



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

# Request for Proposals

**Opioid and other Substance Use Disorder Interventions that are Led,  
Designed and Operated within and by Highly Impacted Communities**

**RFP Posting:**

Thursday, June 8, 2023

**Office Hours:**

10 a.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, June 21, 2023

**Questions Deadline:**

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, August 18, 2023

**Submission Deadline:**

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, August 30, 2023

**Estimated Award Decision/Notification:**

November 2023

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. Bonfire: The County's online procurement software. Proposers must have a Bonfire account to submit a Response to this RFP
4. Led, designed and operated by the community: An approach that: is accountable to the vision and priorities set by a community; puts those most affected by the work in the lead; ensures diverse representation in planning and decision-making; mobilizes the community's own resources; and uses feedback to improve the approach on a regular basis.
5. Contracted 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
6. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
7. DHS Bonfire Portal: A Bonfire webpage specific to Allegheny County Department of Human Services where Proposers can view open, past and awarded solicitations released through Bonfire
8. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
9. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
10. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
11. RFP: Request for Proposals
12. RFP Opportunity Page: The Bonfire webpage where the RFP and all supporting documents are listed and where the RFP submission documents must be uploaded for a Proposal to be considered for review
13. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

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

# The RFP at a Glance

## *Purpose*

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS), along with partners in the County's Department of Health and Children's Initiatives, is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to create or expand opioid use disorder (OUD) and other substance use disorder (SUD) interventions that are led, designed and operated by and within highly impacted communities.

More specifically, DHS seeks Proposals from Proposers looking to (1) initiate new programs that connect communities with informal OUD/SUD harm reduction information and services, or (2) expand similar, established programs and services. **Regardless of whether a Proposal is to initiate a new program or expand an established one, the work should be focused within and led by a community that has been disproportionately impacted.**

## *Award Details*

The services contracted through this RFP will be funded by the October 2020 class-action legal settlement against opioid manufacturer Johnson & Johnson and distributors McKesson, Amerisource Bergen and Cardinal Health.

DHS will commit a minimum of \$1.1 million of settlement funds to the services contracted through this RFP, with a target of awarding Agreements to multiple Successful Proposers. DHS expects to fund a mixture of small- and large-scale interventions. The agreements will be one-time, one-year agreements.

While these contracts will be one-time agreements, DHS also anticipates, as more settlement dollars become available, making additional investments in community led, designed and operated OUD and SUD interventions and working with providers to continue promising projects.

## *Who Can Submit a Proposal*

Anyone, including but not limited to non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, small businesses, and individuals, is eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. Proposers do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to apply, but they must meet all of Allegheny County's contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers) and have the programmatic, financial, and staffing capabilities to provide the Contracted Services.

Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more organizations partner together to submit one Proposal, are permitted. See Section 4.2.c for details. Successful Proposers can satisfy the contracting requirements listed in Section 6 on their own or through a partnership, such as a partnership with a Fiscal Sponsor.

**Proposals must be submitted electronically by logging into or creating an account on [Bonfire](#) (See Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal).**

***What’s Important to Us***

Successful Proposers will have demonstrated how their intervention is led, designed and/or operated by the community and how their intervention is focused within a community that has been disproportionately impacted by the opioid epidemic or by substance use disorders. While the intervention(s) can be focused on any community where disproportionate impact can be demonstrated, a list of communities that DHS has identified as disproportionately impacted can be found in Section 1: Why DHS is Issuing this RFP.

DHS will prioritize Proposals from the following:

- Individuals and organizations working within communities that have been disproportionately affected by OUD/SUD and where the affected community is a leader, designer and/or operator of the intervention
- Organizations predominantly staffed by individuals in recovery
- Small organizations (as opposite to academic institutions and research agencies)
- Proposers proposing interventions that are predominantly led and/or staffed by Black individuals, reflecting experience, community feedback and research on how trusted messengers improve engagement and service delivery.

***Timeline***

RFP Posting	Thursday, June 8, 2023
Office Hours (see section 4.1 for details)	Wednesday, June 21 at 10 a.m. Eastern
Questions Deadline	Friday, August 18 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Last Website and Q&A Update	Thursday, August 24 at 6 p.m. Eastern
Submission Deadline	Wednesday, August 30 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Estimated Award Decision/Notification	November 2023

***Who we are***

DHS is the largest department of Allegheny County government and provides publicly funded services to more than 200,000 people annually, in areas including child welfare, behavioral health, aging, developmental supports, homelessness and community services. More information about DHS is available at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/human-services/index.aspx>.

