

Allegheny County

Department of Human Services

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

To Develop a Foster Care
Awareness and Recruitment
Marketing/Public Relations Campaign

RFP ISSUED	7/18/14
QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL	Until 8/25/14 at 5 PM
RESPONSES (Q & A) POSTED ON WEBPAGE	Within 1 business day of receipt
PROPOSALS DUE	8/27/14 at 5 PM
AWARD DECISION / NOTIFICATION	10/30/14
ESTIMATED START DATE	January/February 2015

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Glossary

Unless otherwise changed or modified by its context, the terms listed below have the following meaning when referred to in this Request for Proposals (RFP):

Aging-out of the system: Children who have turned 18 (or 21 if they were in school or an approved training program) and have exited the child welfare system without having achieved legal permanency (i.e., family reunification, adoption, or permanent legal custodianship)

Agreement: The negotiated contract between the County and the Contractor to provide the Contract Services

Congregate care: Out-of-home placement in a congregate, non-family setting; group care or residential care

Contractor: The Proposer selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

Contract Services: The specific services that the Contractor agrees to provide to the County pursuant to the proposal submitted in response to the RFP and as set forth in the Agreement. Contract Services also means the Scope of Services described in this RFP.

CYF: [The Allegheny County Department of Human Services] Office of Children, Youth and Families

DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services

DCS: [Allegheny County Department of Administrative Services] Division of Computer Services.

Foster Family: Synonymous with Resource Family (see below)

Kinship foster care: Placement with family member(s) or an individual or family who, though not a blood-relation, has a close connection to the child

Non-kinship foster care: Placement with an individual or family who has no close connection to the child; 'stranger' resource family/home

OCR: [Allegheny County Department of Human Services] Office of Community Relations.

Proposer: The person, firm, agency, or corporation submitting a proposal to the County, in response to the RFP, in an effort to be selected as a Contractor

Resource Family: Also known as foster family; a family that provides temporary foster or kinship

care for a child who needs out-of-home placement; might eventually provide permanency for the child, including adoption

Scope of Services: The services described in detail in this RFP which the Proposer agrees to provide under the Agreement. .

Successful Proposer: See definition of Contractor above.

General Instructions and Information

Purpose

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is intended to provide interested parties with information to enable them to prepare and submit a proposal to develop and execute a comprehensive awareness and recruitment marketing/public relations campaign strategy, designed to educate the Allegheny County community about the need for resource (foster) homes interested in fostering youth ages 14 through 17 and to build a teen-focused foster care network that represents the geographic, ethnic and racial diversity of children in care.

Allegheny County intends to use the results of this RFP process to award one contract not to exceed \$60,000 to the Successful Proposer to provide the Scope of Services requested in this RFP.

About this Document

This document is a Request for Proposals. It differs from an invitation to bid in that the County is not seeking a quotation meeting firm specifications for the lowest price. Rather, the County is requesting the submission of proposals emphasizing the nature of a product or service, of which quality, references, experience in the field, availability, or capability may be overriding factors.

The evaluation criteria set forth in this RFP should be viewed as the standard that measures how well a proposal meets the desired requirements and needs. Based upon the results of the evaluation of all submitted proposals, the County may award a contract to a qualified and responsible Proposer submitting the proposal that best meets the required needs, quality guidelines and other considerations as described throughout this RFP.

The issuance of the Request for Proposals does not obligate the County to enter into a contract for any services. The County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted.

Issuing Office

The County's Department of Human Services (DHS) is the "Issuing Office" for this RFP. The Issuing Office is the sole point of contact with regard to all aspects of this RFP. Please refer all inquiries about the RFP via email to: DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us

All requests for additional information or clarification concerning this RFP must be submitted via email no later than one business day prior to the proposal due date in order to be guaranteed a response will be posted at the RFP webpage.

Addendum and Modifications

Any changes, additions, deletions, or clarifications to the RFP will be made by the County through a written document called an addendum. Any Proposer with questions about any part of the RFP may request an interpretation or clarification from the Issuing Office. DHS will post the interpretation or clarification as an addendum to the RFP at:

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.aspx>. Any addendum will become part of the RFP and be as binding as other provisions of the RFP. No verbal interpretations or explanations will be binding.

Eligibility Requirements

Proposers eligible to respond to this RFP include for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals; however, submissions from experienced marketing or public relations firms are preferred.

