



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Inpatient Program for Victims of Childhood Sex Trafficking

RFP Posting:

Wednesday, July 22, 2020

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

December 2020

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 or the County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
3. CHANCE: Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation, which is an evidence-based treatment program designed to address the complex needs of childhood sex trafficking victims. The program was originally developed by Citrus Health Network through a partnership with the Florida Department of Children and Families.
4. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): An evidence-based practice aimed at improving mental health through the development of personal coping strategies that target solving current problems and changing unhelpful patterns in thoughts, behaviors and emotional regulation.
5. 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.
6. Conferencing and Teaming: The DHS standard of practice that engages individuals, families, supports and professionals in assessing strengths and needs and developing a plan for keeping children, youth and adults safe and healthy while continually integrating individual and family actions with professional services.
7. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services.
8. Motivational Interviewing: A counseling method that helps people resolve ambivalent feelings and insecurities to find the internal motivation they need to change their behavior. It is a practical, empathetic and short-term process that takes into consideration how difficult it is to make life changes.
9. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP.
10. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP.
11. Response Form: The Word document in which a Proposer responds to requested information about this RFP.
12. RFP: Request for Proposals.
13. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services.
14. Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF CBT): A conjoint child and parent psychotherapy model for children who are experiencing significant emotional and behavioral difficulties related to traumatic life events.

15. Trauma-Informed: An approach to care that recognizes the physical, social, and emotional impact of trauma on the victim, as well as on the professionals who help them, and that creates opportunities for victims to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.
16. Victim-Centered: An approach that prioritizes the safety, privacy and well-being of the victim to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner.

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

Allegheny County, on behalf of its Department of Human Services' (DHS) child welfare office, is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers for an inpatient residential program (henceforth referred to as the Program) for victims of childhood sex trafficking (henceforth referred to as Participants). The Successful Proposer will develop, implement and manage the Program which includes a residential facility with 10 to 12 beds and comprehensive intervention, therapeutic services, non-treatment supports, and the evidence-based treatment program Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE).

Award Details

DHS is desirous of entering into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services for a term of one year, with an option to renew at the County's discretion. Proposers should provide a detailed budget for the annual operating costs of the program.

As part of the contract award, DHS will provide a separate amount for development and renovation for the inpatient residential facility. The dollar amount of this development and renovation budget is to be determined. DHS will negotiate with the Successful Proposer and agree upon a final development and renovation budget amount.

Who can apply

Anyone is eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. This includes non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals. A Proposer does not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to apply, but the Proposer 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.

DHS anticipates that one entity may not be able to provide all the residential and therapeutic services requested under this RFP. Therefore, a Proposer may wish to provide the requested services through partnerships and subcontracts. Partnerships between two or more entities on a collaborative Proposal are encouraged but not required. Entities may participate in more than one collaborative Proposal.

Timeline

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions about this RFP is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, October 7, 2020. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, October 14, 2020. We expect to notify Proposers of the County's decision to award an Agreement in December 2020.

Who we are

DHS is issuing this RFP on behalf of the County.

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

Human trafficking, and particularly the sexual exploitation of minors, has devastating consequences, including physical and psychological trauma, disease, worsened mental health and addiction, unwanted pregnancies, and social isolation. Children and youth with a history of abuse, trauma, poverty, housing instabilities and poor educational outcomes are at a high risk of trafficking and sexual exploitation and youth involved in the child welfare system are at particular risk. Children and youth who run away, are homeless or in foster care or group home settings are especially vulnerable. Risk factors associated with childhood sex trafficking include:

- History of trauma, especially sexual abuse
- History of child protective investigations and foster care
- Lack of family/social support
- Inadequate supervision
- Chronic runaway behaviors or homelessness
- Substance use

Each of these risks puts children and youth at heightened risk for trafficking and exploitation and related traumatic victimization.

Although most victims of sexual exploitation tend to be women and girls (according to Pittsburgh's FBI Field Office, about 80 percent are female), recent studies show that boys may be victimized more often than is reported and that the child welfare system is poorly equipped to work with male victims. LGBTQ youth also are particularly vulnerable. Research has shown that one in four LGBTQ youth will be forced out of their home. This underserved population lacks resources and is less likely to have a strong support network.