# Section 1: Why DHS Is Issuing This RFP

**DHS is issuing this RFP to reduce opioid and other substance use disorders and related deaths in disproportionately impacted communities. To ensure these goals are effectively met, DHS is specifically interested in funding interventions that are led, designed and/or operated by these communities.**

For nearly three decades, the opioid epidemic has impacted individuals, families and communities in Allegheny County through increased addiction and related overdose deaths. A recent, major class action legal settlement has resulted in the availability of significant funding to address the harms this epidemic has caused, and to simultaneously address the negative impact of other addictive and dangerous substances.

Not all communities have been impacted equally. Some neighborhoods and municipalities have experienced significantly higher rates and numbers of overdose deaths (a full list is available in Section 2 of this RFP). Black communities, in particular, have been disproportionately impacted; in 2021, for example, the rate of overdose deaths among Black individuals in Allegheny County was more than two times higher than the rate among White individuals.<sup>1</sup> Despite this disproportionate impact, however, far too little funding has been directed to interventions that are led, designed and/or operated by individuals and organizations in the most highly impacted communities.

While DHS is interested in proposals that address any SUD, we acknowledge the immense impact the opioid epidemic has had on communities in Allegheny County.

## *Brief History of the Opioid Epidemic*

**1<sup>st</sup> Wave (late 1990s – 2009):** The opioid epidemic began in the 1990s when medical professionals prescribed opioids at greater rates, believing that the newly-developed opioid pain relievers did not produce increased rates of addiction.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Wave (2010 – 2012):** As communities and the government confronted the epidemic with strategies designed to limit the prescription of opioids, usage shifted from prescription opioids to cheaper, more accessible and ultimately more fatal opioid alternatives like heroin and fentanyl.

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<sup>1</sup> [Allegheny County Overdose Dashboard](#)

3<sup>rd</sup> (2013 – present): The third, current wave is associated with fentanyl and has increasingly involved multiple substances including cocaine and psychostimulants like methamphetamine. Opioid overdose-related deaths have risen as a result.

The racial disproportionality of the epidemic has been most pronounced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave. Data from the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System shows growing racial disparities in opioid-related overdose deaths from 2013 through 2019. In this time, Black Americans experienced the highest increase in the rate of overdoses, and Black men experienced opioid-involved overdose deaths at a rate *seven times* higher than White men. Meanwhile, unequal access to services, cultural differences between providers and communities, social obstacles (childcare, employment, transportation) and substance use stigma<sup>2</sup> have created a situation in which fewer individuals of color received OUD/SUD treatment prior to their overdose.

### *Allegheny County*

As stated previously, in 2021 the rate of overdose deaths among Black individuals in Allegheny County was more than two times higher than the rate among White individuals. Preliminary data for 2022 show that this disparity has remained. Racial disparity is also present in resource access and utilization. Research published in 2021 showed that Black individuals enrolled in Medicaid in Allegheny County were 18.2% less likely than White enrollees to start MOUD (medications for opioid use disorder) treatment.

Overall, the epidemic has hit Allegheny County particularly hard. In 2020, the County’s opioid-related overdose death rate (57.7/100,000 people, age adjusted) far exceeded the state’s (39.9) and was more than double the national average (25.8).

### *Focused on Disproportionately Affected Communities*

DHS has identified the following neighborhoods and municipalities as having the highest rates of overdose deaths,<sup>3</sup> numbers of overdose deaths<sup>4</sup> and number of Black residents (the latter is a particular focus of this RFP given the disproportionate impact of the epidemic on Black communities<sup>5</sup>). DHS will also prioritize interventions that are predominantly led and/or staffed by Black individuals, reflecting experience, community feedback and research on how trusted messengers improve engagement and service delivery.

#### **City of Pittsburgh Neighborhoods**

Bedford  
Beechview  
Bloomfield

#### **Allegheny County Municipalities**

Braddock  
Carnegie  
Clairton

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “[Drug Overdose Deaths Rise, Disparities Widen: Differences Grew by Race, Ethnicity, and Other Factors.](#)” July 2022; Nora D. Volkow and Carlos Blanco, “The Changing Opioid Crisis: Development, Challenges, and Opportunities,” *Molecular Psychiatry* 26 (2021), 218-233.

<sup>3</sup> 2018-2022, excluding neighborhoods and municipalities with fewer than 10 deaths. This data is available on the [County’s Overdose Dashboard](#).

