



Request for Proposals

Family Emergency Shelter

RFP Posting: Monday, March 13, 2017

Deadline for Questions: Monday, April 17, 2017

Submission Deadline: 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, April 24, 2017

Estimated Award Decision/Notification: June 2017

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

Contents

Definitions

The RFP at a Glance

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

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. AHAR: Annual Homeless Assessment Report
3. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4. CoC: The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is designed to: promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families and communities by homelessness; promote access to and affect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
5. 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
6. Contract Services: The specific services which the Successful Proposer agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
7. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
8. Family: Any household with one or more adults and one or more children under age 18
9. HMIS: Homeless Management Information System
10. HUD: [United States Department of] Housing and Urban Development
11. Housing First: A model to address homelessness based on the following principles: 1) the provision of safe and affordable housing; 2) all people experiencing homelessness can achieve housing stability in permanent housing; 3) everyone is "housing ready;" 4) many people experience improvements in quality of life as a result of securing housing; 5) people experiencing homelessness have the right to self-determination and should be treated with dignity and respect; and 6) the exact configuration of housing and services depends upon the needs and preferences of the population served.
12. Low Barrier Housing: Housing where a minimum number of expectations are placed on people who wish to live there. In housing, this often means that tenants are not expected to abstain from using alcohol or other drugs, or from carrying on with street activities while living on-site, so long as they do not engage in these activities in common areas of the house and are respectful of other tenants and staff, with a particular focus on insuring the safety and well-being of children in the shelter.
13. Megan's Law: Requires law enforcement authorities to make information available to the public regarding registered sex offenders
14. Motivational Interviewing: A goal-oriented style of case management and counseling that supports clients in exploring and resolving their ambivalence toward illicit and detrimental lifestyles to promote behavioral change

15. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
16. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
17. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
18. RFP: Request for Proposals
19. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

Allegheny County, on behalf of its Department of Human Services (DHS), is soliciting Proposals from qualified Proposers to provide an emergency shelter for families. The emergency shelter must: 1) be accessible for entry 24/7, including nights and weekends; 2) keep families together and safe and have flexible living quarters to accommodate families of different sizes; 3) provide short-term housing with family-centered, housing-focused case management to assist families in obtaining more permanent housing and other needed resources; and 4) have no barriers to or requirements for entry for families.

Award Details

DHS desires to enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services (an emergency shelter to accommodate 20 to 25 families having approximately 75 beds). Total funding proposed for the Contract Services will not exceed \$500,000 annually. DHS expects to fund one facility; however, it will consider Proposal(s) for two smaller facilities that serve the same total population in the aggregate.

Who can apply

Non-profit organizations and for-profit organizations or businesses may apply. Collaborative proposals are encouraged but not required. Entities may participate in more than one collaborative proposal.

What's important to us

The emergency shelter must be based on Low Barrier, Housing First philosophies. The Housing First philosophy, which was adopted by Allegheny County's Homeless Advisory Board,¹ prioritizes providing housing to people experiencing homelessness before addressing other challenges so that housing can serve as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. Low Barrier means that there are a minimum number of expectations placed on people who wish to participate in a given housing program.

The Successful Proposer must be committed to the goals of the emergency shelter and continually seek additional funding to offer the most robust services possible.

What we don't want

We are not interested in a model that creates barriers to entry into the shelter.

Timeline

¹ The Homeless Advisory Board is a public/private partnership formed to assist Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, the City of McKeesport and the Municipality of Penn Hills in reviewing public policy, programs, activities, data and all other efforts that will eliminate homelessness and improve the well-being of homeless persons and families.

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions is Monday, April 17, 2017.
Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, April 24, 2017.
Proposers will be notified of their selection status in June 2017.

Who we are

On behalf of Allegheny County, DHS is the issuing office for this RFP.

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>

The issuance of this RFP and the receipt of any Proposals does not obligate the County to enter into an Agreement. The County reserves the right at all times to reject any and all Proposals.

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP

Data from DHS's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) submitted for the 2016 HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) report (covering October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016) indicate that among families in Allegheny County who received emergency shelter services, 14 percent of families spend one week or less and 45 percent of families spend less than one month in emergency shelters. Nevertheless, the median length of stay for families in emergency shelters in Allegheny County in 2016 was 44 days. According to 2016 AHAR data 39% of families who stay in emergency shelters in the County have a length of stay between one to three months.