DHS has taken several steps to combat childhood sex trafficking in Allegheny County and revised its existing policies to allow for a quicker system response when potential victims of childhood sex trafficking are identified. Child welfare staff convened a working group to address childhood sex trafficking issues relevant to child welfare-involved youth and participate in the

Western Pennsylvania Human Trafficking Coalition.¹ Additional steps that DHS has taken to improve its response to childhood sex trafficking include:

- Requiring an in-depth, specialized childhood sex trafficking training for all child welfare staff.
- Requiring a childhood sex trafficking screening on all youth involved with child welfare any time a runaway episode occurs from placement or home.
- Contracting with a local organization to more thoroughly assess youth whose screening indicated that they may be childhood sex trafficking victims to ensure they are connected to appropriate services and supports.
- Working closely with the FBI and other criminal justice partners to identify victims.
- Hiring a liaison to support child welfare caseworkers and supervisors in working with private investigators to conduct childhood sex trafficking screenings and follow-up on incidents.
- Developing and facilitating a successful multi-disciplinary team who meets regularly to plan, advocate and educate about childhood sex trafficking.

In 2017, DHS contracted with a local organization to open a childhood sex trafficking drop-in center that provides a safe place for youth ages 13 through 23 of all genders and sexual orientations who are victims and survivors of childhood sex trafficking. At this drop-in center, case managers assess the needs of each youth – such as housing, food, clothing, medical, educational, employment, or legal services – and provide consistent support and guidance as they pursue short- and long-term goals.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking a partner in its efforts to combat childhood sex trafficking who will develop, implement and manage a comprehensive inpatient residential facility Program that provides treatment, intervention, therapeutic services and non-treatment supports for youth identified by child welfare staff as potential victims of childhood sex trafficking. The Program will include the evidence-based treatment program known as Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE).

The Program should be designed with a Trauma-Informed and Victim-Centered approach to serve a diverse population. All Participants should feel welcomed, well-served and supported regardless of their ethnic or racial heritage, sexual orientation and gender identity, intellectual or physical disability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

The Successful Proposer must become certified by the Pennsylvania Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) as a Specialized Setting providing services to “Youth Who Are, or At Risk

¹ The Western Pennsylvania Human Trafficking Coalition is a coalition of members of social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, schools, law enforcement agencies and other entities whose mission is to develop and maintain a network of individuals and agencies to educate the community about human trafficking and to provide emergency support to victims and survivors.

of Becoming, Sex Trafficking Victims,” as described in OCYF’s Bulletin number 3680-20-02, 3800-20-03, Specialized Residential Settings for Children and Youth.²

The Successful Proposer must establish an advisory board for the Program that includes survivors of childhood sex trafficking who are compensated for their time.

2.1 Target Population

Program Participants will be children and youth age nine through 21 years old who are involved in the child welfare system. A qualified professional will have identified Participants as a victim of childhood sex trafficking or as someone with a high risk of sexual exploitation. DHS’s child welfare office will identify and refer all Participants to the Successful Proposer.

DHS anticipates that 10 to 12 youth may need inpatient treatment at any given time. The Successful Proposer will provide some level of aftercare, such as continued involvement in CHANCE, once a Participant exits the inpatient stay. Because of the specific focus of this service, DHS expects that Participants will be primarily femme and female identified. However, the Program must have the ability to competently serve youth of all gender identities and expressions, including but not limited to agender, nonbinary and transgender youth.

Participants will have experienced trauma and have complex long- and short-term behavioral and physical health needs as well as legal and life skills needs. Addressing these needs often requires comprehensive, long-term, Trauma-Informed treatment. The Successful Proposer must design a Program that begins to address Participants’ needs, which can include, but are not limited, to:

- Behavioral Health Needs
 - Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Dissociative disorders and personality disorders resulting from trauma
 - Feelings of guilt, shame and worthlessness
 - Fear, anger, low self-esteem, boundary issues, suicidal ideation and issues with intimacy
 - Questions about sexual orientation/gender identity
- Physical Health Needs
 - Injuries resulting from violence (e.g., broken bones, bruises, head trauma)
 - Gastrointestinal problems, malnutrition
 - Dental problems
 - Reproductive problems, vaginal bleeding, pelvic pain, fertility issues
 - High risk of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV
 - Pregnancy and complications from abortions
 - Additional physical needs resulting from limited access to healthcare while being trafficked
- Legal Needs

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https://www.dhs.pa.gov/docs/Publications/Documents/FORMS%20AND%20PUBS%20OCYF/OCYF%20Bulletin%203680-20-02_3800-20-03_Specialized%20Residential%20Settings%20for%20Children%20and%20Youth_issued021420.pdf

- Assistance in proving that they were trafficked and subsequent record expungement (e.g., prostitution offense)
- Help getting visas for international victims
- Help accessing public benefits
- Life Skills Needs
 - Education for missed schooling
 - Job training and placement
 - Independent living skills
 - Connections to kin and natural supports
 - Permanency plans

Some Participants will not identify as being victims of childhood sex trafficking. They may not see themselves as victims or they may blame themselves for their situation. In addition, youth with a history of trauma develop strong bonds with their exploiters. There is a cyclical nature to childhood sex trafficking victimization, and multiple returns to their exploiters is not uncommon before youth achieve independence. The Successful Proposer must be willing to continually welcome Participants back into the Program and use multiple levels of engagement and re-engagement over multiple occurrences.

