



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Housing Mobility Services for Families in the Housing Choice Voucher Program

RFP Posting:

Monday, March 15, 2021

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 16, 2021

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 23, 2021

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

June 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 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. ACHA: Allegheny County Housing Authority
4. Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program: A regional program that will promote geographic mobility for families in the Housing Choice Voucher Program
5. 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
6. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
7. HACP: Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
8. Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program: The federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and people who are disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. The program is commonly referred to as Section 8.
9. Housing Mobility Program Services: The services of the Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program, which are housing search and leasing assistance, administration of financial assistance, post-move support and landlord outreach
10. HUD: [United States Department of] Housing and Urban Development
11. Opportunity Area: According to HUD, a census tract in which 20% or fewer families are below the federal poverty line. DHS additionally considers the following metrics when defining areas of opportunity: low frequency of single parenthood, low unemployment, educational attainment beyond high school, low gun violence, and good comparative outcomes for low-income children.
12. PHFA: Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
13. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
14. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
15. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
16. RFP: Request for Proposals
17. SOGIE: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression
18. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

On behalf of Allegheny County, its Department of Human Services (DHS) is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to implement the new Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program (henceforth referred to as the Housing Mobility Program). The Housing Mobility Program—a partnership between DHS, the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) and the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP)—aims to reduce barriers that can prevent families with housing vouchers from moving to low-poverty “Opportunity Areas” in the City of Pittsburgh and surrounding Allegheny County. Research suggests that moving to Opportunity Areas can lead to improved health and well-being for families and better economic outcomes for children. The Successful Proposer will deliver the following services as part of the Housing Mobility Program: housing search and leasing assistance, administration of short-term financial assistance, post-move support and landlord outreach.

Award Details

DHS intends to enter into one Agreement with one Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services for a term of one year. The Agreement may be renewable depending on the availability of funds. The compensation to be paid under Agreement to the Successful Proposer likely will not exceed \$360,000.

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.

Collaborative Proposals are permitted where two or more entities partner to submit one comprehensive Proposal in which they collaborate in performing the Contract Services; however, only one of the partnering entities will enter into the Agreement. Entities may participate in more than one collaborative Proposal.

What’s important to us

It is important to us that Proposers:

- Are familiar with housing programs, especially the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, the federal government's program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and people who are disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market

- 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
- Think critically about the legacy of racism in housing policies and practices, nationally and locally
- Are committed to improving long-term outcomes for families and children, and are excited about encouraging families to move to Opportunity Areas
- Have experience working with, or willingness to work with, landlords
- Have a history of being a collaborative, communicative partner to DHS and public housing authorities, or a willingness to become a good partner
- Are interested in being a part of a learning journey with DHS to evaluate the Housing Mobility Program’s effectiveness in promoting geographic choice, encouraging opportunity moves and supporting families’ transitions to new neighborhoods

Timeline

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions about this RFP is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 16, 2021. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 23, 2021. We expect to notify Proposers of the County’s decision to award an Agreement in June 2021.

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, developmental supports, 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

All children, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, deserve to live in neighborhoods that are safe, low in poverty, have high quality schools and provide access to opportunities that allow them to thrive and achieve their potential. An abundance of research supports the notion that place greatly affects childhood outcomes. Growing up in a neighborhood with high poverty is associated with stressors that influence well-being and limit economic mobility.¹ In contrast, growing up in a neighborhood with low levels of poverty, less violence and access to higher

¹ e.g., Sharkey, P. (2016). Neighborhoods, cities, and economic mobility. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 2(2), 159-177. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2016.2.2.07#metadata_info_tab_contents

performing schools can lead to better health and well-being and greater economic mobility.² Moving from a low- opportunity to a high-opportunity neighborhood can lead to improvements in education and future earnings for children in these households, with perhaps the greatest effects for those who move prior to age 13.³

Definitions of “Opportunity Areas” vary, as does terminology. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an Opportunity Area is a census tract in which 20% or fewer families are below the federal poverty line. In addition to low poverty rates, DHS considers the following metrics when defining Opportunity Areas: low frequency of single parenthood, low unemployment, educational attainment beyond high school, low gun violence, and good comparative outcomes for low-income children. DHS’s interactive Allegheny County Opportunity Map that identifies Opportunity Areas is available [here](#).

