramount. At the same time, the ability to feel safe within the space is essential to achieving a truly low-barrier environment. As a new facility, DHS anticipates increased community awareness of The Commons location. In addition to drawing supporters and volunteers to The Commons, this raised awareness will likely attract those who wish to exploit and victimize the people being served. The Successful Proposer will be responsible for creating policies and training staff to identify and address several types of victimization including labor and/or sex trafficking, survival sex, intimate partner violence, theft and other forms of abuse.

The Commons has been designed with several security features that increase safety without violating the privacy of Clients and other visitors. Rooms have been designed to provide a clear line of vision into all spaces. Staff workstations have been strategically placed to ensure floor coverage where necessary. A camera system will be installed that will enable staff to see any hallway or common area remotely, as needed. Most meeting rooms will have two doors, so that in the event one exit is blocked and a staff member needs to leave the room they can use the secondary door. Desks in key locations will be equipped with panic buttons in case of an emergency.

The Successful Proposer must demonstrate a clear understanding of de-escalation practices, have the ability to train and support staff consistently in learning and using de-escalation strategies, and clearly describe how safety practices will be incorporated within programming offered in the Shelter and Drop-in Center. The Successful Proposer also must develop and implement policies and procedures specific to individuals in active crisis who present immediate danger to themselves or those around them.

2.6 Consumer Voice

The Successful Proposer must gather feedback and input from Shelter Clients and Drop-in Center Visitors to identify what is working, as well as when policy or programmatic changes might be needed. To achieve this, the Successful Proposer must establish a **consumer leadership group**, an organized group of active and former Clients, to provide feedback about Shelter and Drop-in Center operations, policies and new ideas. The Successful Proposer must ensure that this group is representative of the demographics of the entire population served at The Commons. The consumer leadership group must have a critical role in guiding new development within the Shelter and Drop-in Center. The Successful Proposer must convene the group, provide staff support and assist the group in establishing and maintaining a leadership structure. Any current or former Client participating in the consumer leadership group must be paid a fair hourly wage for the time they spend participating. The hourly wage must be no less than the Self Sufficiency Wage. The Successful Proposer must ensure that consumer leadership

group meetings are scheduled at times convenient for the largest number of current and former Clients.

2.7 Collaboration

The Successful Proposer must operate the Shelter and Drop-in Center in a way that supports a positive and mutually beneficial relationship with partners co-located within The Commons, external partners, immediate downtown neighbors, the wider Allegheny County community and the Allegheny County crisis prevention and response system. The Successful Proposer must make strong and constructive connections with a wide range of community stakeholders in order to facilitate improved outcomes for Clients, particularly those most marginalized.

A. Co-located Partners

Collaboration among The Commons' co-located partners will streamline and improve service delivery, guide development of building policies and procedures and create a healthy space for staff, Clients, other visitors and members of the wider community. The Successful Proposer must convene co-located partners within The Commons and lead coordination efforts. Potential areas of coordination include service implementation/delivery, program referrals and crisis response.

At the time this RFP is released, DHS anticipates five co-located program partners will be involved within The Commons:

Program	Partner
Shelter & Drop-in Center	The Successful Proposer
Health Clinic	UPMC
Field Unit	DHS
SRO Property Management	TBD
Kitchen/Food Program	TBD

The DHS Field Unit (also called the Field Unit) is a team of seven service coordinators and a supervisor. Field Unit staff primarily work to engage individuals living outside or in other areas not meant for human habitation are screened for housing program eligibility if interested and are connected to desired services. Once The Commons is open, the Field Unit will ensure those individuals know how to access the Shelter and Drop-in Center. In addition to the Field Unit, several other street outreach organizations provide similar services in the County. The street outreach office located near the Drop-in Center will house the Field Unit and serve as a central location for all service coordinators working within the community to connect. Field Unit and street outreach staff also will meet with Clients staying in the Shelter or visiting the Drop-in Center when needed.

