



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Design, Launch and Coordination of a Countywide Juvenile Pre-Arrest Diversion Initiative

RFP Amendment:

Thursday, November 11, 2021

Office Hours:

3:30-4 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, November 30, 2021

1-1:30 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, December 27, 2021

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

March 2022

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

Contents

Acronyms and Definitions

The RFP at a Glance

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

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. 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. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
6. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
7. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
8. RFP: Request for Proposals
9. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services
10. Youth/Juveniles: individuals between the ages of ten through 21
11. Juvenile Justice Related Services (JJRS): Specialized service coordination for youth involved in juvenile probation and mental health

Other terms shall have the meaning or definition as stated in the RFP.

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

To reduce the number of citations, arrests and referrals to the juvenile justice system and to link youth with needed services and supports, the Department of Human Services (DHS), on behalf of Allegheny County, is requesting Proposals to design, launch and coordinate a countywide pre-citation and pre-arrest diversion initiative (henceforth referred to as the Initiative). Ultimately, the Initiative is intended to reduce the number of racial disparities seen in juvenile justice referrals and advance a culture of restorative justice within schools and communities by offering an alternative to citation and arrest through a diversion referral. A diversion referral provides school staff, community law enforcement and other stakeholders with an alternative to citation and arrest in which youth can receive needed services.

The Successful Proposer must work collaboratively with DHS to research, plan and design the approach and launch of the Initiative. After implementation, the Successful Proposer must operate as the countywide, centralized “intake” entity for diversion referrals from school staff, community law enforcement and other stakeholders. The Successful Proposer must hire, employ and supervise staff members acting as “Diversion Workers” who will assess the situation/behavioral incident that led to the referral, assess the youth’s physical environment and social situation and health issues, and refer the youth to voluntary services, programs and supports. Collaborative relationships with school districts, community law enforcement and other stakeholders will be key to the success of the Initiative. The Successful Proposer also must collect and analyze relevant data to understand and share insights and outcomes from the design, launch and operation of the Initiative; these insights and outcomes will be used to inform potential changes to the model or its implementation.

Award Details

DHS intends to enter into only one Agreement with one Successful Proposer.

The Agreement with the Successful Proposer will be for a term of approximately two years beginning in early 2022 and ending in early 2024. The initial months of the term of the Agreement with the Successful Proposer will serve as a design and planning phase. The goal is to begin the implementation phase in August 2022 (by the start of the 2022-2023 school year).

Because no such initiative has previously been launched in the County, DHS will work closely with the Successful Proposer during the approximately two-year term for continuous quality improvement of the Initiative and will learn alongside the Successful Proposer about the optimal design and operation of countywide juvenile pre-arrest diversion. While DHS intends to make a long-term commitment to diverting youth from citations and arrests, we will revisit our approach as the two-year term nears its end. Therefore, the Agreement with the Successful Proposer may or may not be extended.

Proposers should provide a realistic estimate of what coordinating a countywide juvenile diversion initiative will cost. As detailed in Section 3 and the Response Form, Proposers should provide a budget and budget narrative that will help DHS understand the thinking and assumptions behind

the proposed budget. DHS will negotiate with the Successful Proposer and agree upon on a final budget.

Who can submit a proposal

Anyone, including but not limited to non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals, is eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. 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

Given that the Successful Proposer will design, launch and operate a completely new, countywide Initiative, we are looking for Proposers who:

- Have some experience with direct engagement with youth.
- Have previously forged partnerships with schools, community law enforcement and other relevant stakeholders.
- Have some level of experience successfully designing and launching new, large-scale initiatives (while DHS will be a partner at every step, we expect the Successful Proposer to be a strong leader in the design, launch and operation of this Initiative).
- Have some level of familiarity with issues related to juvenile justice and/or some level of familiarity with the juvenile justice landscape in Allegheny County.
- Desire to create a culture of a change—not a culture of “fixing kids”—where positive engagement and more helpful/less punitive policies and practices can emerge.