Across the nation, the federal HCV Program, which is commonly referred to as Section 8 or the Section 8 Program, seeks to alleviate the concentration of poverty, keeping low-income families stably housed and allowing them to move to Opportunity Areas. The HCV Program is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly and people who are disabled to afford decent, safe and sanitary housing in the private market. Through the HCV Program, a housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the local housing authority on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the HCV Program.

Though households participating in the HCV Program may use their vouchers to rent in any neighborhood, HCV households are more likely to live in low-opportunity neighborhoods than high-opportunity ones.⁴ In accordance with this national trend, the majority of HCV Program participants in Allegheny County tend to move to areas of low opportunity. According to a recent analysis, only 17% of HCV Program households moved to areas of high opportunity where less than 10% of individuals lived in poverty on average.⁵ Race is the most statistically important factor affecting where HCV Program households tend to move in the County. Black females with children are about twice as likely as White females with children to move to low-opportunity census tracts, which is likely a result of the unique barriers that Black renters face.

² Chetty, R., & Hendren, N. (2018). “The impacts of neighborhoods on intergenerational mobility I: Childhood exposure effects.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 133(3), 1107-1162. <https://academic.oup.com/qje/article/133/3/1107/4850660>

³ Chetty, R., Hendren, N., & Katz, L. F. (2016). “The effects of exposure to better neighborhoods on children: New evidence from the Moving to Opportunity experiment.” *American Economic Review*, 106(4), 855-902

<https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20150572> ; DeLuca, S., & Rosenblatt, P. (2017). “Walking away from the wire: Housing mobility and neighborhood opportunity in Baltimore.” *Housing Policy Debate*, 27(4), 519-546.

⁴ Mazzara, A. & Knudsen, B. (2019). “Where Families with Children Use Housing Vouchers: A Comparative Look at the 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities & Poverty and Race Research Action Council. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/where-families-with-children-use-housing-vouchers>

⁵ Cotter, N. Halfhill, H., Collins, K. & Dalton, E. (2020). “Moving to Opportunity or Disadvantage? An Analysis of Housing Choice Voucher and Rapid Rehousing Programs in Allegheny County.” Allegheny County Department of Human Services. <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2020/03/14/moving-to-opportunity-or-disadvantage-an-analysis-of-housing-choice-voucher-and-rapid-rehousing-programs-in-allegheny-county/>

Motivated by these trends, in the fall of 2019, ACHA, HACP and DHS formed a working group to design a regional housing mobility program for Allegheny County. The group consulted with national experts at Mobility Works⁶ to learn from mobility programs throughout the country. Additionally, the group worked with Opportunity Insights at Harvard University⁷ to shape various program elements based on lessons from King County, Seattle. Through meetings and phone calls, DHS gathered input from local stakeholders—fair housing advocates, researchers, service providers and existing voucher holders—on defining Opportunity Areas and developing the Housing Mobility Program.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking one Successful Proposer to implement the Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program. ACHA and HACP will work closely with DHS and the Successful Proposer to execute the Housing Mobility Program. DHS will coordinate the implementation of the Housing Mobility Program and oversee the work of the Successful Proposer. ACHA and HACP will provide vouchers and other support, including recruitment and enrollment. The Successful Proposer must provide the following services as part of the Housing Mobility Program:

- Deliver Housing Mobility Services, detailed below, including housing search and leasing assistance, administration of short-term financial assistance, post-move support and landlord outreach
- Hire or reassign staff for at least the following positions: two full-time mobility counselors, one full-time landlord liaison and a part-time supervisor
- Participate in regular Housing Mobility Program coordination meetings/communication with partner organizations
- Securely maintain and provide DHS and/or other evaluation partners with data, as requested
- Participate in relevant staff and supervisor trainings

Population

Any family participating in the HCV Program at ACHA or HACP with at least one minor child will be eligible for the Housing Mobility Program. However, the priority population to be served by the Housing Mobility Program is families with children 13 and under. DHS expects that the Successful Proposer will serve at least 100 families in the first year. Families served under the Housing Mobility Program are henceforth referred to as Participants.