B. External Partners

The Successful Proposer must collaborate with external partners of The Commons, including:

- 2P110 Cares Inc. (Cares): Cares owns The Commons building and will contract with a professional building manager to manage the day-to-day operations of the building. While Cares will not have offices located directly on site, the Successful Proposer likely will engage with them on occasion.
- Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP): PDP is a non-profit community development organization comprised of local businesses, professional and civic organizations, foundations, and downtown residents. PDP works to increase the vibrancy of the downtown neighborhood near The Commons.

The Successful Proposer must develop strong relationships with colleagues and other service providers in homeless and housing support services across the CoC. These relationships will enable the Shelter and Drop-in Center to better serve Clients and provide opportunities for additional resources. Staff within the Shelter and Drop-in Center must support the relationships between Clients and their other service providers and must work to align service delivery in the best interest of the Client. This may include communicating with other providers via phone or email, attending meetings in person and virtually, and participating in case conferencing when necessary.

The Successful Proposer must initiate Shelter and Drop-in Center programming expansion through new collaborations and creative thinking. Proposers are welcome and encouraged to include new ideas in their Proposals beyond what is described in the RFP.

C. The Allegheny County Community

The Commons is supported by a board of directors with diverse community representation including local government, businesses and human service providers. It is this board's goal that the Successful Proposer will operate the Shelter and Drop-in Center in a way that engages with its immediate neighbors and the larger Allegheny County community. With its location close to the heart of downtown Pittsburgh, DHS is hopeful The Commons will become a fixture of the neighborhood so that its Clients can feel a sense of belonging. The Successful Proposer must foster long-term relationships within downtown Pittsburgh and the larger Allegheny County community, including large and small businesses, non-profits and local government agencies.

D. The Allegheny County Crisis Prevention and Response System

In September 2020, DHS and Allegheny County's Department of Emergency Services (ACES) convened a Crisis Response Stakeholder Group (CRSG) focused on improving existing services and piloting new ones to address the overreliance on law enforcement and incarceration for people with behavioral health needs, including individuals experiencing homelessness.⁶ Among the groups included in this effort are law enforcement, local government entities, providers, behavioral health specialists and people with lived experiences in the justice system. Many stakeholders on the CRSG—including the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police—also participated in the

⁶ For more information on Allegheny County's emerging crisis response system, please visit <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/News-Events/Accomplishments/Improving-Crisis-Prevention-and-Response.aspx>.

planning for The Commons. One crucial recommendation from the group was that services should be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week—including a “no refusal” policy—to people experiencing a crisis and law enforcement officers who may encounter them in the community. DHS expects The Commons to be responsive to this recommendation for individuals experiencing a housing crisis and to be a critical new resource within the emerging crisis response system for those with shelter and behavioral health needs.

The Successful Proposer must participate in ongoing efforts to improve and assure quality throughout the crisis system. For example, the Successful Proposer must welcome referrals from law enforcement officers. Police will have a separate entrance to The Commons, to minimize interaction between law enforcement and Clients who enter through the main entrance or are in congregate spaces. Beyond facilitating an efficient process for law enforcement officers, the Successful Proposer must join the CRSG, so that the Successful Proposer’s insights, experiences and challenges can inform continuous system improvements.

2.8 Data Collection and Evaluation

The Successful Proposer must collect data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a database managed by DHS that tracks demographic and outcome data for Clients who are experiencing homelessness. The Successful Proposer must input data in an accurate and timely manner—within 48 hours of Clients’ entry into and exit from the Shelter. Additionally, the Successful Proposer must work closely with DHS staff to continuously monitor and improve Shelter and Drop-in Center services and operations.

The Successful Proposer must review data in HMIS and submit all reports within the HMIS system in alignment with the Allegheny County CoC HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual and written standards.⁷ Filling a critical role in the CoC, the Successful Proposer must participate actively in annual Point-in-Time Count data collection and other initiatives to strengthen the CoC crisis response system.

