



Request for Proposals

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

RFP Posting: June 27, 2016

Pre-Proposal Workshops: July 15 and July 28, 2016

Deadline for Questions: August 5, 2016

Submission Deadline: August 12, 2016

Estimated Award Decision/Notification: Fall 2016

Projects to Begin by: October 2016

Allegheny County Department of Human Services
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Definitions

The following words are used in this RFP and shall mean the following:

1. Agreement: An agreement negotiated between Allegheny County or a Community Advisory Board member organization with the Successful Proposer(s) to provide a proposed Initiative
2. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3. Community Advisory Board: A group of community stakeholders that guides the partnership between DHS and Allegheny County school districts
4. Data-Sharing Partner School Districts: Allegheny County school districts with understanding MOU with DHS allowing for the regular exchange of data
5. Data Warehouse: DHS's central repository of social services data from a variety of sources, including partner school districts
6. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
7. GPA: Grade Point Average
8. High-Need Students: Students involved in human services, students with pressing academic needs and other special populations known to the school district
9. Initiative: Integration of data into school procedures designed to improve outcomes for high-need students, as described in this RFP
10. MOU: Memorandum of Understanding
11. PPS: Pittsburgh Public School District
12. Proposal: The response submitted by a Proposer to this RFP
13. Proposer: Representatives from DHS's Data-Sharing Partner School Districts and their chosen partners (other data sharing school districts, individuals, non-profit organizations and/or for-profit organizations or businesses)
14. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP. A completed Response Form is the Proposal.
15. RFP: Request for Proposals
16. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected to provide a proposed Initiative

The Basics

What we need

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS), on behalf of the Community Advisory Board, is soliciting Proposals from its Data-Sharing Partner School Districts to propose innovative ways to use integrated data to improve outcomes for high-need students (hereafter referred to as the Initiative). Proposals should be designed to improve outcomes for high-need students, including students involved in human services, students with pressing academic needs and special populations known to the school district. Outcomes may include (but are not limited to) improvements in attendance, tardiness, school discipline, school stability and standardized test performance. Up to \$150,000 will be awarded to support a maximum of six Initiatives. Funding will not exceed \$25,000 per Initiative, but Proposers may submit multiple Proposals and will be eligible to receive funding for more than one Initiative.

What we don't want

DHS is not looking to fund existing school/community programs or programs that are funded by a school district's budget.

Funding is not intended to provide for additional staffing.

The Initiative may not target high-achieving students with minimal service or academic needs.

DHS is not expecting a school district to conduct analysis on its own. DHS analysts will assist Successful Proposers in evaluating data on an ongoing basis and at the end of the Initiative. However, if a school district has internal analytical capacity, DHS encourages that district to regularly monitor and evaluate Initiative outcomes.

What's important to us

Proposers must be a Data-Sharing Partner School District, i.e., a school district that has an active data-sharing memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DHS. Proposers may work with service providers or other partners to design and implement the Initiative, but the lead Proposer must be a Data-Sharing Partner School District. Partnerships across multiple Data-Sharing Partner School Districts are acceptable, but Proposals may not include districts without a data-sharing MOU.

The Initiative should incorporate integrated data and a clear logic model that showcases expected outcomes.

Ideally, the Initiative should be replicable (i.e., it can be implemented by other schools/school districts).

The desired outcome(s) must be measurable, and data must be collected regularly to evaluate the Initiative's success.

Who we are

DHS is the issuing office for this RFP, on behalf of Allegheny County and the Community Advisory Board.

DHS is the largest department of Allegheny County government and provides publicly-funded services to more than 200,000 people annually, in areas including child welfare, behavioral health, aging, intellectual disability, homelessness and community services.