Referral Process

ACHA and HACP will market the Housing Mobility Program to eligible Participants. Intake staff at the housing authorities will enroll families and refer them to the Successful Proposer.

Service Description

⁶ <https://www.housingmobility.org/>

⁷ <https://opportunityinsights.org/policy/cmto/>

The package of services to be provided by the Successful Proposer under the Housing Mobility Program for each household cannot be “one size fits all.” Instead, Housing Mobility Program services must be tailored to the unique needs of each Participant. In all circumstances, Participants will choose where they want to live, even if it is not within an identified Opportunity Area. The Successful Proposer must provide the following specific services as part of the Housing Mobility Program:

- **Housing Search and Leasing Assistance** – The Successful Proposer must work with Participants on housing search plans, including work to understand Participants’ neighborhood and unit preferences and any barriers that Participants may experience in leasing-up in the private rental market. The Successful Proposer must provide Participants with information about Opportunity Areas in the region and the potential benefits to adults and children of moving to those areas. Housing search and leasing assistance services must include corresponding planning and activities to increase Participants’ housing search activities and skills, as well as to maximize the competitiveness of their housing applications. DHS expects that this work also will entail taking Participants on tours of Opportunity Areas and providing additional information about neighborhood schools, transit, resources and amenities so that Participants can make an informed choice. Leasing assistance may include the completion/facilitation of contract paperwork and/or inspections in accordance with HCV Program regulations to expedite the process. The Successful Proposer must assist in negotiations with landlords and assure that Participants and landlords understand information related to payment standards and the inspection process, including commonly required repairs. Housing search and leasing assistance likely will be conducted virtually (in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions) and/or in office and community settings as the Successful Proposer’s staff accompany Participants to landlord meetings, unit inspections, etc.
- **Administration of Short-Term Financial Assistance** – The Successful Proposer must administer short-term financial assistance to Participants to cover move-in expenses incurred by leasing-up in Opportunity Areas. Short-term financial assistance may cover expenses such as application fees, mover costs, renters’ insurance and/or security deposits. DHS estimates that 60% of Participants will move to Opportunity Areas and has allotted \$90,000 (\$1,500 per Participant on average) for short-term financial assistance. Some Participants will require more or less short-term financial assistance than the average. The Successful Proposer must monitor and track short-term financial assistance allocations. Additionally, the Successful Proposer must administer financial incentives and possible assurances to landlords and property owners in Opportunity Areas as part of landlord outreach activities, including money for small repairs to pass inspection, sign-on bonus payments or vacancy holds. DHS has allotted \$26,460 for landlord assistance. The Successful Proposer must monitor Participants’ and landlords’ eligibility for short-term financial assistance funds and track allocations of short-term financial assistance. Please see the Budget section on page 10 for more details about the allotments.
- **Post-Move Support** – The Successful Proposer must offer post-move support services to all Participants who have made a move to an Opportunity Area. Post-move support

services may include: helping Participants locate neighborhood resources and amenities; navigating enrollment of their children in the local school; conducting regular check-ins and supporting the adjustment to a new neighborhood; and working with Participants on meeting landlord expectations or liaising with the landlord as needed. DHS anticipates that most of these post-move support services will take place during and immediately after Participants' move-in process, but that check-ins with Participants after a move will continue at regular intervals for up to one year.

- **Landlord Outreach** – The Successful Proposer must establish, grow and maintain a network of landlords and property owners in designated Opportunity Areas of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County that are currently working with, or willing to work with, the HCV and Housing Mobility Programs. This network must include a broad portfolio of landlord and property types to accommodate varied needs and preferences, including geography, housing stock, unit size, unit and building amenities and other parameters. Growing this network of landlords and property owners in designated Opportunity Areas will require identification of new landlords and units, marketing and outreach to landlords/owners to explain the HCV Program and the Housing Mobility Program and the benefits of participating in them, and possible coordination with a landlord liaison at HACP and DHS's Housing Navigation Unit. Maintaining relationships with landlords may include outreach to existing participant landlords to gauge satisfaction, troubleshooting concerns and finding out when new units may be coming online.