In 2016, 320 families with children were served in emergency shelters in Allegheny County. These households had one or more adults and one or more children under age 18, and included:

- 143 households (45%) with household size = 2
- 74 households (23%) with household size = 3
- 63 households (20%) with household size = 4
- 20 households (6%) with household size = 5
- 20 households (6%) with household size = 6+

Allegheny County currently provides four family shelters with the following capacities:

- Womanspace East in Uptown/Bluff – 26 units with approximately 78 beds
- Allegheny Valley Association of Churches in Natrona Heights/Tarentum – 3 units with up to 14 beds
- Family Promise in Crafton – 4 units with up to 14 beds
- Salvation Army in East Liberty – 17 units with up to 36 beds

In addition, there are three emergency shelters, serving 79 women and children experiencing domestic violence.

Currently, Allegheny County contracts with Community Human Services to provide a temporary overflow family shelter in McKeesport which has 30 units with 90 beds. This large capacity overflow shelter has demonstrated the substantial need for family emergency shelter units. Once the Successful Proposer's facility becomes operational, the new permanent family emergency shelter will replace the existing overflow shelter in McKeesport.

Many families with young children experience trauma, including community and domestic violence and physical, emotional and sexual abuse, before and during their stay in an emergency shelter.² Homelessness itself can be a traumatic experience. Repeated traumatic events can prevent or prohibit families from participating in services and forming trusting relationships, and can present serious risks to children's and parents' functioning and well-being.³ Families experiencing homelessness have less

² National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2014). *Complex Trauma: Facts for shelter staff working with homeless children and families*. Los Angeles, CA & Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. Retrieved from http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/complex_trauma_facts_homeless_shelter_staff_final.pdf

³ The Ambit Network, & National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2009). *Psychological First Aid for families experiencing homelessness*. Minneapolis, MN: The Ambit Network, University of Minnesota. Retrieved from http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/PFA_Families_homelessness.pdf

access to housing subsidies and supportive services and have weaker social networks than other low-income families.⁴

Young children (especially infants) who experience homelessness for greater than six months are significantly more likely to be at risk for developmental delays, fair or poor health, being overweight, and hospitalizations compared to children who were never homeless or were homeless for less than six months. Homelessness both before and after birth has significant negative implications for children's health and well-being, increasing the risk of long-term consequences not only for the child and his family, but also for society as a whole. Greater health care utilization associated with worse health outcomes involves large financial costs, most of which are paid by public health insurance.⁵

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

Through this RFP, DHS is soliciting Proposals for the development of an emergency shelter for families (defined as any household with one or more adults and one or more children under age 18). The shelter must be open and staffed to receive families 24 hours, seven days a week, and must include flexible living quarters and/or adjoining rooms to accommodate families of different sizes. This shelter must use a Low Barrier, Housing First approach and is intended to provide short-term housing for less than 30 days, although stays can be longer, if necessary. The Successful Proposer must provide participating families with family-centered, housing-focused case management to assist them in obtaining permanent housing as well as other needed resources to increase self-sufficiency. The Successful Proposer must ensure that the educational and developmental needs of all participating children are addressed.

The Successful Proposer should design and operate their emergency shelter in accordance with the guidelines outlined below and in a manner well-tailored to the needs and challenges of the people being served.

2.1 Service Description

A. Emergency Shelter

The Successful Proposer must provide housing that will serve as an emergency shelter for 20 to 25 families, with approximately 75 beds, and meet the requirements described below. DHS envisions a family shelter with a Low Barrier to entry and minimal rules except for those required to ensure safety for all residents, particularly the children.⁶

The emergency shelter must be available to receive families 24/7, including weekends and holidays. The intake process for admission into the emergency shelter must be clear and fast, and referrals should be able to move in the same day. The only immediate barrier is a requirement that the emergency shelter

⁴ Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and at Risk of Homelessness October 31, 2016; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/eecd/echomelessnesspolicystatement.pdf>

⁵ Insights from Housing policy research; Center for housing policy, Children's HealthWatch, June 2015. Retrieved at http://www.childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/Compounding-Stress_2015.pdf

⁶ Shelter must perform an immediate check for people required to register under Megan's Law. Those individuals may not enter the shelter. Criminal background checks for convictions of violent crimes and arson shall also be conducted, but may not necessitate a refusal of admittance under the Low Barrier approach.

must conduct a check for those people mandated to register under Megan's Law. Megan's Law offenders must not be allowed to enter the emergency shelter. The Successful Proposer must conduct additional criminal background checks to identify recent violent criminal behavior and/or arson, but the Successful Proposer must not prevent entry in the emergency shelter for the first night based upon recent violent criminal behavior and/or arson. The day following admission, the emergency shelter staff will review additional criminal background information using the Low Barrier approach to determine whether a family member's history poses an imminent risk to the safety and security of all emergency shelter residents.