Proposers do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County in order to submit a proposal; however, a Proposer must meet be willing to meet all of Allegheny County's contractual requirements. These contractual requirements are available for review at:

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/contracting.aspx> (See Section VII – Contract Terms & Conditions at p.15 infra). Additionally, a Proposer must have the financial and staffing capability to comply with all stated requirements.

Examination of Documents and Requirements

Proposers must carefully examine all RFP documents and thoroughly familiarize themselves with all requirements prior to submitting a proposal to ensure that the proposal meets the intent of this RFP. Before submitting a proposal, each Proposer is responsible for making all investigations and examinations that are necessary to ascertain conditions and requirements affecting the requirements of this RFP. Failure to do so does not relieve the Proposer from an obligation to comply, in every detail, with all provisions and requirements of the RFP.

Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (M/W/DBE) Requirements

This Request for Proposal contains requirements for Proposers to assist the County in meeting its M/W/DBE goals. Therefore, Proposers must document their plan or good faith efforts to meet those goals. The M/W/DBE Participation Statement is required with proposal submission

M/W/DBEs will receive equal opportunities to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex, disability, or national origin in consideration of an award. A M/W/DBE is defined as a small business concern which is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, or in the case of any publicly owned business, at least 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. Socially and economically disadvantaged

include Women, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, and Asian-Indian Americans. A listing of M/W/DBEs certified by the County and the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program can be found at www.county.allegheny.pa.us/mwdbe.

[MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)
[MWDBE Participation Statement form](#)
[MWDBE Waiver Statement form](#)

Proposal Preparation Costs

Issuance of this RFP does not commit the County, in any way, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal.

Background

About the Department of Human Services (DHS)

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) was created in 1997 to consolidate the provision of human services across Allegheny County. In addition to having an Executive Office, DHS consists of five program offices (Area Agency on Aging, Office of Behavioral Health, Office of Intellectual Disability, Office of Children, Youth and Families, and Office of Community Services) and three support offices (Office of Community Relations, Office of Administrative and Information Management Services, and Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation). Together, these offices serve approximately 20 percent of Allegheny County's residents.

DHS is responsible for providing and administering publicly-funded human services to Allegheny County residents. DHS is dedicated to meeting these human service needs, most particularly for the County's vulnerable populations, through an extensive range of information exchange, prevention, early intervention, case management, crisis intervention and after-care services.

DHS provides a wide range of services, including services for older adults; mental health and drug and alcohol services (includes 24-hour crisis counseling); child protective services; at-risk child development and education; hunger services; emergency shelters and housing for the homeless; non-emergency medical transportation; job training and placement for public assistance recipients and older adults; and services for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

DHS provides services to eligible individuals without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation, disability, familial status, military service, or religious, community or social affiliations.

Issue of Concern

The Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) within DHS is responsible for child welfare in Allegheny County and is charged with protecting children from abuse and neglect, preserving families whenever possible and assuring permanent homes for children. The vast majority of children and families receiving services do so while the families stay intact. But when, for safety reasons, a child must be removed from the home and live away from his or her parent(s), the child is placed temporarily in an "out-of-home placement" setting. Ideally - and most of the time in Allegheny County - that placement is in a home setting (a foster or resource home) rather than in a group or congregate care setting; 1100 of the 1400 Allegheny County children in out-of-home placements are in foster care. In Allegheny County, approximately 50 percent of children placed in foster care are placed with a relative or close family friend (kin); however,

some children need to be placed in a 'stranger' resource home when family members are unavailable or unwilling to care for the child. Approximately 300 children and youth are in a congregate setting and, as DHS recognizes the over-reliance on congregate care and the benefits of family placement, we seek to reduce these numbers.

Recently, DHS reformed its practice model for client and family engagement and the way in which placement decisions are made. As part of this effort, DHS analyzed data from a newly-developed placement tool and recent placement trends to learn more about what happens to children in the system. Through this comprehensive analysis, DHS discovered that the current resource family network does not fully meet the needs of children and youth entering our care. One key area in which the resource family network was found to be lacking is in the number of individuals or families willing to serve older youth. In response, DHS sought and received a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Administration for Children and Families to assist in efforts to recruit individuals and families into our resource family network.