2.2 Inpatient Residential Facility

Proposers will propose a space (either to rent, purchase or create within its existing facilities) to develop into a welcoming, youth-friendly inpatient residential facility for the Program. The facility should have approximately 10 to 12 beds. The facility must be safe and have staff onsite 24 hours a day. The Program’s facility must satisfy all licensing requirements under applicable laws and meet Chapter 3800 regulations for a child residential and day treatment center.³

At a minimum, the facility’s physical layout must include:

- All elements necessary to make it a safe facility
- Private one-on-one meeting spaces for staff to conduct intake and regular service meetings and for the use of partnering agencies (e.g., child welfare staff)
- Multi-use room(s) for group meetings and classes
- A kitchen (properly equipped) from which congregate meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) can be prepared and served
- A community dining area
- Laundry facilities
- Premises that are cleaned and maintained on a regular basis and remain free of vermin, rodents, insects, bedbugs and all other unwanted insects, animals, etc.

The residential facility’s environment must be welcoming and inspire hope. Participants must find its design, décor and amenities comfortable and appealing. The Successful Proposer must design the Program to keep Participants safe, but the residential facility cannot keep Participants

³ 55 Pa.Code Ch. 3800: <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/providers/Clearances-and-Licensing/Pages/Children-and-Youth-Residential-Licensing.aspx>

locked up and look and feel like jail or detention facility. The facility's environment can include, but is not limited to:

- A welcoming entry area for greeting visitors and Participants
- A common lounge area
- A quiet space for reflection, meditation or prayer
- Access to computers
- Outdoor recreation space, including a children's playground
- A designated space for exercise or physical activity (e.g., weightlifting, yoga, dance)

Proposers will propose a process for developing and renovating the space and will propose a timeline and separate budget for this one-time process. DHS will provide a limited startup budget for the facility and renovations and will support the Successful Proposer in procuring private funds for additional facility work.

2.3 Intervention, Therapeutic Services and Non-Treatment Supports

In addition to providing an inpatient facility for the Program, the Successful Proposer must provide comprehensive intervention, therapeutic services and non-treatment supports to address the needs of Participants. Proposers will propose the intervention, therapeutic services and non-treatment supports that they believe will best meet the needs of childhood sex trafficking - involved youth in an effective inpatient program. These services and supports can be evidence-informed, Victim-Centered, Trauma-Informed or strength-based and can include, but are not limited to, physical health appointments, exercise and wellness programs, art, recreation, life skills training, legal aid, education, and job placement. The Successful Proposer should offer a variety of these services and supports so they can be individualized and tailored to the unique experiences and needs of Participants.

Ideally, all intervention, therapeutic services and non-treatment supports will be provided in-house. However, DHS understands that even a Proposer who provides many of these services and supports in-house will need to subcontract and work outside the facility with partners to meet all the complex needs of Participants.

The Successful Proposer must maintain communication with the Participant's caseworker and other service workers assigned to the Participant, if any, and participate in Conferencing and Teaming meetings. The Successful Proposer will work with DHS to develop a step-down and discharge plan for each Participant, with permanency, remediation and reintegration measures. As part of the step-down plan, the Successful Proposer may provide some level of aftercare after a Participant's stay in the inpatient facility has ended.

2.4 CHANCE

As part of the Program's intervention, therapeutic services and non-treatment supports, the Successful Proposer must include the evidence-based treatment program known as Citrus

Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE).⁴ CHANCE was developed and piloted in Miami-Dade County, Florida to address the unique mental and behavioral health needs of youth in the child welfare system who have been engaged in childhood sex trafficking. It consists of a Community Response Treatment team (CRT) and a Specialized Therapeutic Foster Care program (STFC). The Program will use CRT with Participants in the residential facility. In the future, DHS hopes to develop a STFC program, but it is out of the scope of this RFP.

CHANCE provides services to Participants that address their childhood sex trafficking, behavioral and emotional problems, trauma symptoms, lack of housing and support, lack of independent living skills, substance use and academic difficulties. It includes, as needed for a Participant, individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, guidance from a life coach and certified behavioral analyst, as well as case management for links to all appropriate support services. Participants' parents or caregivers, if any, may be involved in some CHANCE services and its treatment team.

