



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Housing and Healthcare Coordinated Programs for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2021 Bonus Funding

RFP Posting:

Friday, September 24, 2021

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 8, 2021

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 15, 2021

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

November 2021

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

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Acronyms and Definitions

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

1. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
2. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3. Bonus Project: A project submitted under the CoC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) that is over and above the pro rata of need established by HUD and can be funded if HUD chooses to fund the project in accordance with CoC need and program quality
4. Continuum of Care (CoC): A geographically-based group of representatives that carries out the planning responsibilities of the HUD Continuum of Care Program
5. CoC Regulations: HUD's rules and regulations under the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act). The rules and regulations are titled, "Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Continuum of Care Program; Interim Final Rule," and can be found at 24 CFR Part 578.
6. Contract Services: The specific services which the Successful Proposer agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP, as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
7. Coordinated Entry: A standardized method for connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to the resources available in a given geographic area
8. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services.
9. HAB: [Allegheny County] Homeless Advisory Board, 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.
10. HEARTH Act: Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009
11. HMIS: Homeless Management Information System, an information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and people at risk of homelessness
12. 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
13. HUD: [United States Department of] Housing and Urban Development
14. NOFO: Notice of Funding Opportunity
15. Participant: An individual or family served by a proposed Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing Program
16. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): Programs that provide long-term housing with supportive services for homeless individuals with disabilities

17. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
18. Proposer: The non-profit organization submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
19. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
20. RFP: Request for Proposals
21. Rapid Rehousing (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
22. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to be included in DHS's response to HUD's NOFO
23. Supportive Services: Services designed to prepare a Participant to make a successful transition from homelessness to independence

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

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

As recommended by the Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board (HAB), through the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) and on behalf of the Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC)¹, Allegheny County is soliciting Proposals from one or more Proposers who will coordinate with a healthcare organization to provide housing, housing assistance, supportive services and healthcare services to individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness, through Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Programs and Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Programs (hereinafter referred to separately as PSH Programs and RRH Programs and collectively as the Programs). DHS is seeking innovative PSH and RRH Programs that utilize rental assistance and healthcare services to improve the health and well-being of participating individuals and families (individuals and families receiving the proposed PSH Program and RRH Program services will hereinafter be referred to as Participants).

Proposers may submit a Proposal for one PSH Program only, for one RRH Program only or for one of each type of Program.

Award Details

This RFP for PSH and RRH Programs is made in response to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the CoC, [FR-6500-N-25](#). The NOFO is competitive, and DHS will submit a response to HUD for a chance to be awarded “bonus funding.” The amount of bonus funding available is approximately \$1.2 million.

Successful Proposal(s) will be included in DHS’s response to HUD’s NOFO. HUD must approve and award bonus funding for the proposed Programs in order for the County to enter into an Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).

Dependent upon HUD’s approval of DHS’s response to the NOFO, DHS intends to enter into one or more Agreements in 2022 with one or more Successful Proposer(s) to provide PSH and RRH Programs for a term of one year. DHS cannot anticipate the number of projects that may be funded at this time and there is no guarantee that HUD will award any bonus funding to DHS.

If DHS is successful in the NOFO process, the PSH and RRH Programs would begin on July 1, 2022.

Who can apply

All non-profit entities are eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. Entities do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to submit a Proposal, but they must

¹ The Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board has designated the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as the entity authorized to apply for and carry out activities on behalf of the CoC (the Collaborative Applicant).

meet all of Allegheny County’s contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capability to provide the Contract Services.

What’s important to us

Since the adoption of “Opening Doors,” the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, the federal government has emphasized the importance of understanding Housing First not just as a program model, but as an overall orientation in communities’ response to homelessness. Housing First strategies incorporate few programmatic prerequisites, utilize proactive outreach and engagement efforts, implement low-barrier admission policies, create rapid and streamlined entry into permanent housing, offer voluntary and engaging supportive services, and focus on housing stability.