More information about DHS is available at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/human-services/index.aspx>

The Community Advisory Board was established in 2010 to help guide the partnership between DHS and school districts. In addition to DHS and the Data-Sharing Partner School Districts, the group consists of members from the local foundation community, non-profits and community organizations including A+ Schools, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, Allegheny County Juvenile Probation Office, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Allies for Children, Community Care Behavioral Health, the Education Law Center, the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania, Homewood Children’s Village, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, KidsVoice, the Office of Child Development (University of Pittsburgh), Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children, the Pittsburgh Promise, United Way of Allegheny County and the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh.

The Data-Sharing Partner School Districts are school districts with memoranda of understanding with DHS allowing for the regular exchange of data.

Currently, the following school districts are eligible by virtue of their existing ability to exchange data with DHS:

- Avonworth School District
- Baldwin Whitehall School District
- Carlynton School District
- Clairton School District
- Elizabeth Forward School District
- McKeesport School District
- Penn Hills School District
- Pittsburgh Public School District
- Propel Schools
- Sto-Rox School District
- Woodland Hills School District

The following school districts will be eligible if a regular data exchange, or acceptable alternate method of data sharing, is established with DHS before the proposed Initiative start date:

- Allegheny Intermediate Unit
- Chartiers Valley School District
- Cornell School District
- Duquesne City Schools
- Gateway Area School District
- Moon Area School District
- Steel Valley School District
- West Mifflin Area School District

Section 1: Key Information

1.1 General Information

- a. This RFP is a solicitation to DHS's Data-Sharing Partner School Districts (Proposers) to submit a Proposal to implement an Initiative as described in *Section 3.1 of this RFP: What we are buying and why*. Proposers must have the ability to meet the identified needs and quality standards within the guidelines specified in this RFP. Proposers may partner with other Data-Sharing Partner School Districts, individuals, non-profit organizations and/or for-profit organizations or business on submitting a proposal.
- b. To be eligible for this RFP, Proposers must have a weekly data exchange with DHS (or an alternative DHS-approved arrangement) in place by the start of the Initiative.
- c. The issuance of this RFP does not obligate Allegheny County or a Community Advisory Board member organization to enter into an Agreement with any Proposers.

1.2 Timeline

- a. Pre-Proposal Workshops will be held on July 15 and July 28, 2016. Attendance at these workshops is voluntary.
- b. Deadline for Proposers to submit questions is August 5, 2016.
- c. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. on August 12, 2016.
- d. Proposers will be notified of their selection status and Initiatives are expected to begin by October 2016.

1.3 How to Contact DHS

- a. All inquiries and questions must be submitted via email to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us
- b. All information about the RFP, including answers to questions, changes and clarifications, will be posted at our Active Solicitations website at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations
- c. Please be sure to check this website regularly for answers to questions, additional information, or changes to the RFP or the RFP process.

1.4 Submitting Your Proposal

- a. This RFP provides detailed information about Proposal and Proposer requirements, the evaluation process and how to develop your Proposal.
- b. Please use the Response Form to develop your Proposal. Type your responses to each requested item directly into the Response Form. It is available at our Active Solicitations website with the RFP announcement at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- c. Data-Sharing Partner School Districts who are interested in submitting a Proposal may attend voluntary Pre-Proposal Workshops where they can engage with DHS analysts to ask questions and receive guidance on their Initiative design and Proposals. Pre-Proposal Workshops will be held on:
 - Friday, July 15, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Lower Level, 1 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

- Thursday, July 28, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Dewey Room, 475 Waterfront Drive East, Homestead, PA 15120
- d. Please do not send any attachments other than those listed on the Response Form.
- e. Please take time to review and understand the RFP, specifically:
 - The requirements (see *Section 3: Our Requirements*)
 - The evaluation process (see *Section 4: The Evaluation Process*)
- f. Make sure to complete each section of the Response Form and to stay within the word counts specified in the Response Form.
- g. Proposals must be submitted electronically to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us no later than 3:00 p.m. EST on August 12, 2016 to be considered for review.**
- h. Please make sure to get your Proposal in before the deadline! If your Proposal is late, it will not be considered.
- i. You will receive an email when your Proposal is received. If you do not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting your Proposal, please contact DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us

1.5 Other Information

- a. The Agreement originating from this RFP is subject to all of the Terms and Conditions specified in *Section 5: Contract Information*.
- b. Proposers are responsible for all costs related to the preparation and submission of their Proposal.
- c. Proposals become the property of the County and may become part of any subsequent Agreement between the Proposer and the County.
- d. The Successful Proposal will be posted online in the DHS Solicitations Archive after contract execution.

