



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Provider of the High-Risk Track of Functional Family Therapy through Child Welfare: An Evidence-Based Intervention

RFP Amendment:

Friday, July 30, 2021

Pre-Proposal Information Session:

1 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 3, 2021

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 10, 2021

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

October 2021

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 and acronyms are defined as follows for purposes of this RFP:

1. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
2. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3. Contract Services: The specific services that the Successful Proposer agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
4. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
5. Evidence-Based Program (EBP): A program that has empirical evidence supporting its efficacy
6. Functional Family Therapy (FFT): A short term evidence-based prevention program for at-risk youth and their families
7. Functional Family Therapy through Child Welfare (FFT-CW): A family-system, cognitive-behavioral therapeutic intervention for children and adolescents (birth through 17) and their parent/caregivers and other family members, who were referred to child welfare services for indicated or suspected child abuse or neglect
8. FFT LLC: The organization that trains, consults and provides quality assurance to organizations that provide Functional Family Therapy and related programs
9. High-Risk Track: A higher cost, more intensive version of FFT for families with higher levels of risk
10. Low-Risk Track: A lower-cost, less intensive version of FFT for families with lower levels of risk
11. Prevention Services: (sometimes called In-Home Services) An array of services that DHS provides through contracts with human services organizations to address the circumstances posing risk of harm to children in order to prevent their removal from home for the first time or for an additional time after having returned home following a stay in out-of-home care
12. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
13. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
14. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
15. RFP: Request for Proposals
16. Site Certification: The training process to become an FFT-certified site prepared to provide FFT-CW to fidelity, as developed and led by FFT LLC
17. 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 seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to implement the High-Risk Track of Functional Family Therapy through Child Welfare (referred to variously as FFT-CW or the FFT-CW Program or the Program). FFT-CW is an Evidence-Based Program (EBP) designed to address the maltreatment and neglect concerns of families with children and youth, aged birth through 17, who have been accepted for services under DHS's child welfare Prevention Services program. FFT-CW is an adaptation of Functional Family Therapy, a short-term EBP for at-risk children, youth and their families, that is specifically designed to serve them in child welfare settings. The Successful Proposer must have the capacity to deliver the Program consistent with the FFT-CW EBP clinical model and to partner with families to safely prevent the need for out-of-home care.

FFT-CW is a strength-based program built on a foundation of acceptance of and respect for individuals, families and cultures. At its core is a focus on assessment and intervention to address risk and protective factors, within and outside of the family, that impact a child's welfare and adaptive development. FFT-CW addresses risk factors (including, but not limited to, mental health issues, past trauma, adverse childhood experiences, and drug and alcohol use) with cognitive behavior interventions and child development education, and by engaging the whole family in planning and problem solving. FFT-CW takes a tiered approach with both a Low-Risk and a High-Risk track. Families in the Low-Risk track meet with a therapist who provides case management and counseling. Families in the High-Risk track meet with a therapist and receive traditional therapeutic FFT-CW services, focusing on familial relationships and risk factors. These services are further described in Section 2, below.

In the first phase of DHS's FFT-CW implementation, this RFP will determine the Successful Proposer to implement the High-Risk track. DHS will seek a provider for the Low-Risk track through a subsequent RFP, depending on the success of the High-Risk track implementation. At this time, DHS is seeking a provider for only the High-Risk track; the Low-Risk track is out of scope for this RFP.

Award Details

DHS intends to enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer to provide FFT-CW High-Risk track to approximately 60 families, for a term of one year, subject to renewal for an additional period at the discretion of the County. The total budget for this FFT-CW Program must not exceed \$400,000 including start-up and training costs.

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. Proposers do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to apply, but they must meet all of Allegheny County's contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements for

Successful Proposers) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capabilities to provide the Contracted Services.

What's important to us

It is important to DHS that Proposers:

- Share in DHS's mission and vision to establish an FFT-CW Program that is tailored and responsive to families' individual needs.
- Want to forge a collaborative partnership with DHS to establish an EBP within our Prevention Services array.
- Are committed to providing high-quality services to all families regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.
- Have the capacity to implement the necessary components of the FFT-CW EBP with fidelity to the clinical model.

Timeline

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions about this RFP is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 3, 2021. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 10, 2021. We expect to notify Proposers of the County's decision to award an Agreement in October 2021.