As a Continuum of Care, the County is committed to these Housing First principles. This RFP aims to contribute to long-term efforts to more fully integrate Housing First models into the Allegheny County CoC. As supportive, low-barrier housing, RRH and PSH Programs help Allegheny County increase Housing First options in its network of housing supports.

Timeline

Proposers must submit questions about this RFP by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 8, 2021. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 15, 2021. We expect to notify Proposers of the County’s decision in October 2021. DHS’s response to the NOFA is due on November 16, 2021.

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, intellectual disability, 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

PSH and RRH Programs are core to DHS’s service array for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. PSH Programs provide long-term housing with supportive services for homeless individuals with physical and/or intellectual disabilities. This type of supportive housing enables these individuals to live as independently as possible in a permanent setting. RRH Programs assist individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness to move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and to achieve stability through a combination of rental assistance, housing search and supportive services.

DHS administers a HUD grant of approximately \$21.8 million, of which approximately \$14.5 million is currently allocated to PSH Programs and of which approximately \$5 million is currently allocated to RRH Programs across Allegheny County. HUD recently awarded DHS, on behalf of the CoC, with Unified Funding Agency (UFA) status. This status allows DHS to reallocate funding within grant cycles and “right-size” the County’s PSH and RRH Programs throughout the grant year. For the July 2020–June 2021 project year, this funding flexibility has resulted in the expansion and reduction of projects as needed and the CoC returning zero funds to HUD for the first time. In the past, the CoC would return between \$500,000 and \$1 million in funds to HUD each year.

To inform planning and decision-making for the HAB, DHS assesses homeless housing needs and turnover for longer term (non-emergency shelter) homeless programs. Data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), DHS’s information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and people at risk of homelessness, and DHS’s coordinated intake (through the Allegheny Link, an office that connects people in need to available resources) are analyzed. Available data includes: information from homeless assessments; the [Allegheny Housing Assessment](#), a pre-screening tool that assesses the health and social needs of people experiencing homelessness to match them with appropriate supports and housing intervention programs; homeless unit capacity and turnover; and other relevant data.

For the 2021 NOFO, DHS is seeking new PSH and/or RRH Program(s) that collaborate with healthcare systems (both physical and behavioral) to assist individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness (with UFA status, DHS no longer needs to use NOFO funds to expand existing PSH and RRH Programs).

Targeting Programs that integrate healthcare and homelessness services through this RFP supports an area of need identified by the CoC, HAB and DHS because Participants in PSH/RRH Programs often need supportive services for physical and mental healthcare and substance use treatment or recovery. The healthcare sector is recognized as a vital partner in the CoC and collaborations have already begun across Allegheny County among housing providers and healthcare organizations. New PSH/RRH projects with a dedicated collaboration with the healthcare system would bolster the work in progress and could enhance service delivery and quality and encourage effective and creative resource utilization to meet need.

In addition, soliciting for Programs that collaborate with the healthcare systems would align with HUD priorities, as evident by the NOFO. Included in this year’s NOFO is the opportunity to receive bonus points for applying for new PSH and RRH projects that use healthcare resources to help individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. Bonus points add to the CoC’s overall score, with CoC scores guiding funding levels and decisions from HUD.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is requesting collaborative Proposals from non-profit housing providers in partnership with healthcare organizations (private or public) for PSH and RRH Programs that make a concerted

effort to assist Participants in obtaining health insurance and addressing their healthcare needs. DHS is seeking creative PSH and RRH Programs that utilize rental assistance and healthcare provided through an array of health services providers to improve Participant’s health and well-being.

The Programs must adhere to Housing First principles as well as all rules and regulations of: 1) the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act),² HUD’s Homeless Emergency Assistance, Rapid Transition to Housing: Continuum of Care Program (CoC) Rules and Regulations (“CoC Regulations”),³ found at 24 CFR 578 and 2) the Fair Housing Act.⁴

The 2021 fair market rate (FMR), as documented by HUD, will determine the number of units to be funded. If a HUD bonus project allocation is approved, any funding received through a successful project allocation will be added to the CoC’s current funding level to support additional PSH and RRH Programs.