DHS goals for the five-year grant are to:

- Create and sustain a more representative network of resource families, one that ensures that DHS has a best-fit home available for all children in care, especially teens
- Cultivate a resource family network that is better prepared to successfully serve youth, including the most vulnerable with behavioral and medical challenges
- Improve the partnership among providers, DHS staff and resource families so that resource families are fully engaged and supported in their efforts to serve children in care
- Increase placement stability
- Reduce reliance on group/congregate care
- Provide stakeholders with a defined voice that influences the policy/practice of child welfare and the recruiting and engagement continuum

To support this effort, DHS intends to implement an outreach and recruitment strategy with several components:

1. Expansion of the number of individuals and families available to serve older youth
2. Expansion of the number of individuals and families in the resource network
3. Development of a marketing/public relations campaign to target individuals in locations where foster placement needs are greatest

Currently, 10-12 DHS-contracted provider agencies are responsible for managing the resource homes that comprise the countywide network. Each agency recruits resource homes, with varying degrees of success, employing strategies ranging from paid advertising to capitalizing on neighborhood fairs. Recent interviews with agencies suggest that they recognize the benefits of - and welcome - an overarching recruitment campaign that will serve to coordinate the work

systemwide and supplement their individual efforts.

To assist in foster care awareness and recruitment, DHS seeks to enlist the services of an experienced external contractor to provide the Scope of Services as laid out in detail in Section III. DHS has identified the following goals and objectives for a successful recruitment and awareness strategy:

1. An increase in the number of individuals or families indicating willingness to become resource homes for youth, ages 14 through 17
2. An increase in the number of homes in the resource family network, representing the geographic, ethnic and racial diversity of children in care, through the development and implementation of a countywide recruiting strategy
3. Consistent branding and messaging to raise awareness about the continued need for resource families in Allegheny County
4. A detailed plan to increase awareness of the continued need for foster families in Allegheny County, including creative concepts for all necessary collateral materials

Research related to the outreach and recruitment campaign will be conducted by DHS. DHS will share with a successful Proposer all relevant research and data pertaining to current outreach efforts, strengths and weaknesses of the current resource family network, results from focus groups with current foster children, foster families and the provider network, and other pertinent data as necessary. DHS also is capturing testimonials from current and former foster children, foster parents and youth who have aged-out of the system in both foster and congregate care settings, for utilization in a prospective recruitment campaign. Along with gathering research information, DHS-organized focus groups may be used for market testing of Proposer's campaign materials.

Scope of Services

DHS is seeking proposals outlining a detailed plan to develop and execute a comprehensive awareness and recruitment marketing/public relations strategy designed to educate the Allegheny County community about the need for resource families willing to foster youth ages 14 through 17 and, in doing so, assist DHS in building a network of foster care resources that represent the geographic, ethnic and racial diversity of children in care. The Proposer will work in collaboration with the DHS Office of Community Relations, and with input and approval from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to develop the materials. A stakeholder advisory committee comprised of DHS staff, provider agency staff, current resource parents and youth in the system will serve to inform all efforts made under the aegis of the HHS grant.

The Successful Proposer will:

- Develop a brand and messaging materials for the DHS resource homes recruitment campaign
- Develop a comprehensive plan to build community awareness of need through multiple strategies including public education and grassroots, community-based engagement
- Design strategic marketing materials including print, social media messages, web site content and other products designed to forward the campaign
- Recommend and develop implementation plan for media strategies

The following is a list of key deliverables that a Successful Proposer will need to provide for completion of this project:

1. Propose, develop and execute a public education and recruitment campaign to increase community awareness about children in out-of-home care in need of resource families, particularly youth 14 through 17 years of age. The campaign should serve to 'normalize' these teens, dispelling any preconceived negative beliefs about children who come into the child welfare system, and expose the public to the rewards and challenges of becoming a resource home. The campaign should aim to increase the number of individuals and families indicating willingness to foster these children. (DHS will develop a streamlined mechanism to accept all calls/contacts from interested parties.) The campaign should include development of a strategic plan and concomitant timeline which includes creation of outreach materials, products, distribution strategies and methods for measuring effectiveness. The Proposer will be responsible for creative design of materials and for campaign and social media messages as well as a distribution plan. The County will be responsible for production and physical distribution of materials, as well as execution of the social media portion of the plan.

2. Develop creative materials that are culturally sensitive, audience-centered and suited to the format of the selected media vehicle or strategy as defined in the plan (DHS will assist in the production of all materials)
3. Develop creative elements for the campaign, including (but not limited to) brand/logo and creative themes such as colors and fonts
4. Develop key message statements for awareness campaign
5. Design print collateral
6. Develop creative strategies to identify and engage public/private collaborators to assist with the awareness campaign and to help extend it beyond the funding period
7. Develop a cost effective, research-based media plan

All materials developed by the Proposer are subject to review and approval by DHS and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and will be informed by the stakeholder advisory committee described above.