<sup>4</sup> 2018-2022. This data is available on the [County’s Overdose Dashboard](#).

<sup>5</sup> Based on data from the US Census 2014-18 American Community Survey.

Bluff	Duquesne
Brookline	East Pittsburgh
Carrick	Glassport
Downtown	Homestead
East Allegheny	McKees Rocks
East Hills	McKeesport
East Liberty	Monroeville
Fineview	Mt. Oliver
Garfield	North Braddock
Glen Hazel / Hazelwood	Penn Hills
Homewood South	Sharpsburg
Knoxville	Spring City
Lincoln-Larimer-Belmar	Stowe
Marshall-Shadeland	Swissvale
Middle Hill	West Mifflin
Mt. Washington	Wilkinsburg
Perry South	
Southside Flats	
Troy Hill	
West Oakland	

Proposers can view the [Allegheny County Overdose Dashboard](#) to see trends in overdoses and related fatalities, including trends by neighborhood and municipality.

## Section 2: What DHS Is Looking For

DHS is interested in Proposals that represent a community led, designed and/or operated approach within a disproportionately affected community. DHS is interested in a range of potential interventions within those communities.

### 2.1 Approach

#### *Community Led, Designed and Operated*

While there is no singular definition for a community led, designed and/or operated approach, Proposals that align with this ethos would demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Individuals most affected by the epidemic or involved in efforts to address it are in key leadership positions.
- Community representation is a key element of planning and decision making.
- Affected community resources are mobilized to address challenges related to the epidemic.



Given the racial disproportionality of the epidemic (as discussed in Section 1), DHS will also prioritize interventions that are predominantly led and/or staffed by Black individuals, reflecting experience, community feedback and research on ways in which trusted messengers improve engagement and service delivery.

### *Creative and Evidence-Informed Interventions*

DHS is interested in Proposals focused on interventions that are either creative or evidence-informed (or both). Creative interventions are new approaches that have not been tried before. Evidence-informed interventions are approaches that are informed by research. DHS recognizes that given the scale of the epidemic, both creative and evidence-informed interventions are needed. In addition, DHS is interested in interventions focused on “critical times” for individuals affected by OUD/SUD.

“Critical times” include those when an individual is:

- In the emergency department due to a SUD-related event and preparing to be discharged back into the community
- Navigating the criminal legal system; particularly, experiencing incarceration or returning to the community from incarceration without supports or access to treatment
- Living in an unstable housing situation or presently without housing (ex: residing in a shelter, living outside)
- Seeking employment, housing or healthcare

### *Commitment to Harm Reduction*

Whether an intervention is creative or evidence-informed, DHS will prioritize interventions that demonstrate a commitment to harm reduction (seek to lessen the negative physical and/or social consequences of substance use). The federal government (SAMHSA) defines harm reduction services as those that:<sup>6</sup>

- Connect individuals to overdose education, counseling and referral to treatment for infectious diseases and substance use disorders.
- Distribute opioid overdose reversal medications (e.g., naloxone) to individuals at risk of overdose or to those who might respond to an overdose.
- Lessen harm associated with drug use and related behaviors that increase the risk of infectious diseases, including HIV, viral hepatitis, and bacterial and fungal infections.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/harm-reduction>

- Reduce infectious disease transmission among people who use drugs, including those who inject drugs, by equipping them with accurate information and facilitating referral to resources.
- Reduce overdose deaths, promote linkages to care and facilitate co-location of services as part of a comprehensive, integrated approach.
- Reduce stigma associated with substance use and co-occurring disorders.
- Promote a philosophy of hope and healing by including individuals with lived experience of recovery in the management of harm reduction services and connecting those who have expressed interest to treatment, peer support workers and other recovery support services.

### *Potential Interventions*

Proposers are welcome to propose *any* type of creative and/or evidence-informed intervention. Below is a list of the common categories these interventions fall into:

- Education – Expanding timely access to quality and comprehensive information about the spectrum of OUD/SUD interventions, including holistic approaches to prevention, treatment, de-stigmatization and recovery
- Engagement/Outreach – Cultivating ongoing, person-centered relationships with underserved or vulnerable communities and individuals
- Linkages to Treatment – Creating or expanding connections between affected communities, creating or expanding informal community-based peer-support programs, and/or providing information about use of MOUD (supplementary to the existing infrastructure of formal, institutional supports)

Proposers are welcome to propose any specific intervention, regardless of whether it falls into any of the categories above. In addition, below is a list of known, evidence-informed interventions (again, DHS also welcomes creative interventions that are not yet evidence-informed):