Proposers may propose to develop one PSH Program, one RRH Program or one of each type of Program. Proposed Programs must provide both housing and supportive services to Participants.

A. Target Population

Programs may serve single or family households—with or without children—who are experiencing homelessness. In addition:

- PSH Programs must serve chronically homeless individuals and/or families meeting HUD disability requirements.
- RRH Programs must serve homeless individuals and/or families coming directly from the streets or emergency shelter or fleeing domestic violence situations.

Programs must follow a Housing First model⁵ and serve Participants without regard to previous criminal history, clean time, employment, credit worthiness or other barriers. Successful Proposer(s) must promote respect and utilize approaches that are tailored to serve diverse individuals, families and communities. Successful Proposer(s) must be committed to providing high-quality services to all Participants regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

² <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessAssistanceActAmendedbyHEARTH.pdf>

³ <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/CoCProgramInterimRule.pdf>

⁴ http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/FHLaws/yourrights

⁵ https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_OpeningDoors_Amendment2015_FINAL.pdf

B. Housing

Housing for PSH Programs

For a PSH Program, Successful Proposer(s) will be expected to offer facility-based and/or scattered site housing units in Allegheny County. The rent for all units must be reasonable for the area and units must meet all housing quality standards.

Housing for RRH Programs

For a RRH Program, Successful Proposer(s) will be responsible for offering short-term rental assistance (up to three months) or medium-term rental assistance (4-24 months) for Participants. All rental assistance will be for tenant-based scattered site units, meaning that Participants may locate the housing of their choice in the private rental market, with assistance from the Successful Proposer as needed. If a Participant later moves to another suitable unit, the rental assistance may be applied to the new unit.

All RRH Program units must: 1) pass a housing quality inspection; 2) meet all requirements identified in the HEARTH Act, CoC regulations and the Fair Housing Act, and; 3) meet reasonable rent standards. The Successful Proposer(s) also will be responsible for working with landlords and other service providers to ensure that Participants remain successfully housed and to facilitate their transition out of the RRH Program. Further, the Successful Proposer(s) must ensure timely and accurate payment to the landlord on behalf of the Participant. The Successful Proposer(s) must follow the rental assistance regulations for RRH,⁶ including having all leases in the name of the Participant.

Per HUD requirements, to remain in an RRH Program, Participants must demonstrate that they continue to lack sufficient resources and support networks necessary to retain housing without assistance. If Participants no longer require assistance through an RRH Program, they must be permitted to remain in the housing unit (if they choose) and assume full responsibility for payment of rent and utilities.

C. Supportive Services

In addition to appropriate housing for PSH and RRH Programs described above, the Successful Proposer(s) must provide supportive services designed to prepare Participants to make a successful transition from homelessness to independence. Supportive services are aimed at long-term recovery and may focus on social, vocational, educational, behavioral or cognitive skills. Supportive services are not one-size-fits-all, and Successful Proposer(s) must tailor them based on a Participant's needs, culture, circumstances, learning styles and abilities. Services may be provided by the Successful Proposer(s) directly or by another agency under contract with the Successful Proposer(s). Supportive services include the following:

- Assessment of service needs

⁶ <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/toolkit/program-components-and-eligible-costs/> and <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessAssistanceActAmendedbyHEARTH.pdf>

- Assistance with moving costs
- Case management
- Child Care
- Education services
- Employment assistance and job training
- Food assistance
- Housing search and counseling services
- Legal services related to securing/maintaining rental housing
- Life skills training
- Mental health services
- Outpatient health services
- Outreach services
- Substance use disorder treatment
- Transportation
- Utility deposits

Healthcare Supportive Services

Programs should leverage the healthcare resources available through the collaboration between the housing and healthcare providers and intentionally focus on providing supportive services for physical and mental healthcare and substance use treatment or recovery. Proposers can be creative in how their Programs utilize healthcare resources and should describe this in their Proposals. Healthcare resources can include, but are not limited to, the following: 1) direct contributions from a public or private health insurance and 2) provision of healthcare services individualized for each Participant.