The emergency shelter should serve as a temporary safe haven with the clear understanding that the family's goal is to exit to more permanent housing as soon as safely and sensibly possible. DHS anticipates a median stay of 30 days; however, families may stay until they have secured viable permanent housing. Some of the families will be on a waiting list for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs; regardless, emergency shelter staff should work with all families to secure permanent housing beginning on day one of admission into the emergency shelter. If a family should happen to be accepted into a RRH or PSH program while staying at the emergency shelter, emergency shelter staff should collaborate with the staff from the other program to help the family locate and move into the subsidized housing as quickly as possible.

Recognizing that families entering an emergency shelter are often suffering trauma, the emergency shelter must be designed and managed in a trauma-informed manner, incorporating best practice interventions. Emergency shelter staff and the overall environment must try to mitigate the effects of trauma as they work with families to find permanent housing.

The Successful Proposer must be able to flexibly accommodate families of different sizes and configurations. The emergency shelter facility and staff must be able to respond to the varying needs of different sized families, including fathers, and children regardless of their gender or age.

B. Facility Criteria for the Emergency Shelter

Environment

The physical environment of the emergency shelter should be secure, with onsite staff, locking doors and security cameras. It should be comfortable, but designed for brief emergency stays and not for long-term residence. It must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, have a valid occupancy permit, comply with all applicable fire and safety codes, have a valid Allegheny County Health Department permit if serving food, and comply with any other necessary licensures.

Prior to opening the emergency shelter, the County must approve the Successful Proposer's procedures for operation, including the emergency shelter's program agreement, resident's handbook, rules and regulations.

Location

Proposers must propose possible location(s) for the emergency shelter facility. The identified location(s) must be easily accessible by public transportation from as many areas of Allegheny County as possible. Proposers should consider that existing family shelters are located in Uptown, East Liberty, Natrona

Heights/Tarentum and Crafton⁷ when proposing a location for an emergency shelter. Proposers should also consider school districts and access to schools. Proposers may consider partnering with other agencies that own appropriate spaces. DHS encourages Proposers to consider buildings that previously served similar residential needs and will require less renovation. In addition, Proposers may want to contact the Office of the Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, the Allegheny County Redevelopment Authority, school districts, the Mon Valley Initiative or real estate agents to learn about real estate available as a possible location for the emergency shelter.

Facility Amenities

At a minimum, the facility should include:

- An occupancy permit from either the PA Department of Health or the local municipality, and the facility must meet all local fire and safety codes and habitability standards
- All elements necessary to make it a secure facility, with staff onsite 24/7, locked entrance and room doors, and monitored security cameras
- Private one-on-one meeting spaces for staff to conduct intake and regular service meetings and for the use of partnering agencies (e.g., homeless services and supports coordinators, child welfare staff)
- A computer lab
- Multi-use room(s) for group meetings and classes and age-appropriate play areas and spaces for children, including infants and toddlers
- A kitchen (properly equipped) to enable families to prepare their own meals or from which congregate meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) can be prepared and served. If families prepare their own meals, facility must provide secure space for families to store their personal food supplies.
- Additional food storage should be provided to enable families to enjoy healthy foods and snacks during non-meal times
- A community dining room
- Private bedrooms of varying or flexible sizes and/or adjoining bedrooms to accommodate families of various sizes
- Bathrooms: Facilities must provide for family privacy regarding bathrooms. Bathrooms may be located within the family's private bedroom(s), or there may be multiple communal unisex bathrooms with showers and/or bathtubs, that can be locked while a family or family member is using it.
- Outdoor recreation space, including a children's playground that is open and available for consistent use
- Laundry facilities
- Premises that are cleaned and maintained on a regular basis and remain free of vermin, rodents, insects and bedbugs

C. Supportive Services

⁷ The Overflow Shelter in McKeesport will no longer exist once the emergency family shelter being sought by this RFP is operational.