Proposal Instructions & Format

Overall Format

A complete proposal must include all components listed below, prepared in an MS Word or PDF format. Proposals should be on 8½-x 11-inch paper using 12-point type and at 100% magnification, using black ink on white paper, single-sided and double-spaced.

Specific Format Requirements

1. Cover page and M/W/DBE participation statement

Please complete the RFP [Cover page](#) and [MWDBE Participation Statement form](#)

2. Executive Summary (1 page)

The Executive Summary should include:

- a. Proposer information including key staff and a description of organizational capacity to address the issues
 - b. A brief description of the issues to be addressed
 - c. A brief description of the proposed solutions and strategies
3. Narrative on Scope of Services and Key Deliverables (limit 10 pages)
 - a. Describe the proposal, proposed project timeline and detailed plan for:
 - i. engaging the public to increase awareness of the need for resource families (as articulated in Background section of this RFP)
 - ii. creation of a campaign plan, as outlined in Scope of Services, that strategically employs print, electronic and social media as needed
 - iii. testing and assessment of effectiveness of campaign materials with focus groups (as described in the Background section of this RFP)
 - iv. execution of the plan
 - b. Describe how you will work with DHS and its advisory committee to develop approved products.
 - c. Highlight potential obstacles and strategies that you will use to mitigate these obstacles.

- d. Proposers also may propose additional tasks or activities if they feel that they will substantially improve the results of the campaign. Any proposed additional tasks/activities must be identified and separated from the required items on plan and cost summary.

4. Organizational and Staff Experience (limit 3 pages)

- a. Discuss your organizational experience in marketing efforts for social/human services, especially campaigns intended to raise awareness about a social or public health issue and/or campaigns intended to influence decisions to participate in a social cause (e.g., volunteerism, PTA participation).
- b. Discuss your organizational experience in creating print media (posters, brochures), web content and social media campaigns. Provide samples of previous work and include data that demonstrate the extent to which your work assisted the client in achieving desired outcomes.
- c. Discuss your organizational experience with media strategies, including examples of researching and placing media buys.
- d. Identify the staff from your organization who will be assigned to this project if your organization is selected. Include staff résumés as attachments.
- e. List three (3) client references.

5. Budget and Budget Narrative

Provide a line item budget demonstrating how the project budget will be spent, including implementation cost estimates. Include a copy of your organization's most recent audited financial statements.

Submission Information

To be considered, proposals must respond to all requirements in the RFP and be submitted on or before the due date/time. The contents of this RFP and your proposal may become part of any contract(s) with the County. DHS reserves the right to request additional information which, in its opinion, is necessary to assure that the Proposer's competence, business organization and financial resources are adequate to perform any contract awarded in accordance with this RFP.

DHS may make such investigation as it sees fit to determine the ability of the Proposer to perform the work listed in the Scope of Services, and the Proposer must furnish the County all such information and data for this purpose as requested by the County. The County reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such Proposer fails to satisfy the County that such Proposer is properly qualified to carry out the obligations under the Agreement and can satisfactorily perform the Scope of Services.

Proposal Delivery, Time, Date and Place

Proposals in response to this RFP must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on 8/27/14. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted. However, the County reserves the right to extend or postpone the date and time for RFP activities through an addendum that will be posted on the RFP webpage.

Proposals should be submitted via email to:

DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us

Supplemental materials that are unable to be emailed may be sent via U.S. Mail or hand/courier-delivered to:

Maria Wallace
Allegheny County Department of Human Services
One Smithfield Street
Suite 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

An email confirmation of receipt of your proposal will be sent within two business days. Please contact us immediately (via email or by calling Maria Wallace at 412-350-7144) if you do not receive a confirmation within this time frame.

All proposals, responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to this RFP, and all electronic media, reports, charts and other documentation submitted by a Proposer, will become the property of the County when received.

Selection Process

Proposal Review and Evaluation

DHS will perform an initial screening of all proposals received. For a proposal to be eligible for evaluation, the proposal must be:

1. Received from the Proposer by the due date/time
2. Properly signed by the Proposer
3. Properly formatted and include required forms and sections

Proposals that do not meet the initial screening are subject to rejection without further evaluation.

The County uses the concept of “Best Value” in evaluating proposals. “Best Value” means the overall combination of quality, price and various elements of required services that meet the County’s needs.