- Providing connections/warm handoffs to SUD providers and information to targeted communities, including the use of Buprenorphine and Methadone for MOUD
- Creating, expanding, or increasing awareness and distribution of SUD/harm reduction products like Naloxone/Narcan kits, fentanyl test strips (FTS) and alternative drug testing, and syringe services (disposal/exchange for clean materials)
- Decreasing barriers and stigma around access to SUD treatment/MOUD services by:

- Involving active users in creating culturally sensitive, trust-building relationships between affected communities, medical professionals and service providers.
  - Producing informational campaigns on social media platforms, newspaper ads and radio impressions targeted at youth and vulnerable communities.
  - Developing or expanding peer-support recovery programs.
- Creating or expanding resources for family members, loved ones and community members to support them in connecting an individual with treatment and services:
    - After-school prevention programs, adult/youth drop-in spaces, community recovery spaces
    - Parenting/pregnancy center programs that increase screening, brief intervention and referral treatment (to non-Medicaid eligible or uninsured pregnant individuals and young adult family members)<sup>7</sup>
    - Targeted training and outreach to families and support networks interested in supporting an individual experiencing OUD/SUD, including techniques around motivational interviewing and navigating the OUD/SUD treatment environment
    - Peer-support programs offered in churches, jails/prisons and schools that bridge connections between individuals in recovery and community organizations
- Recovery Housing – Safe, supportive, and drug- and alcohol-free residential environments where individuals in recovery from unhealthy substance use can live together as a community while they transition from residential treatment or other institutional settings (e.g., jail) to living independently.
  - Peer Support Workers – SAMHSA defines peer support workers as “people who have been successful in the recovery process who help others experiencing similar situations. Through shared understanding, respect and mutual empowerment, peer support workers help people become and stay engaged in the recovery process and reduce the likelihood of relapse.”
  - Case Management – Coordination of care and services across multiple health and social services systems, ensuring an individual receives a full array of needed supports and services. This might include making appropriate referrals for professional services, assisting clients in accessing necessary and available resources and entitlements, and assisting clients in securing support services according to their individualized needs.
  - Workforce Supports – Interventions aimed at improving the recruitment, retention and training of staff who work on OUD/SUD interventions.
  - Approaches that address social factors (e.g., transportation) that might present a barrier to receiving SUD services.

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<sup>7</sup> For information on SBIRT, see <https://www.samhsa.gov/sbirt>; applications of SBIRT in existing opioid settlement RFPs include North Carolina’s “Screening, Brief Intervention & Referral to Treatment Implementation Grant for Adolescents,” <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/media/15099/download?attachment>.

## **2.2 Budget**

Proposers must submit a budget that details estimated expenses. DHS will use the proposed budget as a starting point to work with each Successful Proposer to discuss and agree upon a final budget for the strategies it will support. Any staff must earn at least \$15/hour.

## **2.3 Data Collection and Reporting**

Successful Proposers must collect basic data about service provision and share that data, along with narrative reports, with DHS. DHS will provide access to its client management information software system (ClientPath) for data collection as needed.

Where feasible, the Successful Proposer(s) must collect and share individual-level data with DHS to monitor outcomes and improve quality. Any data required to be shared with DHS will be agreed upon with the Successful Proposer(s). There may be some cases in which a Proposer desires to collect more detailed data on the intervention than required. DHS will provide technical assistance to Proposers to support data collection, if needed. Below are a few examples of the types of data DHS may require or that a Proposer may wish to collect:

- Narrative summary of services provided and the impact those services have had on individuals, their loved ones and/or their community
- Narrative summary indicating what is working well about the Project and what challenges or barriers the Project is facing
- Number of unique individuals/families served or educated
- Number of services provided/trainings conducted
- Number of referrals to formal behavioral health treatment and other services (and type of service)
- Number of referrals to non-behavioral health services (and type of service)
- Number of individuals who followed up on referrals and met with behavioral and non-behavioral health service providers
- Survey data from those served indicating their reaction to services
- Survey data from those served (or the community as a whole) concerning their beliefs about behavioral health issues and their knowledge of behavioral health services

## **2.4 Additional Considerations**

Consistent with DHS policy, all Successful Proposers must make language assistance services available to participants/clients with limited English language proficiency (LEP), working with DHS as needed to connect with County-contracted resources (e.g., translation, interpretation and other aids). Project budgets may reflect anticipated costs associated with accessing such resources.