There will be a pre-proposal information session at 1 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 via Microsoft Teams. Attendance at the information session, is not required in order to submit a Proposal. Preliminary answers will be provided orally for questions asked during the conference. Final, definitive answers to questions asked during the conference will be posted in writing on the DHS Solicitations webpage. Please join the information session by:

- Calling (267)368-7515 and using Conference ID 639 530 437#
- Or following this link: [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
- Or copying and pasting this link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YWQ4NjE2YTgtZGYyMC00M2RmLWlzM2YtMjMxNzFiOWI4OTE2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22id%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%224c7924c5-3d5a-494b-ba54-242fc5f6db86%22%7d

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>

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP

DHS is committed to strengthening families, enhancing the elements within families and communities that promote child and family well-being, and further preventing the placement of children into out-of-home care. DHS currently offers an array of Prevention Services, (sometimes called “In-Home Services”) through a network of contracted providers. These Prevention or In-Home Services aim to address the circumstances that pose risk of harm to children and to prevent their removal from home for the first time or for an additional time after having returned home following a stay in out-of-home care. An important measure of whether we are achieving prevention goals is the rate of removals to out-of-home care, which occurs when there are safety concerns serious enough to warrant removing children from their home.

Unfortunately, our current approach to Prevention Services does not do enough to prevent home removals. A DHS analysis of active Prevention Services cases from fiscal years 2017-18 through 2019-20 revealed a startling conclusion: families that *did not* receive Prevention Services and did not already have a child removed at the start of the analysis period experienced a 24.6% home removal rate within a year; families that *did* receive Prevention Services experienced an 24.8% home removal rate within a year. Although these statistics do not control for differences between the two groups, these similar rates of home removal – regardless of the provision of Prevention Services – suggest that child welfare Prevention Services are not always the right ones for a given family’s needs, not effective and/or not delivered at the right time.

In response, DHS is engaging in an effort to redesign its Prevention Services. In a recent [concept paper](#) that stemmed from extensive research, planning and stakeholder engagement, we shared our vision for the future of child welfare Prevention Services in Allegheny County. Focus areas of the concept paper included:

- Offering the right services to families and ensuring those services are delivered in a manner consistent with families’ cultural, geographic and linguistic needs.
- Investing in supports for providers to allow quality implementation of prevention programs known to make a difference for families.

DHS is committed to building a continuum of Prevention Services that will allow families to receive the intervention most appropriate for their needs. FFT-CW will be an important part of the continuum. The effort to redesign Prevention Services also includes:

- Shifting to more evidence-informed and evidence-based practices and programs that address families’ most important needs while moving away from programs with unproven benefits.
- Investing in ongoing training of contracted provider staff.
- Investing in comprehensive programmatic supports necessary to sustain quality implementation of new programs.

DHS selected [FFT-CW as a model](#) because it has been shown to address the range of needs that highest-need families experience. Our research shows that when Allegheny County families are initially assessed as presenting higher level needs in the [Family Advocacy and Support Tool's \(FAST\)](#) domains of Caregiver Functioning, Neglect and Substance Use, those families undergo out-of-home care at a high rate. Additionally, FFT-CW does not restrict program eligibility based on child age, and because it includes both High- and Low-Risk tracks, the same model can serve many families with different needs.

According to [recent evaluation results](#):

- Families receiving FFT-CW completed treatment more quickly than families receiving usual care, and they were significantly more likely to meet all planned service goals.
- Fewer FFT-CW families were transferred to another program at closing, and they had fewer recurring allegations.
- FFT-CW families with higher risk factors had fewer out-of-home placements.

Higher fidelity to the FFT-CW clinical model was associated with more favorable outcomes. Additionally, the FFT-CW High-Risk track is modeled after the much-tested FFT model, and the evidence base for FFT provides broad support for the FFT-CW model.¹

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

The Successful Proposer must implement the High-Risk track of FFT-CW, including participating in required training, hiring and supervising staff, and ensuring fidelity to the model of the EBP.

Priority Population

The population to be served is families with children from birth through age 17 who:

- Are at high risk of home removal
- Have been referred to Prevention Services by the family's child welfare team
- Have been assessed to have high needs in areas that can be addressed by FFT-CW (i.e., two or more items endorsed from the FAST domains of Caregiver Functioning, Neglect and Substance Use)

To be eligible for FFT-CW Program services, a family must have an active child welfare case and the child(ren) must still be in the home. In addition to involvement with child welfare, family members may also be involved with other systems or services. This may include the juvenile or criminal justice system, behavior health services, substance use disorder treatment services,

¹ For more information, see <https://www.fftllc.com/documents/FFT-CW-Model-Effectiveness.pdf>

homeless services, etc. Referred families will come from racially, ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse communities and populations.