DHS will use a formal evaluation process to select the successful Proposer. DHS will consider capabilities or advantages that are clearly described in the proposal. DHS reserves the right to contact individuals, entities, or organizations that have had dealings with the Proposer or the Proposer’s staff, whether or not identified in the proposal. Evaluation will be carried out in the following manner:

DHS will designate an appropriate evaluation committee for the review and evaluation of all proposals. The members of the evaluation committee are bound by best practice regarding conflict of interest. Evaluation committee members may be:

1. In the employ of the County
2. Recruited from other entities under contract to provide services to CYF
3. Others as determined by DHS within its sole and exclusive discretion.

An evaluation method, such as a matrix, will be developed for use by the evaluation committee. Proposals will be judged based on a variety of criteria including creativity, use of engagement strategies, Proposer experience, cost effectiveness and sustainability of the plan.

Oral Presentations and Site Visits

Select Proposers may be required to make an oral presentation at DHS as part of the awarding process. DHS will notify the Proposer of the time and location for these activities. DHS reserves the right to ask additional questions during oral presentations to clarify the scope and content of the written proposal.

Discussions with Proposers

DHS may, but is not required to, conduct discussions with Proposers for the purpose of:

1. Obtaining clarification of proposal ambiguities
2. Requesting modifications to a proposal

Proposal Scoring

1. Narrative on Scope of Services and Key Deliverables **(70 points)**
 - a. Proposer must demonstrate, through an articulated and detailed plan and strategy, an understanding of the needs laid out in this proposal.
 - b. Proposer must present a clear and concise multi-media plan
 - c. Proposer must offer a rationale for all suggested creative materials outlined in the plan
 - d. Proposer must outline potential issues that might arise in implementation of the plan
 - e. Proposer must provide, in addition to the plan, an accompanying detailed timeline that includes implementation dates for deliverables and status updates
 - f. The work plan and related timeline will be evaluated based on quality of ideas, creativity, perceived campaign effectiveness and cost effectiveness
2. Organizational and Staff Experience **(15 points)**
 - a. Proposer provides proof of the capacity to complete all of the requirements laid out in this RFP
 - b. Proposer defines roles of any individual team members assigned to this project with a clearly designated 'lead,' including contact information
 - c. Proposer includes examples of organizational and team member experience completing similar work
3. Budget and Budget Narrative **(15 points)**
 - a. Budget incorporates estimated costs for all components where cost is a factor
 - b. Budget should not exceed \$60,000

Final Award Process

Based upon evaluation results, oral presentations and/or negotiations, the evaluation team will tabulate and submit award recommendation to the DHS Director.

Contract Terms and Conditions

The successful Proposer will enter into a one-year contract with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services for performance of the Scope of Services as specified in this RFP. Information concerning contracting with DHS (terms and conditions) and the standard DHS contract can be found on the DHS website at:

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/contracting.aspx>

The County also reserves the right, upon notice to the Proposer, to extend the Agreement or any part of the Agreement for up to three (3) months, upon the same terms and conditions, after the indicated expiration date as described in the Agreement, in order to prevent a lapse in Agreement coverage for the services indicated on the Agreement, and only for the time necessary to enter into a new Agreement. When applicable, an extension notice will be issued defining the exact extension of the Agreement; all other terms and conditions of the extended Agreement will remain in full force and effect.

Insurance requirements

Successful Proposer(s) must, at their cost and expense, maintain insurance coverage as required by Allegheny County at all times during the term of the Agreement.

HIPAA Compliance

DHS is a covered entity with regard to the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The successful Proposer must be prepared to comply with any applicable [HIPAA compliance](#).

Cyber Security

A significant portion of DHS business activities and related billing carried out under this RFP are done through information management systems or tools, including email. A Proposer must meet the minimum computer specifications beginning on page 14 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#) available on the DHS website and should make sure their computers, laptops and other electronic devices have sufficient security software and settings to minimize the risk of a breach of information. In addition, the Proposer should have policies and procedures in place to assure that their electronic devices are physically secure when not in use (e.g., locked in a vehicle trunk, password protected.).

Conflict of Interest

By submitting this proposal, the Proposer certifies and represents to the County that the Proposer has not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of

value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Non-Discrimination

Proposer shall not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, consumer 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 of any individual or independent contractor or because of the disability of an individual with whom the person is known to have an association; or on any other basis prohibited by federal, state or local law.