# **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 our [DHS Bonfire Portal](#) on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) and on the Active Solicitations webpage at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations). The maximum score that a Proposal can receive is 80 points, as outlined in the following sections.

#### **Approach (25 points possible)**

- Description of the proposed intervention, including the services that will be provided and the intended outcomes (10 points)
- Identification and description of the proposed focus community(ies) and population(s), and an explanation of how the focus community(ies) and population(s) have been disproportionately impacted by the opioid epidemic (15 points)

#### **Community Led, Designed and/or Operated (45 points possible)**

- Explanation of how the proposed intervention will be led, designed and/or operated, with an emphasis on strategies to include community members in the planning, design and/or implementation of the intervention (15 points)
- Explanation of why the Proposer is the appropriate provider of the proposed intervention, including a description of the Proposer’s experience providing support or services to, with and/or within communities that have been disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic (15 points)
- A plan for staffing, including needed roles, role descriptions, and any training requirements. The staffing plan should demonstrate how the Proposer intends to ensure that interventions are led/staffed by Black individuals, as per DHS intent. (10 points)
- One (1) letter of support from a community-based organization or individual that speaks to your experience building trust with or within an affected community; this letter should include at least one specific example (5 points)

#### **Budget and Budget Narrative (10 points possible)**

- Detailed, line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with planning, implementing and sustaining the intervention for one year (5 points)
- Budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed budget (5 points)

## **Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal**

### **4.1 Prepare**

#### **a. Office Hours**

- DHS will hold “RFP open office hours” from 10 to 10: 30 a.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, via Microsoft Teams. Anyone interested in the RFP and in submitting a Proposal may drop in during this time to ask questions.

- Attendance during office hours is not required in order to submit a Proposal. Preliminary answers will be provided orally for questions asked during the office hours. Final, definitive answers will be posted in writing on the RFP Opportunity Page and the DHS Solicitations webpage.
- Prospective Proposers must register to join the office hours by following or copying and pasting this link:  
<https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/d2967109-6e65-45d9-995d-bc620c7be36d@e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d>

## 4.2 Submit a Proposal

- Proposers should take time to review and understand the RFP in its entirety including:
  - The background (see Section 1: Why DHS Is Issuing This RFP)
  - The narrative (see Section 2: What DHS Is Looking For)
  - The requirements (see Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)
  - The evaluation process (see Section 5: How DHS Will Evaluate Your Proposal)
- 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 on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) on our [DHS Bonfire Portal](#) and on our Active Solicitations webpage with the RFP announcement at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations).
- Collaborative Proposals
  - Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more entities partner to apply together, are permitted. Collaborative Proposals can include:
    - Lead Agency: The County can enter a contract with only one partner of a Collaborative Proposal. Therefore, a Collaborative Proposal must identify one entity as the Lead Agency that will be the contracting party with the County. The Lead Agency should be the Proposer.
    - Partners: Partners must be committed to a role in carrying out the Contract Services and will be compensated for that role. Collaborative Proposals must attach a signed letter of commitment from each Partner that details and agrees to their role in the Contract Services.
  - Entities may participate in more than one Collaborative Proposal.
- Proposers must submit a complete Proposal that includes the following attachments that are available on Bonfire and our Active Solicitations webpage:
  - Response Form
  - Partner commitment letters, if applicable
  - W-9
  - Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 7.1 and 7.2)
- Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or in the Response Form.
- Proposers must make sure to complete each section of the Response Form and to stay within any word counts or page limits specified in the Response Form.
- Proposals must be submitted electronically by logging into or creating an account on Bonfire at <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com> and uploading the required submission documents to the appropriate [RFP Opportunity Page](#) no later than 3:00**

**p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, August 30, 2023, to be considered for review. If you are having trouble making an account or uploading your documents, please contact Bonfire Support. You can also reach out to the DHS Procurement Team at [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us) or (412) 350-6352.**

- h. All Proposals must be submitted before the deadline! Once the deadline has passed, the RFP Opportunity Page will no longer accept Proposals. 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](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).