2.9 Performance Outcome Goals

The following is a preliminary list of anticipated outcome goals. DHS and the Successful Proposer will work together to determine actual expected outcomes and the monitoring process:

- Decreased amount of time that individuals spend living unsheltered or in places not meant for habitation (CoC baseline and benchmark to be established)
- Increased engagement with behavioral health services – including SUD recovery programs – by individuals accessing services at the Drop-in Center and/or the Shelter (baseline and benchmark to be established)
- 85% or more of Clients spend 30 days or fewer in the Shelter
- 5% or fewer involuntary terminations in the Shelter
- 75% of Shelter Clients who stay for one week or longer have at least one clinic visit before exit

⁷ <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442464334>

- 60% or more Shelter Clients exit to permanent housing (including RRH or PSH within the CoC)
- 10% or fewer of Shelter Clients return to homelessness within two years
- Increased percentage of Clients with medical coverage

The Successful Proposer must meet the following administrative outcomes:

- 5% or less data missing in HMIS
- 75% or more assessments within three days of program entry
- 75% or more assessments within three days of program exit

2.10 Budget

The proposed annual budget for the Shelter and Drop-in Center is approximately \$2,000,000. Proposers may propose a budget that exceeds this amount, but the overage must be justified in the budget narrative. Proposal budgets must include, but are not limited to:

- Sufficient staffing to meet the expectations as detailed above for both the Shelter and the Drop-in Center, including clinical staff and staff coverage for the winter overflow capacity. If a Proposer plans to pay any staff a wage below the Allegheny County Self-Sufficiency Wage, the rationale must be provided.
- Day-to-day cleaning/maintenance costs for the Shelter and Drop-in Center
- Office supplies
- Personal care supplies for Drop-in Center laundry and showers and for Shelter (e.g., soap, shampoo, toothpaste, laundry detergent)
- Light refreshment supplies for Drop-in Center
- Transportation assistance for Clients
- A place holder of \$250,000 for annual rent of three floors (exact square footage and costs are still being determined but the actual amount will be built into the final contracted budget)
 - Utilities are included in this rent and do not require separate line items
 - For internet, the building will provide basic Wi-Fi, but Proposers may propose to pay for a more robust system

The following costs do not need to be included in Proposals and will be covered by The Commons:

- Startup costs including all furniture and linens/towels
- Meal costs for the Shelter. As detailed in Section 2.7 Collaboration, DHS expects the Shelter's commercial kitchen and meal costs to be run through a separate contract with The Commons. As this component is not yet confirmed, there is a possibility the Successful Proposer will be asked to oversee meal preparation and its related costs. If this becomes the case, an additional budget would be developed.

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 110 points, as outlined in the following sections.

3.1 Approach and Philosophy (25 points possible)

- Clear and concise statement of the Proposer's service delivery philosophy and how the Shelter and Drop-In Center services fit in with the Proposer's mission (5 points)
- A specific description of how the Successful Proposer will apply each of the following principles in the management of the Low-Barrier Shelter and Drop-In Center and what impact these principles will have on the services (10 points):
 - Low-Barrier Philosophy
 - Harm Reduction
 - Trauma-Informed Care
 - Housing First
- An organizational commitment to reducing racial inequities, maintaining cultural humility, and promoting inclusivity, and policies for service provision and/or internal operations that reflect these values (5 points)
- Commitment to and plan for attracting and retaining high quality staff and prioritizing the hiring of those with lived experiences relevant to housing services and supports (5 points)

3.2 Housing and Priority Population Experience (10 points possible)

- Past success achieving positive outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness, including finding the best possible permanent housing (5 points)
- Experience implementing de-escalation practices as tools for security and safety and for clients who are experiencing crisis (5 points)

3.3 Implementation Plan (50 points possible)

- An understanding of barriers that can prevent people experiencing homelessness from accessing or engaging with services, especially those who are experiencing Chronic Homelessness or have avoided shelters in the past, and a specific plan to eliminate those barriers for the Shelter and Drop-In Center (10 points)
- Identification of anticipated implementation challenges and a plan to overcome them (10 points)
- A plan to ensure seamless collaborations with the co-existing services and providers at The Commons (5 points)