In the first year of FFT-CW Program implementation, the Successful Proposer is expected to serve approximately 60 families. In the past three calendar years, nearly 300 newly accepted cases have met the eligibility profile for High-Risk FFT, for an average of approximately 100 per year. DHS expects that not all eligible families will engage in the FFT-CW High-Risk track service.

Services

The Successful Proposer must deliver FFT-CW High-Risk track services in fidelity to its EBP model. As a family-focused model, FFT-CW begins as soon as possible after the family's referral; and therapists are involved with families from the very beginning. FFT-CW is provided in family homes and must be coordinated with families to ensure that the sessions are held at convenient times (which will likely include evenings and weekends).

During the first year of implementation, the Successful Proposer must staff one FFT-CW High-Risk track team of three therapists who will serve approximately 60 families. Each therapist will work with eight to 10 families at a time. Each family is expected to require about 2½ hours of therapist's time each week, including 1½ hours of face-to-face meetings with the family and child/youth, 30 minutes for assessments and to engage the family in planning and problem solving, and 30 minutes for collaboration with community and professional supports. This intensity is adjusted depending on assessed need and risk. The average length of service is four to seven months.

For the first phase of DHS's FFT-CW implementation, the Successful Proposer must deliver the High-Risk Track of FFT-CW. Families participating in the High-Risk track meet with a therapist and receive traditional therapeutic FFT-CW services, focusing on familial relationships and risk factors. The High-Risk track model includes five phases: 1) Engagement, 2) Motivation, 3) Relational Assessment, 4) Behavior Change and 5) Generalization. Depending on the success of the first phase of implementation, DHS will release another RFP to select a Successful Proposer to deliver the Low-Risk Track.²

Training and Site Certification

FFT LLC is the EBP's training and dissemination organization. As an FFT-CW provider, the Successful Proposer must enter into an agreement directly with FFT LLC (in addition to the contract with Allegheny County). The Successful Proposer must participate in the FFT-CW Site Certification process and ensure that staff therapists successfully complete required trainings. FFT-CW Site Certification is a three-phase process.

² For more information on the FFT-CW clinical model and Low-Risk and High-Risk tracks, see <https://www.fftilc.com/fft-child-welfare/clinical-model.html>

The goal of Phase One of the FFT-CW Site Certification process (Clinical Training) is to build a lasting infrastructure that supports therapists to take maximum advantage of FFT-CW training and consultation. The Successful Proposer will engage with FFT LLC's Pennsylvania representative every week through 12 months of Phase One training and on an ongoing basis thereafter, as needed. Only Phase One requirements apply in the first year of implementation.

Specific initial Phase One training requirements must include:

- An average of three days of initial FFT-CW training for therapists. As of the date of publishing this RFP, trainings are conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but training logistics are subject to change based on federal, state and local safety guidelines.
- Weekly 1-2-hour consultations between therapists and the trainer.
- Eight days of follow-up training over the year for each therapist.

Missing any of the initial trainings means that an FFT-CW therapist cannot continue with the FFT-CW team.

Subsequent training (Phases Two and Three) will take place after the first year, dependent on the renewal of the Successful Proposer's Agreement with the County.

Clinical Assessments

FFT-CW therapists are expected to administer pre- and post-therapy assessments to family members participating in FFT-CW. While many of the assessments have been developed specifically for FFT-CW by FFT LLC, the EBP also uses three other clinical assessment instruments (the OQ-45.2, Y-OQ2.01 and YOQ SR) that the Successful Proposer must purchase (see Budget section below for details). These instruments must be available on-site prior to the beginning of the Site Certification process. FFT-CW therapists will administer these assessments to all families as described during training. The Successful Proposer must work with FFT LLC to obtain all necessary assessments.

Inclusivity

The Successful Proposer must promote respect and utilize approaches that are tailored to serve diverse families and communities. FFT-CW therapists must schedule and modify sessions based on families' needs, culture, circumstances, learning styles and abilities. All families should feel welcomed, well-served and supported regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

Staffing

In year one of implementation of the FFT-CW Program, the Successful Proposer's FFT-CW team must consist of three master's degree level (preferred) therapists. An FFT-CW supervisor (who must possess a master's degree) will be identified from this initial group of three therapists.