D. Referral and Outreach

DHS expects that all referrals to the PSH and RRH Programs managed by Successful Proposer(s) will be made through DHS's Coordinated Entry Unit (Allegheny Link). Successful Proposer(s) will be responsible for accepting a referral and quickly securing the Participant's appropriate housing placement.

E. Performance Outcomes for Both Program Types

Successful Proposer(s) will be responsible for collaborating with DHS and CoCAP (Continuum of Care Analysis and Planning Committee, a subcommittee of the HAB) in tracking outcomes and meeting the following HUD performance standards for the PSH and RRH Programs within one year.

Performance standards for a PSH Program:

1. Average Program utilization rate of units will reach or surpass 98%.
2. Average length of time from Program enrollment to move-in date is less than 30 days.
3. 85% of Participants will maintain or increase their income.
4. Participants will obtain or maintain employment (part-time or full-time).

5. 85% of Participants will maintain or increase non-cash benefits (e.g., Food Stamps).
6. 100% of Participants will maintain or secure Medicaid or private health insurance.
7. 95% of Participants will maintain permanent housing or exit to other permanent housing.
8. Fewer than 5% of Participants that exit from the PSH Program to a permanent housing destination return to homeless system within 6 months.

Performance standards for an RRH Program:

1. Average Program utilization rate of units will reach or surpass 95%.
2. Average length of time from Program enrollment to move-in date is 30 days.
3. 85% of Participants will maintain or increase their income.
4. Participants will obtain or maintain employment (part-time or full-time).
5. 85% of Participants will maintain or increase non-cash benefits.
6. 95% of Participants will maintain or secure Medicaid or private health insurance.
7. 85% of participants will exit the Program within nine months.
8. 85% of Participants will maintain permanent housing upon exit.
9. Fewer than 5% of Participants that exit from the RRH Program to a permanent housing destination return to homeless system within 6 months.

Beyond HUD's performance outcomes, DHS expects that the Successful Proposer(s) will establish additional goals for the PSH and RRH Programs (e.g., Participants will secure health care through public or private sources, Participants will be linked to mental health outpatient services, Participants will enroll in substance use recovery groups). For more information, please see the [CoCAPC performance management webpage](#).

F. HMIS

Successful Proposer(s) will be responsible for participating in the Allegheny Link process and for entering all data into HMIS within the parameters established by the HUD regulations. Victim services providers are not required to participate in HMIS, per HMIS regulations. However, victim services providers must have a comparable database to produce the required reports to HUD on an annual basis as well as run periodic data quality reports to ensure all data is correct in their system, per the most recent HUD data specifications.

G. Budget

Because DHS expects that there will be more than one Successful Proposer, funding will be divided among Successful Proposers according to Program size and needs. Successful Proposers' Programs will be included in the County's response to HUD's NOFO. Contingent on HUD approval, the County expects to award Agreements for a term of one year.

A 25% match from the Successful Proposer(s) is required to be documented for all line items except leasing. The match may be cash, through additionally raised funds, or in-kind services. Match may not include CoC funding that a Proposer currently receives. If in-kind services are secured from another organization for this match, the organization must have a memorandum of understanding in place prior to the executed contract. Proposers must include a brief narrative

identifying planned sources of match. Upon selection, Successful Proposer(s) will be required to provide letters verifying all sources of matching funds.

No more than 3.5% of HUD funds may be used for a Successful Proposer's administrative expenses (e.g., staffing, computers, office supplies). Matching funds, cash and in-kind resources may be used for additional administrative costs.

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Proposers must meet the following evaluation criteria and must address their qualifications by responding to the specifically requested items or questions in the Response Form. Proposers should download and type their responses directly into the Response Form available on the Active Solicitations webpage at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 100 points for each Program proposed, as outlined in the following sections. The score from the Organizational Experience section will be added to the score for each Program proposed.