What we don’t want

DHS is not interested in:

- Approaches that include elements or even the spirit of coercion (e.g., making the dropping of potential citations dependent on a youth’s acceptance of a referral to a program or service).
- Proposers who are inflexible, or otherwise have a completely pre-determined approach in mind (though we expect the Successful Proposer to be a strong leader in the design, launch and operation of this Initiative, they should be open and responsive to feedback from and partnership with DHS).

Timeline

Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, January 5, 2022. DHS expects to notify Proposers of their status in March 2022.

Anyone can submit questions about this RFP to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us. The deadline for the submission of questions is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, December 27, 2021.

There will be “RFP open office hours” from 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, November 30 and from 1 to 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14 via Microsoft Teams during which anyone interested in the RFP and in submitting a Proposal may drop in at any time to ask questions. Attendance at the office hours is not required to submit a Proposal. Preliminary answers will be provided orally during the office hours. Final and definitive answers to all questions will be posted in writing on the [DHS Solicitations webpage](#).

Tuesday, November 30, 3:30-4 p.m. Office Hours

- Follow this link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Or copy and paste this link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NjVmOTFkMDgtNTZiNy00YjQwLWFmMWItNjRjOTc1MWUwZWm4%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%224c7924c5-3d5a-494b-ba54-242fc5f6db86%22%7d
- Or call 267-368-7515 and entering code 713 487 744#

Tuesday, December 14, 1-1:30 p.m. Office Hours

- Follow this link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Or copy and paste this link: https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ZDM0YzEzMjYtNGI0Yi00NDIzLThhMzAtZmI4YzQ2YTU5NDE2%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%224c7924c5-3d5a-494b-ba54-242fc5f6db86%22%7d
- Or call 267-368-7515 and entering code 431 970 067#

Who we are

DHS is issuing this RFP on behalf of Allegheny County.

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

Over-referral into the juvenile justice system is a serious issue for Black youth in Allegheny County. Major sources of referrals to the juvenile justice system include school staff (and in some districts, school police) and community law enforcement. Many referrals stem from behavioral incidents where a milder intervention (neither citation nor arrest) would have been more appropriate.

A [2020 report released by the Black Girls' Equity Alliance](#) (BGEA), a collaborative of individuals, community-based organizations, local court representatives, universities and government entities in Allegheny County (including DHS), used data from 2019 to show that Black girls in Allegheny County are ten times more likely than White girls to be referred to the juvenile justice system and that Black boys in Allegheny County are seven times more likely than White boys to be referred.¹

The BGEA report presents data that the majority of arrests made by Pittsburgh Public School (PPS) police “are for minor offenses that are not safety related.” Additionally, “about half of arrests of Black youth (54% for Black girls and 42% for Black boys) by PPS police in 2019 ultimately resulted in a charge of disorderly conduct (compared with just 10% and 20% of arrests of White girls and boys made by PPS police, respectively).”

While this report primarily dealt with referrals only to the Juvenile Section of the Family Division of the Court of Common Pleas (and did not include those received by the Magisterial District Court), it still provides useful context around the issue of over-referral. The report notes that these rates are “significantly higher than the national rates for Black youth.” For Black girls in Allegheny County, their rate of referral is 56% higher than the national rate. For Black boys in Allegheny County, their rate is 23% higher than the national rate.

[Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race](#), a report released in 2019 by the Pittsburgh Gender Equity Commission, also describes over-referral to the juvenile justice system. Pittsburgh students are referred to law enforcement at rates higher than youth in 95% of other large cities in the U.S. For Black girls, the rate is higher than 99% of other large cities in the U.S.²

There are not only disproportionate rates of arrest, but disproportionate rates of summary citations (often called “non-traffic citations”), which require a youth to appear before a district magistrate judge. The consequences of an appearance before a district magistrate judge can be quite serious. The consequences include the creation of a criminal record that can “follow” a youth into adulthood. According to the [U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#), youth with juvenile criminal records “frequently experience collateral consequences of their arrest or adjudication,” which can include “a host of sanctions and disqualifications that can place unanticipated burden on individuals,” including “difficulties

¹ https://www.gwensgirls.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/20-011-BGEA_JuvenileJustice-BlackYouth_v4.pdf

²

https://www.socialwork.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/pittsburghs_inequality_across_gender_and_race_07_19_20_compressed.pdf

accessing educational services such as student loans, obtaining employment, and finding and maintaining housing...”³

For many youth, their experience with arrest or summary citation comes at the cost of receiving services and supports that might address the root cause(s) of the behavior, including academic support, mental health support, social/emotional competency-building, parental involvement and engagement, substance use disorder support and developmental support. For other youth, their experience with arrest or summary citation leads to juvenile court adjudication or a criminal record, when a milder intervention would have been more appropriate.

DHS has reported trends in human services involvement among youth who have had at least one allegation of delinquent behavior (an allegation being the document submitted to the juvenile probation office by the law enforcement officer or, in a rare case, by a private citizen, that alleges a juvenile has committed an act of delinquency). DHS’s 2020 report *Students’ Experiences with the Juvenile and Criminal Justice Systems In and Out of School*,⁴ showed that PPS students with at least one allegation were more likely than students with no allegations to be involved with the child welfare system, mental health services and assisted housing, as well as enrolled in public benefits. For example, 43% of students whose first allegation was made by PPS police and 48% of students whose first allegation was made by another source had received any mental health services, while only 34% of all PPS students had received any mental health services (2010-2018).

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

To reduce the number of citations, arrests and referrals to the juvenile justice system, and to link youth with needed services and supports, DHS is requesting Proposals to design, launch and coordinate a countywide pre-citation and pre-arrest diversion initiative (the “Initiative”). Ultimately, this work should reduce the rate of racial disparity seen in juvenile justice referrals and advance a culture of restorative justice within schools and community law enforcement by offering an alternative to citation and arrest.

The Successful Proposer must carefully design the details of the Initiative in partnership with DHS. Once the Initiative is launched, the Successful Proposer must coordinate countywide pre-citation and pre-arrest juvenile diversion efforts. These efforts must include working with stakeholders to raise awareness and influence a culture of a change where positive engagement and more helpful/less punitive policies and practices emerge. The Successful Proposer must also operate a centralized diversion referral intake that eventually results in either no action taken/needed or a referral to voluntary programs, services and/or supports.

The Successful Proposer must design and operate the Initiative in a way that promotes respect and that utilizes approaches tailored to serve diverse families and communities. All youth and their

³ <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/publications/expunging-juvenile-records.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2020/10/01/students-experiences-with-the-juvenile-and-criminal-justice-systems-in-and-out-of-school-a-longitudinal-analysis-of-pittsburgh-public-school-students-2010-2018/>

families should feel welcomed, well-served and supported regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

Target Population and Referrals

While referrals will be accepted for any 10- through 21-year-old youth in the County, the Initiative should be designed to tackle the racial inequities highlighted in Section 1 that detail how Black youth in Allegheny County are disproportionately referred to the juvenile justice system (as opposed to both their White counterparts in Allegheny County and the national rate for Black youth). Referred families will come from racially, ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse communities and populations.

It is difficult for DHS to anticipate a precise number of referrals to the Initiative for several reasons:

- The emergence of an alternative to citation and arrest (the Initiative) might influence stakeholders' behavior.
- The volume of referrals will be, in part, a consequence of the marketing to and relationships with stakeholders.
- One of the goals of partnership with schools and community law enforcement should be to shift the culture around responses to adolescent behavior, thus hopefully reducing even referrals to a diversion Initiative.
- It is unclear how pandemic-driven changes to education will influence the prevalence of behavioral incidents in schools.
- DHS does not have complete data on historical juvenile justice referral patterns.