Staffing & Staff Qualifications

The Successful Proposer must staff the following positions in the first year of the Agreement to provide the Housing Mobility Program services described above:

- Two full-time mobility counselors who will provide housing search and leasing assistance, administration of financial assistance and post-move support, as described above
- One full-time landlord liaison who will conduct landlord outreach and administer short-term financial assistance as described above
- A part-time supervisor who will manage staff and oversee Housing Mobility Program services and be a direct point of contact for Housing Mobility Program partners

Training

DHS will coordinate and cover the cost of mobility services training, provided through our partner, Mobility Works, for all existing and newly hired Housing Mobility Program staff. DHS also will coordinate fair housing training for all existing and newly hired Housing Mobility Program staff through the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh,⁸ at no cost to the Successful Proposer.

⁸ <https://fhp.org/>

Expected Outcomes

The following is a preliminary list of anticipated Housing Mobility Program outcomes that DHS expects to occur in the first year of the Agreement with the Successful Proposer. DHS, Housing Mobility Program partners and the Successful Proposer will work together to determine actual expected outcomes and the monitoring process:

- Increase Participants' familiarity with, access to and utilization of housing options in Opportunity Areas
- Increase the number of landlords/owners (and corresponding rental units) located in Opportunity Areas that are willing to participate in the HCV Program
- Increase lease-up rates for Participants
- Reduce barriers to geographic choice

Evaluation & Assessment

DHS shall evaluate the Housing Mobility Program to assess its effectiveness in promoting geographic choice and encouraging HCV participants to move to Opportunity Areas. Additionally, DHS seeks to learn from the experiences of Participants. An evaluation can inform how the local public housing authorities administer the HCV Program and how Housing Mobility Program partners can ensure that families receive the support they need to remain in Opportunity Areas long-term, allowing them to benefit from their move. The Successful Proposer must be willing to work with DHS and its various partners to design an evaluation approach for the Housing Mobility Program.

Data Collection & Reporting

The Successful Proposer must record data on Housing Mobility Program service interactions, receipt of short-term financial assistance, address data and demographic data. DHS will work with the Successful Proposer to provide oversight and data analysis, reporting, visualization and tools, as needed.

Budget

DHS has secured funds from Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) and the Pittsburgh Foundation to support the Housing Mobility Program for one year. DHS has applied to PHFA for a second year of Housing Mobility Program funding; PHFA will announce funding awards after July 2021. DHS will work with the Successful Proposer on sustaining the Housing Mobility Program beyond one year, regardless of the PHFA decision.

DHS shall enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services for a term of one year. The compensation to be paid under the Agreement between the County and the Successful Proposer for the provision of the Housing Mobility Program services described in this RFP likely will not exceed a total of \$360,000. Total funding that will be provided under the Agreement with the Successful Proposer shall be provided in two categories: Housing Mobility Program services and short-term financial assistance. DHS has designated

\$243,540 for Housing Mobility Program services, including personnel, indirect costs and fringe benefits. When securing funds, DHS assumed fringe benefits at 35% of salaries and indirect costs at 10% of salaries plus fringe. DHS reserved \$116,460 for short-term financial assistance, with \$90,000 for Participants and \$26,460 for landlords.

Potential as a HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration Site

Proposers should be aware that the Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program currently is under consideration to be part of HUD's HCV Mobility Demonstration⁹ as the Pittsburgh-Allegheny County demonstration site. HUD expects to announce selected sites in Spring 2021. Proposers should be aware that if HUD selects Pittsburgh-Allegheny County, funding for the Housing Mobility Program and its evaluation would be secured for six years (amounts to be determined) and the scope of the Housing Mobility Program would be significantly larger, both in terms of the number of families served and the demands of participating in a national demonstration project with five to nine other sites. The Successful Proposer must be willing to participate in the HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration if Pittsburgh-Allegheny County is selected.

If HUD selects Pittsburgh-Allegheny County as an HCV Mobility Demonstration site, the Successful Proposer will serve only families with children 13 and under and will serve a larger number of families (with additional funding and staffing). At each demonstration site, HUD anticipates serving approximately 130 families annually in the first two years of the Housing Mobility Program and approximately 350 annually in the last three years. The first year would serve as a planning and pilot year.