Section 2: Background

In 2009, DHS and the Pittsburgh Public School District (PPS) signed an MOU that established a data-sharing arrangement between the two entities. The MOU provided the opportunity for PPS and DHS to gain a comprehensive understanding of a population of children and youth whose involvement in human services puts them at risk for a number of poor outcomes (e.g., low academic achievement and attendance, grade retention, disciplinary problems, low graduation rates).

A sample copy of the MOU between DHS and its Data-Sharing Partner School Districts is available at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147491518>

Additional background information on the MOU between DHS and PPS is available at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147491525>

Since the first MOU between DHS and PPS, approximately 20 additional local school districts have signed MOUs with DHS. Under these MOUs, the Data-Sharing Partner School Districts send DHS student attendance records, enrollment information and academic outcome data. Then, DHS matches student information with data from the Data Warehouse, a human services data repository that receives and integrates data from almost 30 data sources (e.g., juvenile justice, public benefits, behavioral health,

child welfare). As of early 2016, DHS's Data Warehouse contains over 1.4 billion service records and 1.2 million distinct clients.

Analysis of data from Data-Sharing Partner School Districts and the Data Warehouse allows for better collaboration between DHS and the schools and improved service coordination within the human services network. An analysis of data from eight of the Data-Sharing Partner School Districts¹ found that more than 45 percent of enrolled students are involved in human services during the current school year. The integrated data provide a comprehensive profile of educational outcomes for these high-need students involved in human services. Additional analyses show that high-need students involved in human services struggle to succeed academically at the same level as their peers.

A provision of the MOU allows the use of data for "action research" to address issues that high-need students may experience. Programs enacted as a result of action research include:

- **Addressing chronic absenteeism:** DHS worked with PPS on an assessment of students who miss 10 percent or more of school days in an academic year. The analysis demonstrated that students involved in human services are more likely to be chronically absent than their peers and to fall behind in Grade Point Average (GPA). Using this information, and in an effort to better coordinate supports, DHS made attendance data available to child welfare caseworkers. Similarly, PPS mobilized around the issue of chronic absenteeism, aiming to decrease the proportion of chronically-absent students by five percent in the 2015/2016 school year. PPS partnered with DHS and other community organizations, such as United Way, to create *Be There*, a positive attendance campaign.
- **Identifying and supporting students who are homeless or at-risk for homelessness:** An analysis of shared data found a wide gap between the number of students that DHS identifies as homeless and the number of students that schools identify as experiencing a housing crisis—a gap due largely to the different definitions of homelessness that guide DHS and school districts. These findings provide opportunities for earlier identification and influence resource allocation decisions and service planning and coordination.
- **Understanding the importance of school stability:** Changing schools in the middle of a school year can have a negative effect on students' learning and academic outcomes. An analysis of PPS student data suggests that a move within the school year drastically increases the likelihood of chronic absenteeism in students. For 9th grade students, changing schools in the middle of the year also increases the likelihood of a lower GPA. In response, DHS and its partners are working toward increased school stability.
- **Assessing student standardized test scores at a geographic level:** DHS collaborated with Clairton City Schools to better understand standardized test outcomes in the district. Using geographic analysis, DHS was able to locate clusters of high-achieving students in Clairton on a map. This allowed the Clairton district to engage community supports in these identified areas in an effort to replicate these outcomes for other district students.