The following recent data from the Allegheny County Magisterial District Court and the Juvenile Section of the Family Division of the Court of Common Pleas may provide some context:

- During the 2019-2020 school year, there were 2,266 referrals of juveniles to the Magisterial District Court.
- In 2019, there were 2,212 referrals to the Juvenile Section of the Family Division of the Court of Common Pleas.

While the Initiative seeks to reduce the number of referrals to both courts, the Successful Proposer will work with DHS to establish intended outcomes and an approach to evaluating the impact of the Initiative.

Designing the Initiative

Using the broad framework provided by DHS as a starting point, the Successful Proposer must work collaboratively with DHS to design the overall countywide juvenile pre-arrest diversion initiative. This includes:

- Working with DHS to establish intended outcomes and an approach to evaluating the impact of the Initiative. Metrics may include:

- Reduction in the number of juvenile citations
- Reduction in the number of juvenile arrests
- Reduction in the number of juvenile court referrals
- A significant reduction in, or complete elimination of, the racial disparities seen in referrals to the juvenile justice system
- Reduction in the number of “failure to comply” rulings that result in a Juvenile Probation Office referral
- Reduction in the number of youth who enter adulthood with a juvenile justice record
- Culture change metrics among schools and community law enforcement
- Outcomes for youth:
 - Outcomes of those who accepted a voluntary referral to a program, support or service
 - Outcomes of those who do not accept a voluntary referral to a program, support or service
 - Outcomes of those for whom no action is recommended/taken
 - Outcomes of those for whom conferencing with a caseworker and/or probation officer is initiated
 - Academic outcomes (including suspensions and expulsions)
- Working to comprehensively understand the current juvenile justice and juvenile diversion landscape across Allegheny County, including related efforts (existing and planned). This includes:
 - Summarizing the landscape to DHS.
 - Incorporating that understanding into design and planning efforts.
- Conducting a more formal landscaping of current programs, services and supports across Allegheny County where youth who are diverted from citation or arrest may be voluntarily referred. This includes:
 - Establishing and sustaining preferred partnerships, where needed.
 - Researching relevant best practices and analogous Initiatives in other jurisdictions and summarizing/incorporating key findings.
- Ensuring the Initiative is countywide while also identifying areas and districts where there are high or disproportionately high numbers of referrals to the juvenile justice system and where sustained partnership with school staff and community law enforcement will be needed.
- Determining an approach to assessment of youth who school staff or community law enforcement are referring for diversion from citation or arrest. The assessment may include:
 - Methods to understand the behavioral incident or situation.
 - The youth’s physical environment (e.g., access to sufficient food, clothing, stable housing, heat and cooling).
 - Social situation (e.g., family conflicts, social or education issues that may impact the youth’s life at school, parental issues).
 - Health issues (e.g., illness, disability).
- Working with DHS to establish links to human services data that may serve as useful inputs into an assessment of a youth’s physical environment, social situation and health issues.

- Working with DHS to identify gaps in services, programs and support for the Initiative’s target population, and making recommendations about ways to fill these gaps, particularly as DHS plans to release an out-of-school-time teen programming RFP in the coming months.
- Considering and determining the appropriate level of parent/caregiver involvement at each step of the diversion process.
- Determining a response time and protocol for responding to initial referrals from school staff and community law enforcement.
- Developing a finalized staffing plan, to include not only countywide coordination but also Diversion Workers who can respond to referrals from school staff and community law enforcement.
- Developing a branding/marketing plan for the Initiative that accounts for the following audiences: school staff, parents/guardians, youth, community law enforcement, community partners and others as jointly determined with DHS.
- Determining, with DHS and other stakeholders, which specific offenses are “divertible,” and which specific offenses are not “divertible.”