If Pittsburgh-Allegheny County is selected as an HCV Mobility Demonstration site, HUD and a research partner will evaluate the Housing Mobility Program using a randomized controlled trial study design in which a treatment group (those receiving services) is compared to a control group (a similar group that does not receive services).

If HUD selects Pittsburgh-Allegheny County as an HCV Mobility Demonstration site, DHS and the Successful Proposer will negotiate and agree upon revised Contract Services and Agreement specifics.

Proposers should develop their Proposals based on the Housing Mobility Program as initially described in the RFP, not as it would be as a HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration site. However, the Successful Proposer must be willing to work with DHS to scale up the proposed Housing Mobility Program if HUD selects Pittsburgh-Allegheny County to be a HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration site.

⁹ https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/mobilitydemo

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 100 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Organizational Experience (35 points possible)

- Clear and concise statement about why the Proposer feels that it is the best candidate for providing the Housing Mobility Program services and how the proposed Housing Mobility Program fits well within the Proposer's mission (10 points)
- Experience partnering with other organizations to implement programs, especially partners in government and/or research sectors (10 points)
- Evidence of client satisfaction in current programs and mechanisms to learn from clients to improve services (5 points)
- Evidence of staff retention, satisfaction and opportunities for professional development (5 points)
- Experience maintaining databases/using software for reporting/analysis, tracking service interactions, and/or staff management (5 points)

Housing Experience (25 points possible)

- Experience providing housing-related services to families (5 points)
- Familiarity with the unique housing challenges faced by families with low incomes (in particular, Black families, female-headed households with children, and individuals with disabilities, which make up a significant portion of HCV Program participants), especially in moving to Opportunity Areas (10 points)
- Experience working with landlords, property owners, real estate firms and other stakeholders involved in local housing markets (10 points)

Implementation Plan (30 points possible)

- A plan for recruiting/reassigning and supervising qualified staff to fill the positions named in Section 2, and the specific strategies employed to recruit racially diverse staff and staff with lived experience relevant to the Housing Mobility Program (5 points)
- A plan to provide the housing search and leasing assistance services identified in Section 2, and to overcome anticipated implementation challenges (5 points)
- A plan to administer the short-term financial assistance identified in Section 2, and to overcome anticipated implementation challenges (5 points)

- A plan to provide the post-move support services identified in Section 2, and to overcome anticipated implementation challenges (5 points)
- A plan to provide the landlord outreach identified in Section 2, and to overcome anticipated implementation challenges (5 points)
- Anticipation of additional needs/new challenges if Pittsburgh-Allegheny County is selected to be part of the HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration (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 Housing Mobility Program services described in this RFP (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 including the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
 - Response Form
 - MWDBE and VOSB documents (see sections 6.1 and 6.2)
 - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
 - Audited financial reports for the last three years
 - W-9
 - Budget attachment, if desired
- Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or on the Response Form.
- 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, April 23, 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 Friday, April 16, 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

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

5.1 Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

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

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

- c. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the average scores, and arrive at a consensus on which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP. The Committee will have the discretion to proceed as follows: (i) to recommend to the Director of DHS that a reduced number of Proposals be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation to the Committee; or (ii) to recommend to the Director of DHS that DHS

request authorization for the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Proposer(s).

- d. As described in c above, DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have the exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Proposals for more extensive review. In this case, DHS may request that shortlisted Proposers make a formal oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee. Each Committee member will individually score the oral presentation of the shortlisted Proposers using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that a shortlisted Proposer's oral presentation can receive is 15 points:
 - Presentation demonstrates Proposer's ability to implement the proposed program effectively (5 points)
 - Proposer's answers to Evaluation Committee's questions (5 points)
 - Proposer's presentation is thoughtful and professional (5 points)
- e. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee to the short-listed 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.
- f. The Committee will submit its recommendation for award of an Agreement or Agreements to the Director of DHS for approval. The Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement or Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
- g. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
- h. As part of determining 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.
- i. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with a Proposer as a result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**
- j. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
- k. Proposers not awarded an Agreement who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

5.2 Other Requirements

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

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

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

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

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

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

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

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

6.2 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) that you intend to use with 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](#)
 - [VSOB 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](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Prospective-Providers.aspx), 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.