#### **4.3 How to Contact DHS about this RFP and RFP Communications**

- a. If you have any questions about this RFP, please use the Vendor Discussion feature through the DHS Bonfire Portal at <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com> on the RFQ Opportunity Page, or email us at [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).
  - a. All content-related questions must be submitted by the Questions Deadline at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, August 18, 2023.
  - b. You may submit technical or logistical questions at any time, even after the Questions Deadline.
- b. All information about the RFP, including answers to all content-related questions and any changes or amendments, will be posted on the Bonfire RFP Opportunity Page and on our Active Solicitations website at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations). Once you have created an account and indicated you are interested in this RFP, you will receive automatic email updates through Bonfire when any questions, changes or amendments are available.
  - a. Please check our DHS Bonfire Portal and the website regularly for answers to questions, additional information and changes to the RFP or the RFP process.
  - b. The webpage will be updated only on Thursdays, with any new information visible after 6 p.m.
  - c. The last Q&A and website update for this RFP will be on Thursday, August 24, 2023, at 6 p.m. We will make every effort not to post any new information after this time; however, we reserve the right to post new information in emergency circumstances.

#### **4.4 New Provider Requirements**

Any Successful Proposer(s) who does not have current Allegheny County DHS contract must submit the DHS New Provider Application and its supporting documents upon Notice of Intent to Award. Proposers are not required to submit this documentation with their Proposal.

- a. The DHS New Provider Application is available at our Active Solicitations website under the “Required documents” bar at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations).



- b. The DHS New Provider Application asks for audited financial reports for the last three years. If a Proposer does not have audited financial reports for the last three years, then the Proposer may submit other financial documentation that attest to the financial health of the organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing adequate financial documentation is a requirement of contracting through Allegheny County.

#### **4.5 Other Information**

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

#### **4.6 Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law**

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

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



## Section 5: How DHS Will Evaluate Your Proposal

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

### 5.1 Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. DHS will form an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee, which will be comprised of evaluators with expertise in the subject matter of this RFP, may include community members with lived experience, external subject matter experts, provider representative(s), representative(s) from key partners or funders, and DHS staff.
- b. All Evaluation Committee members will individually review and score each Proposal. Each Evaluation Committee member will award points for each response on a Proposer's Response Form, utilizing their personal expertise and best judgment of how the Proposal submitted by that Proposer meets the evaluation criteria in Section 3 using the following scale:
  - 0 – Not addressed in Proposal
  - 1 – Poor
  - 2 – Below expectations
  - 3 – Meets expectations
  - 4 – Exceeds expectations
  - 5 – Outstanding
- c. Each 0-5 score will be multiplied by the appropriate weight for the number of possible points noted after each evaluation criterion in Section 3. For example, for a criterion worth 15 points, the 0-5 score would be multiplied by three. An "Outstanding" response would receive 15 points, while one that "Meets Expectations" would receive nine points.
- d. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the average scores, and arrive at a consensus on which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP. The Committee will have discretion to either: (1) recommend to the DHS Director that a reduced number of Proposals be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation to the Committee, interview or a site visit or (2) recommend to the DHS Director that DHS request authorization for the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Proposer(s).
- e. As described in d above, DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have the exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Proposals for more extensive review. In this case, DHS may request that shortlisted Proposers make a formal oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee. Each Committee member will individually score the oral presentation of the shortlisted Proposers using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that a shortlisted Proposer's oral presentation can receive is 15 points:

- Presentation demonstrates Proposer’s ability to implement the Contract Services effectively (5 points)
  - Proposer’s answers to Evaluation Committee’s questions demonstrate Proposer’s ability to implement the Contract Services (5 points)
  - Proposer’s presentation is thoughtful and well prepared (5 points)
- f. DHS will tally the 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 scores and arrive at a consensus as to 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 DHS Director for approval. The Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
  - h. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
  - i. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer’s references.
  - j. As part of determining a Proposer’s eligibility to enter a contract with Allegheny County, all Proposers’ financial audits or other documentation will be reviewed by DHS fiscal analysts to ensure a Proposer’s financial stability.
  - k. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with a Proposer as a result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**
  - l. All Proposers will be notified of the County’s final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
  - m. Proposers that are not awarded an Agreement but who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).

## 5.2 Other Requirements

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

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

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

## Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, Proposers must comply with all contract requirements listed below and all standard terms and conditions contained in a County contract

for provision of services to DHS and its offices. Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County are provided in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations) under the “Required documents.”

## 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” to help the County meet 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 can 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](http://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” to help the County meet 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 are from all bonding requirements.
- b. All Proposals must include either of the following:

- If the Proposer can meet the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement is required. You must also attach a copy of the VOSB vendor(s) DD 214 discharge form(s) cited in the Participation Statement.
  - If the Proposer requests a waiver from participating in the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement and VOSB Waiver Request are required.
- c. VOSB forms can be found at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://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](http://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).