For more examples of DHS educational analyses, please visit:

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Research/Education.aspx>

¹ Districts include Carlynton, Clairton, Cornell, Penn Hills, Pittsburgh Public, Propel and Woodland Hills School Districts.

DHS and the Community Advisory Board want to further the use of integrated data to improve outcomes for high-need students.

Section 3: Our Requirements

3.1 What we are buying and why

Through this RFP, DHS is soliciting Proposals from Data-Sharing Partner School Districts for Initiatives that use data in innovative ways to transform school district practices. The Initiative should be designed to improve outcomes for a target group of high-need students.

The Successful Proposer is responsible for Initiative implementation. DHS analysts will provide analytic support for the Initiative throughout the year and will evaluate results. Successful Proposers are also encouraged to collect qualitative data (e.g., focus groups or surveys) to evaluate the Initiative's impact. DHS also will provide support for analyzing qualitative data.

There are a variety of approaches a Proposer may take to design and implement its Initiative. Appropriate Initiatives include using data to examine and drive policy change or systems improvement, to create programs, or to support technology solutions that integrate human services data into school operations. DHS encourages Initiatives that are built on the use of evidence-based models, but creativity of design is encouraged as well.

All Initiatives must meet the following standards:

Goals

The primary goal of an Initiative is to improve outcomes for high-need students through the innovative use of data. Initiatives should have an area of focus or be aimed at improving a given academic metric or set of metrics, such as:

- Attendance (Chronic Absenteeism)
- Tardiness
- Standardized Test Performance
- GPA and Grade Performance
- School Stability (Entries/withdrawals)
- School Discipline (Suspension Days)

While improving academic outcomes is important, this solicitation is also an opportunity for Proposers to creatively incorporate data into district procedures. Data usage that is innovative, replicable and sustainable is an important goal of any Initiative.

Target Population

The Initiative should improve educational outcomes for high-need students. High-need students may include those with human service needs, behavioral challenges, special needs or diagnoses and poor academic outcomes, and/or those who may require additional support both in and out of school. The target population may vary in size and scope (e.g., a special education classroom, 7th graders in the

district with behavioral challenges, all students from a specific neighborhood experiencing homelessness).

Data Collection

In addition to the data available via the exchange between the Proposer's district and DHS, the Successful Proposer must track data about the Initiative, including data on start date, end date, enrollment and participant attendance. The Successful Proposer must store these data in a spreadsheet approved by DHS.

Partnerships

Proposers may identify community partners (e.g., other Data-Sharing Partner School Districts, individuals, non-profit organizations and/or for-profit organizations or businesses) to include in their Proposal. Proposers should clearly articulate the relationship among the partners. The lead Proposer must be a Data-Sharing Partner School District.

3.2 What we require

Proposers must meet the following evaluation criteria and should address their qualifications by responding to the specifically requested items or questions in the Response Form. Proposers should download and type their responses directly into the Response Form available on the Active Solicitations webpage at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 55 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Initiative Design and Implementation

- The proposed Initiative must use data to effectively address the identified need and selected goals (10 points)
- The proposed Initiative must incorporate data into district practice and procedures, and highlights how the award amount will help accomplish this goal (5 points)
- The proposed Initiative must have a target population that demonstrates a high need (5 points)
- The proposed Initiative must have an appropriate area of focus or academic metric(s), (e.g., attendance, GPA, school stability) (5 points)
- The conclusions and lessons drawn from the proposed Initiative should be able to be effectively used or replicated in other schools or districts (5 points)
- The Proposer must provide a timeline and management plan that detail when Initiative activities will occur and who is responsible for each activity (5 points)
- The Proposer must have a strong plan for collaborating with DHS and any partners identified in the Proposal (5 points)
- The Proposer must have a detailed plan for collecting, tracking and storing data about the Initiative (5 points)

Budget

- The Proposer must provide a detailed budget that clearly supports the proposed Initiative and implementation plan is included (5 points)

- The Proposer must provide a detailed budget narrative that justifies key costs associated with the proposed Initiative (5 points)

Section 4: The Evaluation Process

4.1 Evaluation Model

Proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation committee created by DHS. The evaluation committee will assign scores based on the Initiative as described in *Section 3.1: What we are buying and why* and on the evaluation criteria in *Section 3.2: What we require* using the scale listed in *Section 4.2 c*.

