Allegheny County
Department of Human Services
Request for Proposals Q&A

RFP for Innovative Ways to Use Data to Improve Outcomes for High-Need Students

August 3, 2016 (Final answers to questions asked at the Pre-Proposal Workshop on 7/28)

18.) You mentioned that two neighboring districts might want to work together – it's ok for them to collaborate on a proposal?
Yes, as long as both districts have the data-sharing MOU in place.

17.) Is it ok to look at the past year's data? Or is only data from here forward available to be analyzed?
Yes, we can look at historic data as long as we are able to access it. Typically with the data exchange, the data starts when the exchange starts. We may be able to make arrangements with district staff or your information system provider to get historic data.

16.) What are the reporting requirements? What will the district have to report back to DHS?
There are no strict requirements for program evaluation and reporting. DHS will work with districts selected for awards to determine an appropriate framework for program evaluation.

15.) Are there any line-item restrictions for the budget besides staff? Is equipment ok? Transportation? Software?
The only line-item restriction is that the funding is not intended to provide for additional staff. Please also see Questions 9 and 10, below.

14.) Is it a priority that the targeted outcomes be human services related? That is, must there be a subgroup of students that are receiving human services and those that are not?
No, but the RFP states that proposed Initiatives must target a high-need population. That population could be students receiving human services, but it could also be a school-defined population such as students with poor academic outcomes or students who have an individualized education plan (IEP). We've intentionally left this loosely defined so districts can figure out what makes sense for their schools.

13.) So, there won't be priority given to proposals that make use of the DHS Data Warehouse?
No, this is not a requirement of the RFP, and proposals that use the Data Warehouse will not be automatically prioritized. That said, the committee may view use of the Data Warehouse as a strong element of a particular proposal and award more points for "using data to effectively address the identified need and selected goals," or for a "strong plan for collaborating with DHS."

12.) Is it the expectation that proposals will make use of the DHS Data Warehouse?

No, proposals may be strictly focused on district data. While we would certainly love to see some proposals with a human services component, the emphasis should be on improving school outcomes.

11.) If we are given an award, is there a deadline by which we need to use all of the funds?
No, there will not be a hard deadline.

10.) What about a stipend for internal people to train others in the community? Can we include that in the budget?
Yes, you can include this, but please make sure to explain and justify each line item of your budget in the accompanying budget narrative.

9.) RFP says that the funding is not intended to provide for additional staffing, but what about training for current staff? Would training current staff to implement a new initiative be something we could use the funds for?
Yes, you may include training for current staff in your proposed budget. The intent of the language about not using the funds for additional staffing is that this is a one-time award, but we hope that the impact will be longer standing than just hiring someone for one year.

8.) If a district has changed a strategy and they think they've seen a change for good or bad, can DHS help us understand the data and figure out if it's an effective intervention?
Yes, you may propose this type of initiative.

7.) What about previous recipients of the grant? What have they done?
This is a brand new endeavor; we've never made these awards before. But the RFP has some examples of projects school districts have done with DHS data.

6.) Can you provide some examples of what kind of projects the evaluators are seeking? Or a direction they are hoping to go in?
We don't want to give too many examples beyond what is in the RFP – we want districts to propose their own, creative ideas rather than feel limited by the committee's suggestions. However, Sanjeev Baidyaroy and Amy McCarty can be resources to help you think through what kind of data you could use for your project or identify outcomes that you may focus on. Please use their expertise on an individual basis to help you craft your proposal. Also, we can say broadly that projects should be data-driven and data-focused – not a program that you were planning to implement anyway, with data tacked on as an afterthought.

5.) So, does it have to be by building? Or could a primary and intermediate school join together for an application?
Whatever makes the most sense for your project is acceptable. That could be one application for the primary and one for the intermediate, a joint application, or a joint one and an additional one for just the primary, for example.

4.) Within a district, can multiple buildings apply and be awarded contracts?
Yes, there is not a cap on the number of applications a district can submit. Up to six total awards of up to $25,000 will be issued, and a district could win multiple awards.

3.) Our district has an MOU but does not have the data exchange up and running. Do we need to get that established before we can apply?

You are eligible to apply without the active exchange, but any award(s) will be contingent on getting this set up prior to implementation.

July 8, 2016

2.) We are a provider of social services interested in partnering with one or more districts on a Proposal for this RFP. What is the process we should follow for initiating a discussion with these districts?

If you have a contact at the district, please feel free to call or email them directly. We would also encourage you to attend one or both of the Pre-Proposal Workshops on July 15 and July 28 (see page 6 and 7 of the RFP for details) as an opportunity to learn more about the RFP and connect with representatives from the districts face-to-face.

If there is a specific district you are interested in reaching out to but do not have contact information for, you may send an email to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us and we will do our best to identify the correct contact person for this project at the district.

1.) Do we need to RSVP in order to attend the workshops?

No, just show up!

Amendments

- RFP was amended 7/19 to reflect that the Pre-Proposal workshop on 7/28 will be held at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit rather than the Human Services Building.