Staff must have the ability to assure the provision of culturally responsive services across the diverse population represented within Allegheny County, and should reflect the population to be served. FFT LLC can provide interview questions and job descriptions for new FFT-CW therapists.

To get the most out of training and to build model fidelity, therapists must provide FFT-CW services on a full-time basis. A maximum caseload for full-time therapists is 10-12 families at any given time. There are situations, however, where training part-time therapists is necessary to meet a specific service delivery situation. In such situations, the minimum number of cases per week for an FFT-CW therapist, at 20 hours/week, is 5-6. The Successful Proposer must:

- Ensure that all staff have the proper clearances prior to the start date of employment, including child abuse, FBI fingerprinting and criminal history checks. Employment cannot begin until all clearances are received.
- Hire staff with the ability and commitment to adhere to programmatic standards and model fidelity.
- Provide administrative oversight and supervision of all staff to ensure that they maintain fidelity to the FFT-CW model and follow expected standards.

Data Collection & Reporting

The Successful Proposer must submit to DHS monthly information and family logs that include a listing of all participating family members and the service hours provided to each family, funds expended for each family, and back-up detail as requested by DHS. A monthly progress report will also be required for each family, as well as a closing report within one month of the family leaving the FFT-CW Program.

FFT-CW has a web-based assessment and case management system (“FFT Clinical Services System”) that tracks outcomes, client change, model adherence and service delivery trends. Implementation of FFT-CW requires that FFT-CW therapists use this case management system.³ The Successful Proposer must also do the following:

- Complete and submit all required monthly reports to DHS’s child welfare office. If the family also is involved with the juvenile justice system, reports must be submitted to Juvenile Probation Office program liaisons, as applicable.
- Calculate and submit outcome data to DHS on a quarterly basis.
- Complete and submit monthly invoices to DHS according to the contract requirements.
- Administer a consumer satisfaction survey at discharge for each family and provide copies of survey responses to DHS.

DHS and the Successful Proposer will work together to determine actual expected outcomes and the monitoring process.

³ The FFT-CW Client Services System requires one of the following browsers: Internet Explorer 8+, Firefox 5+, Chrome 16+, Opera 10.7+, Safari 5+.

Budget

The Agreement with the Successful Proposer will include a program-funded/cost-reimbursement line-item budget. No advance payments will be made.

Proposers should propose a one-year budget that does not exceed \$400,000. Proposed budgets should include administration, travel, training and operating costs. Proposers should budget \$39,000 for Phase One training and FFT Clinical Services System and \$1,225 for the three additional clinical assessment licenses. Travel estimates should consider costs associated with regular travel to family homes throughout Allegheny County.

Additionally, staffing costs for three therapists in the first year should be commensurate with expertise and education level, as master's degrees are strongly preferred. If a site has a need to either replace a therapist or add a new therapist to their team, the new hire will need to attend a replacement training series. These series begin each month and include a 2½-day clinical training followed in a month by a two-day follow-up training; after another month, there will be a 2+ hour conference call with the training group. A new hire must attend all three of these events to be considered fully trained. The Successful Proposer is expected to pay the cost for this replacement training series, which is \$1,600/participant.

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

DHS will evaluate Proposals based upon the evaluation criteria listed below. Proposers must address their qualifications in their Proposal by responding to the requested items or questions in the Response Form. Proposers should download and type their responses directly into the Response Form available on the Active Solicitations webpage at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations. The maximum score that a Proposal can receive is 90 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Organizational Capacity and Experience (50 points possible)

- Clear and concise statement about why the Proposer is interested in implementing an FFT-CW High-Risk track Program and how FFT-CW fits well within the Proposer's mission (10 points)
- Experience serving high-need families with children aged birth through 17 from racially, ethnically, religiously, and culturally diverse communities and populations (10 points)
- Experience implementing an evidence-based program, intervention and/or service to model fidelity (10 points)
- Experience recruiting, hiring and retaining staff who reflect the population they serve (10 points)
- Evidence of timely response to requests for service provision (5 points)

- Experience maintaining databases/using software for reporting, tracking service delivery trends and/or client outcomes (5 points)

Implementation Plan (30 points possible)