4.2 Evaluation Process

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. An evaluation committee will be formed by DHS and will consist of some or all of the following:
 - Representatives from the Community Advisory Board
 - Other community representatives and DHS content experts, selected for their expertise and/or experience
- b. Each member of the evaluation committee will sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest agreement.
- c. All committee members will individually review and score each Proposal. Evaluators will award points to each response on a Proposer's Response Form according to their expertise and best judgment of how it meets the evaluation criteria using the following scale:
 - 0 – Not addressed in Proposal
 - 1 – Poor
 - 2 – Below expectations
 - 3 – Meets expectations
 - 4 – Exceeds expectations
 - 5 – Outstanding
- d. The evaluation committee members then will meet collectively to compile and discuss the individual scores and evaluation of each committee member.
- e. The County shall have exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Proposals for more extensive review using the same criteria outlined above. In this case, DHS may request that shortlisted Proposers make modifications to their Proposal or budget or make a formal oral presentation. The evaluation committee will review the modifications and/or oral presentation and rescore the shortlisted Proposals using the original evaluation criteria.
- f. At any time during the review process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
- g. The committee will submit their recommendation for award of an Agreement to the Director of DHS and the Community Advisory Board for their approval. Allegheny County and Community Advisory Board member organizations are under no obligation to award a contract as a result of this RFP. The County and Community Advisory Board member organizations reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.
- h. All Proposers will be notified of their status following the final determination of which Proposer(s) will be awarded Agreements.

- i. Proposers not awarded an Agreement who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

4.3 Other Requirements

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

- Received by the due date/time
- Properly formatted and include responses to all requested information

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

Section 5: Contract Information

As stated above, under this RFP a Successful Proposer may be awarded an Agreement with Allegheny County or with a Community Advisory Board member organization, depending on the number of Initiatives selected and the cost of each Initiative.

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. Proposers entering into an Agreement with the County will also be required to submit the following additional documentation after the award decision is made: W-9, MWDBE Participation Statement/Waiver Request, and Vendor Creation Form. All of these documents and additional details about contracting with Allegheny County are available at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.

Proposers entering into an Agreement with a Community Advisory Board member organization are not obligated to the contract requirements listed below.

5.1 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 and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, and expects that Proposers will make a good faith effort in assisting the County in meeting these goals.

- a. Proposers may be registered and certified with the Allegheny County Department of Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. If so, please indicate registration on the RFP cover page.
- b. Regardless of registration status, Proposals must include either of the following:
 - a. If your organization is able to meet the MWDBE contract goals, an MWDBE Participation Statement is REQUIRED.
 - b. If your organization will request a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, an MWDBE Participation Statement and a Waiver Statement are REQUIRED. Please attach the required explanations with the waiver statement.
- c. MWDBE statements and resources can be found at:
 - [MWDBE Participation Statement](#)
 - [MWDBE Waiver Request](#)

- A list of MWDBEs that have been certified by Allegheny County and the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program can be found at <http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/mwdbbe/index.aspx>
- d. For more information about MWDBEs, please review the following: [MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)

5.2 HIPAA Compliance

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

5.3 Cyber Security

- a. Successful Proposers must meet the minimum computer specifications which begin on page 14 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- b. All electronic devices must have sufficient security software and settings to minimize the risk of an information breach.
- c. Successful Proposers must also have policies in place to ensure that electronic devices are physically secure when not in use (e.g., locked in a vehicle trunk, password protected).

5.4 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Requirements

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