The Successful Proposer must deliver CHANCE with fidelity so that Participants have the best opportunity to accomplish their goals. CHANCE goals are for Participants to gain:

- An increase in their strengths
- Improved interpersonal functioning
- Improved school achievement
- A decrease in oppositional/defiant behavior
- Improved prosocial behaviors
- A reduction in trauma symptoms
- A decrease in depression and anxiety
- A decrease in high-risk behaviors
- Improved life skills

The Successful Proposer must be committed to continuity of care so that Participants may work towards their goals at their own pace. Even when a Participant stops residing in the Program's inpatient facility, they must be allowed to continue CHANCE services until they are no longer deemed clinically indicated.

The Successful Proposer must provide staff for and supervise the CHANCE treatment team. Supervisors of the Chance treatment team must hold a license in the mental health profession. The CHANCE treatment team must include:

- Individual Therapist: Participants will receive individual therapy (one to five times a week based on clinical necessity) by a Master's- or Doctoral-level therapist trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Motivational Interviewing. Therapists shall be on call and available to the youth 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

⁴ <http://www.citrushealth.org/CHANCE>

- Family Therapist: Family therapy is available by a Master's- or Doctoral-level therapist when necessary and will be initiated when deemed appropriate to address family conflict, poor communication and dysfunctional family systems.
- Life Coach: A life coach who is a survivor of childhood sex trafficking is available to provide 24-hour support, assistance and advocacy, when appropriate.
- Certified Behavioral Analyst (CBA): The CBA's services are available to address the behavioral needs of the Participants, as clinically indicated.
- Targeted Case Manager: The targeted case managers facilitate linkage to all appropriate support services.

The Successful Proposer must participate in a CHANCE training with DHS. Training will be provided on-site and will be a total of 24 hours across three or four days.

2.5 Data Collection and Reporting

The Successful Proposer(s) will be required to use DHS's Key Information and Demographics System (KIDS), the child welfare office's electronic case record system. KIDS will be used for coordination of services, data collection and reporting.

2.6 Budget

Proposers must propose an operating budget which includes line item costs for at least the following budget categories: 1) any startup expenses not already included in the inpatient residential facility development and renovation budget, 2) staffing, 3) ongoing facility management and 4) ongoing (concrete) expenses (e.g., furnishings, linens, kitchen supplies). The annual operating budget of the Program will not exceed \$429,000.

The contract award will include a separate, one-time budget for development and renovation of the residential inpatient facility. Proposers must propose a separate facility development and renovation budget and DHS will negotiate the exact dollar amount of this budget with the Successful Proposer.

Some of the Program's clinical and supportive services may be covered by Medicaid or other insurances. The Successful Proposer must accept reimbursement from insurers, when possible.

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

DHS will evaluate Proposals based upon the awarding of points by using the evaluation criteria listed below. Proposers must address their qualifications in their Proposal by responding to the requested items or questions in the Response Form. Proposers should download and type their responses directly into the Response Form available on the Active Solicitations webpage at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations. The maximum score that a Proposal can receive is 95 points, as outlined in the following sections.

3.1 Approach (25 points possible)

- Vision for the overall design of the Program, including the core partners involved, goals desired, and clear reasoning why the Proposer feels that it is the best candidate for this opportunity (5 points)
- Understanding of the challenges anticipated in developing, implementing and managing the Program envisioned by this RFP and a plan to mitigate those challenges (5 points)
- Plan to engage and help Participants who do not recognize that they are victims of childhood sex trafficking and Participants who run away (5 points)
- Plan to ensure that the Program can serve Participants of diverse identities and that Program delivery is culturally competent, trauma-informed, gender responsive and individually tailored for Participants (5 points)
- Plan for the Program advisory board that includes survivors of childhood sex trafficking with a description of the desired board composition and perspectives; meeting schedule; responsibilities of board members; and plan for to compensate board members for participation (5 points)

3.2 Organization Experience (10 points possible)

- Experience in providing services to childhood sex trafficking victims, other victims and/or vulnerable youth including a background working with a variety of systems (e.g., child welfare, legal, physical/behavioral health, education) (5 points)
- Experience managing a residential facility (5 points)

3.3 Inpatient Residential Facility (15 points possible)

- Description of the proposed facility's physical layout, including the location, room list, safety elements, how the facility will adhere to regulations and be cleaned and maintained, and photos of the site, if available (5 points)
- Description of the proposed facility's environment, including design, décor and other amenities (5 points)
- Description of the proposed facility's development and any renovation needs, including the development process, timeline and budget (5 points)