- Specific plan for hiring and/or reassigning, as well as retaining, qualified diverse staff to provide FFT-CW High-Risk track services (5 points)
- Plan to manage staff turnover, including specifics about the plan to sustain fidelity to the evidence-based model and reduce disruptions for families (5 points)
- Plan to ensure that FFT-CW High-Risk track therapists accommodate family schedules and reduce barriers to family participation (5 points)
- Identification of organizations and agencies whose support will be necessary to successfully implement the High-Risk track of FFT-CW (e.g., schools, social service agencies, juvenile courts, youth and family peer support partners) (5 points)
- Detailed plan to ensure appropriate flow of referrals beginning at start-up, including how the referral family will be triaged, engaged and served, with details about plan for documentation and collaboration with DHS child welfare and other system partners (5 points)
- Anticipation of key challenges to providing the High-Risk track of FFT-CW and a plan to overcome them (5 points)

Budget (10 points possible)

- A detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Contracted Services and includes the items listed in Section 2 (5 points)
- A budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed line-item budget (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submission Process

- 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)
- 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.
- Proposers must submit a complete Proposal, which includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:

- Response Form
 - Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 7.1 and 7.2)
 - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
 - Audited financial reports for the last three years
 - Internal Revenue Service Form W-9
- d. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or 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 with 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 Friday, September 10, 2021 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 by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 3, 2021.
- 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

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

5.1 Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. DHS will form an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee 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. Each 0-5 score will be multiplied by the appropriate weight for the number of possible points noted after each evaluation criterion in Section 3. For example, for a criterion worth 15 points, the 0-5 score would be multiplied by three. An “Outstanding” response would receive 15 points, while one that “Meets Expectations” would receive nine points.
- d. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the average scores, and arrive at a consensus on which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP. The Committee will have 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).
- e. 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 Contract Services effectively (5 points)
 - Proposer’s answers to Evaluation Committee’s questions (5 points)
 - Proposer’s presentation is thoughtful and professional (5 points)
- f. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee to the shortlisted Proposer formal oral presentations 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.
- g. 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).
- h. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.

- i. As part of determining a Proposer's 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 a Proposer's financial stability.
- j. 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.**
- k. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
- l. 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 a completed Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form and supporting documents. The Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form should be completed as follows:
 - All Proposers must complete Section 1 – Contact Information and attach their MWDBE Diversity Plan (see Section 4 – Sample Diversity Policy).

- If the Proposer is able to meet the MWDBE contract goals, the Proposer should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement. Proposers also must attach the MWDBE certifications of the firms cited in the Participation Statement.
 - If the Proposer would like to request a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, the Proposer should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement and Section 3 – MWDBE Participation Waiver Request Form.
- b. MWDBE forms and resources can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations:
- [Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form](#)
 - MWDBE Resources
 - [MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)
 - [MWDBE Guide for DHS Proposers](#)
- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion website](#).

6.2 Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) Requirement

Allegheny County also has a goal of 5% participation for veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) in all contracts. The County, therefore, expects that Successful Proposers will make a “good faith effort” in assisting the County in meeting this goal.

- a. A veteran-owned small business is defined by the County as a business having 100 or fewer full-time employees and not less than 51% of which is owned by one or more veterans, or in the case of any publicly owned business, not less than 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more veterans, and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by one or more veterans. The VOSB vendor **MUST** provide proof of veteran ownership including percentage and name and address of business.
- For contracts under \$100,000, VOSB vendors shall be exempt from all bonding requirements.
- b. All Proposals must include either of the following:
- If the Proposer is able to meet the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement is required. You must also attach a copy of the VOSB vendor(s) DD 214 discharge form(s) cited in the Participation Statement.
 - If the Proposer requests a waiver from participating in the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement and VOSB Waiver Request are required.
- c. VOSB forms can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations:
- [VOSB Participation Statement](#)
 - [VOSB Waiver Request](#)

6.3 HIPAA Compliance

DHS is a covered entity under the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Therefore, a Successful Proposer must comply with all HIPAA requirements.

6.4 Cyber Security

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

6.5 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Requirements

By submitting a Proposal, a Proposer agrees to not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, client or any other person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, familial status, age (40 or over), or use of a guide or support animal because of blindness, deafness or physical disability.

6.6 Language Diversity Requirements

Successful Proposer(s) must assure resources are secured and/or made available for participants/consumers/clients with limited English proficiency or other communication barriers. Such actions shall include but not be limited to assessing the need for interpreters, evaluating the need for alternate language materials, identifying internal and external resources to meet identified needs, and accessing services contracted by DHS through their assigned contract monitor(s).

6.7 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.