In addition to providing an emergency shelter, the Successful Proposer must provide case management and be knowledgeable about complementary systems and programs that can connect families being served by the emergency shelter to supports. The Successful Proposer may provide supportive services and/or may partner with other agencies to ensure the services are available to families participating in the Shelter. The Successful Proposer must:

- Have a housing-focused approach to case management services based on a housing plan beginning on day one of a family's admission into the Shelter
- Create a service plan with each family
- Ensure family members have the documents required to obtain housing, employment and benefits (e.g., proper identification, birth certificate, social security card)
- Ensure family members have proof of immunizations and other medical records for children
- Assist with budgeting and financial literacy
- Assist participants with job search skills and other workforce development tools
- Connect families to eligible benefits (e.g., ACCESS, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), transportation, child care)
- Ensure that all families receive information about early learning resources for children ages birth to five years and offer child development assessments and screenings
- Assist families in securing transportation to early childhood education centers and schools, health services and human services
- Address educational success for school aged children, including connecting children with an appropriate school and assisting in arranging for the necessary transportation as required under Title VII of the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act⁸
- Provide family activities and after-school enrichment and recreational programs for children and youth
- Participate in Conferencing and Teaming meetings for child welfare-involved families, if requested.⁹
- Assist families in making connections to mental health and/or substance use services, if necessary

D. Staffing for the Emergency Shelter

The Successful Proposer must employ trained professionals at the emergency shelter who are:

- Knowledgeable in human service and homelessness systems and resources
- Able to use motivational interviewing and a trauma-informed approach to provide case management services focused on securing an alternative housing option as quickly as possible
- Able to collaborate with additional supports, with emphasis on those linkages that are most essential to housing stability¹⁰
- Qualified to work with children, particularly ages birth to age five, using a trauma-informed approach; they should have a strong plan for connecting young children to early intervention,

⁸ 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.

⁹ For more information about Conferencing and Teaming see: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Children-Families/Conferencing-and-Teaming-in-CYF.aspx>

¹⁰ DHS will make available its Homeless Services and Supports Coordinators (HSSC) to collaborate with Shelter staff and work with families, if the family elects to do so, during their time in the shelter and beyond. A family's participation with HSSC is voluntary.

high quality early care and education programs, family support centers and other resources that are specific to children

- Able to enter all required data in HMIS in an accurate and timely manner
- Able to ensure the safety and security of residents
- Able to maintain the cleanliness and habitability of the emergency shelter facility
- Able to provide job search support and financial literacy
- Able to offer educational and recreational programming for youth
- Trained in applying trauma informed care

In addition, all staff must have valid Act 33/34 clearances

E. Referrals

DHS expects that all referrals to the emergency shelter will be made through DHS's Coordinated Entry Unit, which is called the Allegheny Link (the Link).

F. Data Systems

The Successful Proposer will be responsible for working with the Link and for entering data on entries and exits into HMIS within 48 hours of a family's entry into and exit from the emergency shelter. The Successful Proposer will also be responsible for reviewing data in HMIS and submitting all reports within the HMIS system.

2.2 Performance Outcomes

Successful Proposer will be monitored for adherence to the following standards:

- Use of Housing First principles
- Moving families in the same day as referral when a vacancy exists, barring extenuating circumstances
- Providing or connecting families to self-sufficiency resources and services geared toward helping them find permanent housing as soon as possible, within a benchmark of 30 days
- Ensuring that all children under age five are provided the necessary child development assessments and are connected to corresponding required or suggested services
- Ensuring school age children attend school in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
- The rate of involuntary terminations

Successful Proposer will be responsible for tracking outcomes and meeting the following performance standards:

- 85% or greater utilization of units
- 85% or more families exit to permanent housing (including rapid re-housing or permanent supportive housing, as defined by the HUD)
- 85% or more families spend 30 days or less in the emergency shelter
- 5% or less data missing in HMIS

2.3 Budget

DHS will provide a total of up to \$500,000 per year to fund the operation of an emergency shelter for families and supportive services. The Successful Proposer should seek additional funding to offer the most robust services possible.

The Successful Proposer must provide two realistic budgets: a one-year operation budget of the emergency shelter and a second budget for facility development. These budgets should include anticipated sources of funding beyond those available through this RFP. This may include funding received by a Proposer's organization from foundations, private sources or other public sources that will support the cost of the Program or facility development. DHS does not have funding for facility development/renovations, but will provide support letters for the Successful Proposer(s) to seek funding from other sources. The one-year operation budget must be completed using the using the template available at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations. The facility renovation budget must be inserted in the Response Form.