Launching and Coordinating the Initiative

After designing the Initiative, the Successful Proposer is responsible for its implementation, coordination and management. Tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Acting as a countywide, centralized “intake” entity for referrals from school staff, community law enforcement and other stakeholders.
 - Once the Initiative is launched, school staff and community law enforcement throughout the County should be able, in lieu of making a citation or arrest for a low-level offense, to contact a centralized “diversion intake” operated by the Successful Proposer.
- Hiring, employing and supervising qualified and diverse Diversion Workers to staff the Initiative.
 - Staff must have the ability to assure the provision of culturally responsive services across the diverse population represented within Allegheny County; the services should reflect the population to be served.
 - Staff that work directly with youth must have the ability to respond to, connect and communicate with youth.
- Acknowledging receipt of the referral, gathering information from the referrer and directly engaging the youth involved.
 - Diversion Workers will assess the situation/behavioral incident that led to the referral and the youth’s physical environment, social situation and health issues.
- Ensuring that initial referrals from school staff or community law enforcement result in either no action taken/needed or a voluntary referral to programs, services and/or supports.
 - For youth who are already system-involved, the initial referral also may result in a conferencing session with their current caseworker(s) and/or juvenile probation officer.

- Building relationships with school staff and community law enforcement, throughout the County, who will ultimately make diversion referrals.
- Providing trauma-informed training to school staff and community law enforcement on topics such as conflict resolution and mediation, improving de-escalation, secondary trauma and “typical adolescent behavior.”
- Partnering with school staff to make parents/caregivers aware of the diversion Initiative and, when their youth is referred for diversion, making them aware of all steps involved and the outcomes of these steps.
- Working with DHS to continually monitor and evaluate impact and make improvements/changes to the Initiative where and when appropriate.
- Coordinating with other existing and planned services and programs across Allegheny County.

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 130 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Organizational Capacity and Experience (70 points possible)

- Clear and concise statement about why the Proposer is interested in designing, launching and coordinating juvenile pre-arrest diversion, including how it fits within the Proposer’s mission (10 points)
- Experience serving youth (ages 10-21) from racially, ethnically, religiously and culturally diverse communities and populations (10 points)
- Experience with the juvenile justice landscape and system, which may include direct experience diverting youth from the juvenile justice system (10 points)
- Experience recruiting, hiring and retaining diverse, qualified staff who reflect the population served (10 points)
- Experience building relationships with school staff and community law enforcement and understanding of how to influence policy and procedure change (10 points)
- Experience designing, launching and implementing new, major initiatives (10 points)
- Evidence of timely response to requests for service provision, including referrals (5 points)
- Experience maintaining databases/using software for reporting, tracking service delivery trends and/or client outcomes (5 points)

Proposed Approach (30 points possible)

- Summary of how the Proposer would approach the design of this Initiative, including key early tasks (10 points)
- Summary of how the Proposer would approach prioritizing the potential outcomes of this Initiative (10 points)
- Summary of how the Proposer envisions its partnership with DHS, including what the Proposer would need from DHS to make this Initiative successful (10 points)

Budget (30 points possible)

- A detailed, line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with designing, launching, implementing and sustaining the Initiative over a two-year term and that includes the tasks listed in Section 2 as well as position salaries for all proposed staff (15 points)
- A budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed line-item budget (15 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submission Process

- a. 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)
- b. Proposers must use the Response Form to develop your Proposal. Type responses to each requested item directly into the Response Form. It is available at our Active Solicitations website with the RFP announcement at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- c. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal. The Proposal 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 in 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 Wednesday, January 5, 2022 to be considered for review.**
- h. All Proposals must be submitted before the deadline! If a Proposal is late, it will be rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee (as described in Section 5 below) for review and scoring.
- i. Proposers will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their Proposal. If a Proposer does not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting their 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 Monday, December 27, 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 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 will be comprised of evaluators with expertise in the subject matter of this RFP and may include community members with lived experience, external subject matter experts or provider representative(s), representative(s) from key partners or funders and DHS internal staff.
- 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 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 who were 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 that 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 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](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations), 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 that 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.