

**Allegheny County
Department of Human Services
Request for Proposals Q&A**

RFP for a Supportive Housing Program for Individuals and Families Experiencing Both
Homelessness and Behavioral Health Needs

Office Hours, October 03, 2023

1. The \$1.2 million annually that is anticipated for the 70 units, was there a projection in terms of proportion of that \$1.2 million that's to be allocated to rental subsidy?

We used the fair market rent for estimates of budgets, but we don't have a designated amount that you must allocate to rental subsidy.

2. When you used the fair market rent, did you estimate a certain proportion of people coming in with no income versus people that would be paying the portion of their income?

No.

3. You have that projects will begin in the Spring, are you thinking about doing that at the end of the fiscal year or would one be able to start an actual project at the onset of a new fiscal year?

We would like to begin as soon as we have a contract in place, which is likely to occur off cycle from our fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). We do not want to wait for the new fiscal year to begin projects.

4. We have housing programs for women who've been sexually exploited and trafficked, but the women themselves do not have to pay for anything that's in the program. We have 3 different levels of housing: emergency housing, which is a 90-day program; a long-term program which is up to a year; and a transitional program which is up to a year. We are opening all those houses in the Pittsburgh area, our first one is open, then we are working on opening the second one. In the transitional living program, individuals would be paying part if they can do that, but they would not be required, if that makes sense. Would our program qualify under this RFP?

The Program being procured through this RFP targets individuals or families experiencing homelessness who have a behavioral health need, including mental health, substance use disorder, or co-occurring disorders. A household's ability to pay rent is not a requirement for the program. However, referrals and those served must come through our coordinated entry system, the access point for homeless services in Allegheny County. Successful Proposals through this RFP will not be transitional housing programs or programs that do not receive their participants through coordinated entry.

5. With the emergency housing, the women that come stay with us are homeless and do have a lot of mental health and recovery issues. Our case manager works with them to set up whether to stay in our program and into our other houses, then helps them establish wherever their vision is where they want to live. If there is someone in our program and working with our case manager with putting them in the coordinated entry system, then would that person be eligible? Is it on an individual case basis or is it more of the organization?

Individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness, including those that are staying in emergency shelter, are eligible for homeless services. Households experiencing homelessness contact coordinated entry to determine eligibility and to be assessed for level of prioritization. The Supportive Housing Program(s) being procured through this RFP will be referred to households with the highest level of prioritization.

As such, the households served in the emergency housing program referenced in the question may be eligible for the Supportive Housing Program(s) being procured through this RFP, but the emergency housing program referenced would not be eligible to be funded through this RFP.

6. One of the things our case manager would help with is helping an individual get set up on the Allegheny Link, so they remain local. While we're looking for housing in the local area, would that make an individual ineligible because they're in our program and have housing at that point time, like the emergency housing for up to 90 days?

Individuals and families experiencing literal homelessness, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), are eligible for homeless services. The literal homeless definition is: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, meaning the individual or family has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation or is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements. This category also includes individuals who are exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entry into the institution.

As such, the households served in the emergency housing program referenced in the question may be eligible for the Supportive Housing Program(s) being procured through this RFP, but the emergency housing program referenced would not be eligible to be funded through this RFP.

7. We currently have supportive housing units funded by HUD and our mission is behavioral health. If we apply, are we asking to take a portion of those units we already have funded, and have it allocated to this, or do we have to have your new units?

This Program is not seeking to remove any units from HUD CoC funded programs. This funding is for additional units and allows flexibility regarding the style of unit.

8. Is the total of 70 households annually per provider who want to apply for this?

No, we are seeking to serve approximately 70 households, total, with this funding. For example, it's possible we could choose one Successful Proposer serving 30 households, and another Successful Proposer serving 40 households.

9. To clarify, the proposer does not necessarily have to already have X number of units that are available already in their possession? A proposer could propose to provide the services and to engage the clients in this process of finding housing and using scattered sites to do that, even if they do not have those units in their possession, is that correct?

Correct, you do not need to have rental units currently identified, nor do you need to own units. In your response, we're interested in reviewing your experience in regards to identifying landlords who will rent and administer rental assistance funds.

10. I believe this is reinvestment dollars and I saw that there would be a renewal of contracts at the end of the project. However, is the expectation to try to develop alternative funding so that it is not County dollars being used to supplement the housing or would this be picked up by County dollars moving forward?

Currently, we have a commitment of Health Choices dollars for the next five years. Once this funding ends, we'll assess the need for the Program, and identify other funding sources, if necessary. We suspect there will remain a need for supportive housing once the 5-year period ends, but we cannot guarantee what funding source(s) will be available at that time. However, DHS anticipates a continued commitment to serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness through supportive housing programs.

October 13, 2023

11. Does the 13-page limit for the response on the Response Form include the budget and the budget justification pages? Or are they considered separate attachments, and the 13-pages refers ONLY to the narrative?

The Budget and Budget Narrative are not included in the 13-page limit. Both items should be included as additional attachments in your Proposal.

October 19, 2023

12. Is the expectation to serve 70 households each year? If so, will the first year have a different expectation?

Yes, the expectation is to serve 70 households each year, however, this may be achieved through one or more Successful Proposers. There is no different expectation for the initial year. Please also see the response to question eight.

13. Will the awarded agency be able to choose the size of the households served? Is it possible to choose to only serve individuals? With the budget available, larger household sizes would make it difficult to hit 70 households served.

Yes. Proposers can propose to serve individuals, adult households only and/or households with children. Proposers should include a budget that reflects a realistic estimate of costs for the number of households they plan to serve for each year of the 5-year period and a budget narrative to justify all costs.

14. Is this program going to be ran as a SAMHSA grant with similar reporting expectations?

No, this Program is not being funded through a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant. Our reporting expectations are outlined in Section 2.E “Performance Outcomes.”

15. Will the budget rollover from year to year if not all spent, specifically considering the first year where all the rental budget may not be spent?

DHS will have the authority to rollover funds from year to year within the 5-year period at its discretion.

16. Since this is labeled as a mental health program, will DHS be providing direct connections to mental health services? What would OBH’s involvement be in this project?

As stated under *Support Services* in Section 2: “What DHS is Looking For,” for this Program, DHS expects the Successful Proposer(s) to be able to provide linkages to/coordination with community-based Mental health services. Thus, in your Proposal, we’re interested in seeing from Proposers what resources, partners and/or connections they have to provide this linkage/coordination.

October 23, 2023

17. How do Mental health illness and disorder individuals qualify for services under this RFP?

All referrals will come through Coordinated Entry. Coordinated Entry is a standardized method for connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to the resources available in a geographic area. The Allegheny Link and its Field Unit are the Coordinated Entry entities in Allegheny County. Households experiencing homelessness contact Coordinated Entry and are assessed for prioritization. Prioritization will be determined using the Allegheny Housing Assessment, a validated risk assessment and decision-support tool that uses administrative data from Allegheny County’s data warehouse to assess risk for a mental health inpatient stay, a jail booking and/or frequent use (four or more visits) of hospital emergency rooms. The Supportive Housing Program(s) being procured through this RFP will be expanding upon the existing array of housing programs to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Through the

described Coordinated Entry process, the majority of referrals to the Supportive Housing Program(s) will have mental illness and/or substance use disorder, but a particular diagnosis is not a requirement for eligibility.

Please also reference Section 2.A “Target Population” and Section 2.E “Referral Process.”

18. Would an individual with trauma mental health undiagnosed condition be considered to have a mental health illness?

Please see our response to question 17.

19. Are the individuals required to be Health Choices members?

No.