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

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

A. Organizational Experience (15 points)

- Experience providing housing and connections to supportive services for families experiencing homelessness (5 points)
- The ability to enter data into HMIS in an accurate and timely manner. For those Proposers with current DHS contracts for homeless services, HMIS performance data for existing programs will be reviewed during the selection process. (5 points)
- Organizational strength and management health, including evidence of internal communication, external coordination and an adequate financial accounting system and financial stability (5 points)

B. Approach (10 points)

- A plan for operating a Low Barrier, Housing First Shelter while keeping in mind the safety and well-being of children and other residents. The plan should address plan for background checks and ensure safety in the event of referrals who have a history of sex offenses and/or recent violent crimes or arson. (10 points)

C. Facility (30 points)

- A plan for the emergency shelter facility or facilities including how it will accommodate 20 to 25 families of varying sizes, with approximately 75 beds, and will assure safety and privacy for families using a Low Barrier, Housing First model (10 points)

- The proposed facility is ADA compliant, well-located on multiple transportation lines, open to receive residents 24/7, and has a current occupancy permit (5 points)
- The proposed facility provides amenities as described in **Section 2.1, B** (10 points)
- A timeline for any required facility renovation, the approximate budget, and source of funding for any work the building may require before becoming operational (5 points)

D. Supportive Services (20 points)

- A plan for working with families to secure permanent housing within 30 days, or as quickly as possible (10 points)
- A plan for coordinating with an array of supportive human services for young children, school-age children and adults, including identification of specific partnerships that will be leveraged to ensure that participating families can be connected to supportive services (10 points)

E. Staffing (10 points)

- A staffing plan that includes an appropriate number of staff with appropriate responsibilities and levels of experience (5 points)
- A plan for training staff in necessary skills such as trauma-informed care, cultural competence, Motivational Interviewing, Mental Health First Aid and other critical skills (5 points)

F. Financial Management and Budget (15 points)

- Strong financial health, as evidenced by audits or other supporting financial documentation (5 points)
- An annualized one-year line item operating budget and narrative that explains the purpose of each line item and how amounts were calculated, including ongoing facility-related costs (e.g., rent, utilities). Additional funding sources (e.g., ESG, public, and/or private funding) must be included if they are tied to specific budget line items. The annual budget should fall within an estimated range of \$500,000. (10 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

This RFP is a solicitation to individuals, non-profit organizations, and for-profit organizations or businesses (Proposers) to submit a Proposal to perform the services as described in *Section 2: What We Are Looking For*. Proposers must have the ability to meet the identified needs and quality standards within the programmatic and funding guidelines specified in this RFP.

4.1 Submission Process

- a. Please 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. Please 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
 - Completed budget template
- d. Please do not send any attachments other than those listed above and on the Response Form.
- e. If you do not have audited financial reports for the last three years, you may submit other financial statements that attest to the financial health of your organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing financial statements 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 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 Monday, April 24, 2017 to be considered for review.**
- h. Please make sure to get your Proposal in before the deadline! If your Proposal is late, it will not be considered.
- 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 enter into an Agreement with any Proposers.
- b. Any Agreement originating from this RFP is subject to all of 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. The Successful Proposal will be posted online in the DHS Solicitations Archive after an Agreement has been fully executed by the County and the Successful Proposer(s).
- f. Proposers should also be aware that other records submitted in response to this RFP are subject to requests made pursuant to Pennsylvania's Right-To-Know Law and that the County may have to make submitted materials available to a requestor after an award of an Agreement is made.

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 based on the program description in *Section 2: What We Are Looking For* and on the evaluation criteria in *Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria* using the scale listed in *Section 5.1 b*.

5.1 Evaluation Model

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. An Evaluation Committee will be formed by DHS and will consist of some or all of the following:
 - Content experts from within DHS, selected for their expertise and/or experience
 - Representatives of foundations, educational institutions, community and civic organizations, businesses and/or non-profit agencies
- 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 according to their 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. The Evaluation Committee members then will meet collectively to compile and discuss the individual scores and evaluation of each committee member.
- d. DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Proposals for more extensive review using the same criteria outlined above. In this case, DHS may request that shortlisted Proposers make modifications to their Proposal or budget or make a formal oral presentation. The Evaluation Committee will review the modifications and/or oral presentation and rescore the shortlisted Proposals using the original evaluation criteria.
- e. At any time during the review process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
- f. The Evaluation Committee will submit their recommendation for award of an Agreement to the Director of DHS for his approval, who in turn will submit a request to the County

Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).

- g. **The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement as a result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**
- h. All Proposers will be notified of their status following the final determination of which Proposer(s) will be awarded Agreements.
- i. Proposers not awarded an Agreement who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@allegchenycounty.us.

5.2 Other Requirements

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

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

Proposals which do not meet the above requirements will not be considered.

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.allegchenycounty.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 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 your organization 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 your organization will request 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.allegchenycounty.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](#)
- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County MWDBE 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.