- A staffing plan for all positions in the Shelter and Drop-In Center that meets the objectives described in Section 2.4 (10 points)
- A plan to cultivate and maintain relationships with the greater Downtown Pittsburgh community (5 points)
- A plan to establish, support, and compensate members of the consumer leadership group and a plan to include the group in decision making at the Shelter and Drop-In Center (5 points)
- A plan to establish and maintain safety within the Shelter and Drop-In Center (5 points)

3.5 Organizational Capacity (15 points possible)

- Experience partnering with other organizations to implement programs, including across sectors (5 points)
- Evidence of Client satisfaction in current programs and established methods to collect and use Client feedback to improve program design, service delivery and evaluation efforts (5 points)
- Experience collecting and using data to analyze outcomes and to make programmatic changes. For Proposers who currently provide homeless services, HMIS performance will be reviewed during the selection process (5 points)

3.6 Budget (10 points possible)

- A detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Contracted Services and includes the items listed in Section 2.10 (5 points)
- A detailed budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed line-item budget (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submission Process

- 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)
- 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.allegheycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- Proposers must submit a complete Proposal, which includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
 - Response Form

- Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 7.1 and 7.2)
 - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
 - Audited financial reports for the last three years
 - W-9
 - Attachments listed in the Response Form
- d. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or the Response Form.
 - e. 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 your organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing adequate financial documentation is a requirement of contracting with 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 Friday, June 25, 2021 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 by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, June 17, 2021.
- 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 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).

4.4 Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law

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

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

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

DHS will convene an Evaluation Committee to evaluate Proposals. The Evaluation Committee will assign scores to each Proposal by awarding points based on the evaluation criteria in Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria, by using the point scale listed in Section 5.1 b.

5.1 Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. DHS will form an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee may consist of DHS employees and subject matter representatives from external organizations.
- 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 (5 points)
 - Proposer’s presentation is thoughtful and professional (5 points)
- f. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee to the shortlisted Proposer formal oral presentations and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the scores, and arrive at a consensus on which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP.
- g. The Committee will submit its recommendation for award of an Agreement or Agreements to the Director of DHS for approval. The Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement or Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
- h. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.

- i. As part of determining a Proposer's eligibility to enter into a contract with Allegheny County, all Proposers' financial audits or other documentation will be reviewed by DHS fiscal analysts to ensure a Proposer's financial stability.
- j. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with a Proposer as a result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**
- k. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
- l. Proposers 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:

- 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 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% 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 is able to 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 which begin on page 14 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations), 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).

6.7 New Provider Requirements

If awarded an Agreement, Successful Proposers who do not have current Allegheny County contracts will be required to complete the [DHS New Provider Application](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Prospective-Providers.aspx), 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.

Appendix A: The Commons Service Locations and Mock-Ups

Services will be located as follows:

- First Floor: Shelter kitchen and dining room; meeting rooms (with capacity to serve as overflow Shelter space in the winter); hot room for sanitation of belongings; Client storage space; bike racks; a warm handoff room for Clients who are brought by public safety or other community partners
- Second Floor (Main Entrance on Second Avenue): Drop-in Center, with showers and laundry; the UPMC health clinic; DHS Field Unit Street Outreach Office
- Third Floor: The Low-Barrier Shelter with 92+ beds in group sleeping rooms with dedicated personal hygiene facilities, space for pets and storage facilities
- Fourth and Fifth Floor: SRO units for 45 individuals
- Outside: Limited greenspace; limited parking for vehicles; space to park bicycles; an emergency vehicle entrance; a dog wash station

Detailed floorplans may be requested by emailing DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us. The following images are mock-ups of the space.

EXTERIOR | IMAGE AND CHARACTER





INTERIOR | WELCOME CENTER



INTERIOR | THE COMMONS



INTERIOR | DROP-IN AREA



INTERIOR | THE DINING ROOM



INTERIOR | THE SROS