3.4 Intervention, Therapeutic Services and Non-Treatment Supports (15 points possible)

- Description of the proposed Intervention, Therapeutic Services and Non-Treatment Supports that will be available to Participants (5 points)
- Plan for working with outside organizations and across systems to assist with meeting Program goals and providing services and supports to Participants (5 points)
- Plan with examples to work with DHS to develop a step-down plan for Participants and provide aftercare (5 points)

3.5 CHANCE (10 points possible)

- Plan to ensure CHANCE is woven into the Program using a description of what a Participant's typical week would look like (5 points)
- Plan to enable Participants to continue with CHANCE even after their stay at the inpatient residential facility has ended (5 points)

3.6 Staffing (10 points possible)

- Plan to staff the Program, including staff for the residential facility and the CHANCE Program; job titles, descriptions, Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), supervision structure and names and titles of existing staff identified for positions (10 points)

3.7 Budget (10 points possible)

- A line item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Program (5 points)
- A budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed budget, describes any assumptions and demonstrates fiscal and management capacity to manage funds in a fiscally responsible manner (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, which includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
 - Response Form
 - MWDBE documents
 - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
 - Audited financial reports for the last three years
 - W-9
 - Photos of the proposed facility, if available
 - Budgets, as desired

- d. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed above and on 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 through 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 Wednesday, October 14, 2020 to be considered for review.**
- h. Please make sure to get your Proposal in before the deadline! If your Proposal is late, it will be rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee for review and scoring, as described in Section 5 below.
- i. You will receive an email when your Proposal is received. If you do not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting your Proposal, please contact: DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

4.2 How to Contact DHS about this RFP

- a. All inquiries and questions must be submitted via email to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.
- b. All information about the RFP, including answers to questions, changes and clarifications will be posted at our Active Solicitations website at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- c. Please be sure to check this website regularly for answers to questions, additional information or changes to the RFP or the RFP process.

4.3 Other Information

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

4.4 Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law

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

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

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

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

5.1 Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. DHS will form an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee may consist of DHS employees and subject matter representatives from external organizations.
- b. All Evaluation Committee members will individually review and score each Proposal. Each Evaluation Committee member will award points for each response on a Proposer’s Response Form utilizing their personal expertise and best judgment of how the Proposal submitted by that Proposer meets the evaluation criteria in Section 3 using the following scale:

- 0 – Not addressed in Proposal
- 1 – Poor
- 2 – Below expectations
- 3 – Meets expectations
- 4 – Exceeds expectations
- 5 – Outstanding

- c. 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).
- d. 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 proposed program effectively (5 points)
 - Proposer's answers to Evaluation Committee's questions (5 points)
 - Proposer's presentation is thoughtful and professional (5 points)
- e. DHS will tally the average scores 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 on which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP.
- f. 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).
- g. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
- h. As part of determining Proposers' 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 Proposers' financial stability.
- i. **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.**
- j. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
- k. Proposers not awarded an Agreement who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

5.2 Other Requirements

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

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

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

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, Proposers must be willing to comply with all contract requirements listed below and all standard terms and conditions contained in a County contract for provision of services to DHS and its offices. Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County are provided in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.

6.1 Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) Requirements

Allegheny County has MWDBE goals of 13% participation for Minority Business Enterprises and 2% participation for Women Business Enterprises and expects that Successful Proposers will make a “good faith effort” in assisting the County in meeting these goals.

- a. All Proposals must include either of the following:
 - If the Proposer is able to meet the MWDBE contract goals, a completed MWDBE Participation Statement and MWDBE Contact Information form is required. You must also attach the MWDBE certifications of the firms you intend to use with the Participation Statement.
 - If the Proposer requests a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, a completed MWDBE Participation Statement, MWDBE Contact Information form and MWDBE Waiver Request are required.
- b. MWDBE forms and resources can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations:
 - MWDBE Forms
 - [MWDBE Participation Statement](#)
 - [MWDBE Waiver Request](#)
 - [MWDBE Contact Information form](#)
 - MWDBE Resources
 - [MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)
 - [MWDBE Response Checklist](#)
 - [Guide for completing the MWDBE Participation Statement](#)
 - [Sample Diversity Policy](#)
 - [MWDBE Presentation for Proposers](#)

- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion website](#).

6.2 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.

6.3 Cyber Security

- a. Successful Proposers must meet the minimum computer specifications which 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).

6.4 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.

6.5 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](#), 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.