Organizational Experience (35 points total)

- Experience providing housing and supportive services with at least an 85% utilization rate (5 points)
- Strong organizational and management structure including evidence of internal communication, external coordination and an adequate financial accounting system (5 points)
- Absence of any unresolved monitoring or audit findings for any grants (5 points)
- A strong staffing plan including staff qualifications, recruitment, training and performance management (5 points).
- Experience and demonstrated success in meeting standards for managing data with HMIS (5 points).
- Clear understanding of and commitment to the Housing First model (5 points).
- High-performing projects under the 2021 ranking performance measures for the HUD 2019 renewal applications will be awarded up to five points. (5 points) DHS Housing Analysts will review ranking performance measure scores and assign points based on the following scale:
 - 69 or less: 0
 - 70 - 79: 1 point
 - 80 - 85: 3 points
 - 85 and up: 5 points

PSH Program Standards (65 points total)

- A well-defined PSH Program plan, including who the key partners are and how the Program will utilize healthcare supportive services (10 points)

- An appropriate schedule for the proposed activities, a management plan, and a method for assuring effective and timely completion of all work for the PSH Program (5 points)
- Experience and strategy for serving the PSH target population, including any specified subpopulation (5 points)
- An appropriate housing plan that supports PSH Program goals (10 points)
- A comprehensive plan for coordinating with outside partners to provide a variety of supportive services, with appropriate frequency, for PSH Program Participants, including specific names of partners and examples of collaboration (5 points)
- A plan to track and achieve performance standards for a PSH Program (5 points)
- Ability to manage referrals of individuals with a documented disability who are experiencing homelessness (5 points)
- A strategy to effectively use funds for performing the scope of services within funding and time specifications (5 points)
- A budget narrative that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing the PSH Program (5 points)
- HUD budget charts that demonstrate fiscal and management capacity to manage program funds in a fiscally responsible manner (5 points)
- DHS Housing Analysts will perform a review of HMIS data to evaluate Proposers' data quality and performance outcomes using the five-point scale described in Section 5.1. Strong past performance and complete, accurate data entry are worth a total of five possible points. (5 points)

RRH Program Standards (65 points total)

- A well-defined RRH Program plan, including who the key partners are and how the Program will utilize healthcare supportive services (10 points)
- An appropriate schedule for the proposed activities, a management plan, and a method for assuring effective and timely completion of all work for the RRH Program (5 points)
- Experience and strategy for serving the RRH target population, including any specified subpopulation (5 points)
- An appropriate housing plan that supports RRH Program goals including resolution of housing crises in a short period of time (10 points)
- A comprehensive plan for coordinating with outside partners to provide a variety of supportive services, with appropriate frequency, for RRH Program Participants (5 points)
- A plan to track and achieve performance standards for an RRH Program (5 points)
- Ability to manage referrals for individuals experiencing homelessness (5 points)
- A strategy to effectively use funds for performing the scope of services within funding and time specifications (5 points)
- A budget narrative that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing the RRH Program (5 points)
- HUD budget charts that demonstrate fiscal and management capacity to manage program funds in a fiscally responsible manner (5 points)
- DHS Housing Analysts will perform a review of HMIS data to evaluate Proposers' data quality and performance outcomes using the five-point scale described in Section 5.1.

Strong past performance and complete, accurate data entry are worth a total of five possible points (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submission Process

- a. Proposers should take time to review and understand the RFP in its entirety including:
 - The background (see Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP)
 - The narrative (see Section 2: What We Are Looking For)
 - The requirements (see Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)
 - The evaluation process (see Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal)
- b. Proposers must use the Response Form to develop your Proposal. Type your responses to each requested item directly into the Response Form. It is available at our Active Solicitations website with the RFP announcement at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- c. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal. The Proposal 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
 - Internal Revenue Service Form W-9
- d. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or in 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, October 15, 2021 to be considered for review.**
- h. 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.
- i. Proposers will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their Proposal. If a Proposer does not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting their Proposal, please contact: DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

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 Friday, October 8, 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 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 to 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, representatives from external organizations and community members with expertise in the subject matter of this RFP.
- 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 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](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations), 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 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).

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.