



Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Request for Proposals

Latinx Community Needs Assessment

RFP Posting:

Friday, August 7, 2020

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 11, 2020

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 18, 2020

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

November 2020

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. Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR): An approach to research that equitably involves community members, organizational representatives, researchers and others in all aspects of the research process, with all partners in the process contributing expertise and sharing in the decision making and ownership.
4. Community Needs Assessment: Research that identifies the strengths and resources available in the community to meet the needs of community members and that provides a framework for identifying and developing needed services and solutions
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. Fuerza Unida: A community engagement research strategy developed by Casa de Esperanza in Minneapolis
8. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
9. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
10. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
11. RFP: Request for Proposals
12. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

Allegheny County, on behalf of its Department of Human Services (DHS), is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to conduct a Community Needs Assessment focusing on Allegheny County's Latinx community (henceforth referred to as the "Latinx Community Needs Assessment" or the "Assessment"). The Assessment will identify the strengths and resources available within the County's Latinx community and will provide a framework for identifying and developing needed services and solutions to strengthen families and advance the health and wellness of the community. The Successful Proposer will collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative data and produce a written report that clearly presents:

- Demographics, geography and needs of a growing and changing community
- Current service coverage and gaps
- Current service delivery methods and gaps
- Recommendations for implementation planning and strategies to address service gaps and community needs

Award Details

DHS will recommend the selection of one Successful Proposer for the award of an Agreement to provide the Contract Services. The Agreement will have a term of approximately nine months and will begin as soon as possible after the award and execution of a written contract. The compensation to be paid to the Successful Proposer for the Contract Services performed or provided in connection with the Assessment will not exceed \$50,000.

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.

Timeline

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions about this RFP is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 11, 2020. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 18, 2020. We expect to notify Proposers of the County's decision to award an Agreement in November 2020.

Who we are

On behalf of Allegheny County, DHS is the issuing office for this RFP.

DHS is the largest department of Allegheny County government and provides publicly funded services to more than 200,000 people annually, in areas including child welfare, behavioral health, aging, intellectual disability, homelessness and community services. Its mission is to meet the human service needs of people who live in the county, most particularly vulnerable populations, through a human services system that is accessible, equitable, and uses resources effectively.

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

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP

The Latinx community in Allegheny County is growing and changing. While the total population of Allegheny County has declined by 5% since 2000, the Hispanic and Latinx population has increased by at least 138%.¹ This growth is likely even higher, as U.S. Census estimates do not adequately capture the increasing number of undocumented individuals who call Allegheny County home. In addition, the Latinx community has spread geographically, increasing in more suburban areas, such as Moon Township and Monroeville, and establishing small pockets of isolated communities in areas unknown to service providers. Finally, there is insufficient understanding of the diversity (of origin, language and other elements of identity) within the Latinx community. The most recent Allegheny County Latinx Community Needs Assessment was published in 2016,² but much growth and change has occurred since then.

Without a better understanding of the Latinx community's current demographics, geographic locations and needs, and how our social, health and human services systems are and are not meeting those needs, the County is missing the chance to strengthen families and advance the health and wellness that are crucial to prosperity of this particular community. There may be unaddressed needs and gaps in services to the Latinx community. Further, the Latinx community's needs and service gaps intersect under different systems (e.g., family support services, physical health, behavioral health, drug and alcohol recovery, aging services, developmental supports, homelessness services, reentry supports, education, employment, transportation, food access) and involve various stakeholders (e.g., community-based organizations, healthcare providers, other service providers, government entities, churches, schools, families, individuals). DHS and other community stakeholders seek to ensure that they are offering the right services to meet the needs of the Latinx community and are not excluding individuals and families from services because of language, culture, geography or apprehension.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking a qualified Proposer who will conduct a Community Needs Assessment focusing on Allegheny County's Latinx community and produce a comprehensive written report. The Successful Proposer must have deep expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation of needs and effective methods of accessing services, compared with available, accessible resources. The results of the Assessment will be used to improve the effectiveness of the delivery of services to the Latinx community (both current and possible additional services/locations). DHS alone will not be able to fund and implement all Assessment recommendations. Instead, Assessment recommendations are intended to provide a roadmap for the Latinx community, the County and other funders and stakeholders.

¹ U.S. Census, "Hispanic or Latino by Type: 2000 Census Summary File and 2018 ACS 1-year Estimate", 2018

² Latino Family Center and Casa San Jose, "Latino Community Assessment in Allegheny County Final Report from the Pláticas Comunitarias," 2016

2.1 Assessment Outcomes

The Successful Proposer must conduct the Assessment and produce a written report that clearly documents and presents the challenges and needs of a growing and changing community, with attention to:

- Demographics and geography, including:
 - Countries of origin and cultures
 - Languages spoken and literacy levels
 - Residential location, with an emphasis on smaller, geographically dispersed communities that may not be known by DHS
 - Preferred methods of transportation
 - Family and household composition and living situations
 - Ages
 - Trends over time and future projections
- Current service coverage and gaps
- Current service delivery methods and gaps, including:
 - Technology access, use and preferences
 - Preferred methods of communication
- Strategies to address service gaps and community needs, including:
 - Organization(s) and ideal location(s) best poised to implement assessment findings

2.2 Assessment Description

We envision a variety of approaches that a Proposer may take to conduct the Assessment described in this RFP and we are interested in creative Proposals. However, at a minimum, the Assessment offered by Proposers must include the following components:

- Quantitative and qualitative data collection that:
 - Incorporates geographic data to discern need by location
 - Engages the voices of a sample of community members
 - Uses culturally competent approaches, which must include language access and community engagement research strategies (see sections 2.3 and 2.5 below)
- Analysis and recommendations that:
 - Incorporate research on best practices to meet identified needs
 - Include the voices of service providers, such as organizational leaders and board members, in implementation planning

2.3 Community Engagement Strategies

The Successful Proposer must have experience engaging diverse communities. Proposers will describe a plan in their Proposal as to how they propose to engage a robust sample of the Latinx community in Allegheny County. The plan should include:

- The method(s) of communication that will be employed to recruit participants

- Strategies to ensure broad geographic coverage of Allegheny County
- Strategies to find and reach smaller or “hard to reach” communities that have not yet come to the notice of DHS

One example of a community engagement strategy that Proposers may utilize is Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), which engages community members as partners. Community input from CBPR makes a project credible, enhancing its usefulness by aligning it with what the community perceives as social and health goals. Other benefits of CBPR include:³

- Allows for the innovative adaptation of existing resources
- Empowers people by considering them agents who can investigate their own situations
- Helps dismantle the lack of trust communities may exhibit in relation to research

Applying this proven approach to a Community Needs Assessment yields additional benefits (drawn from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention⁴ and the Community Action Partnership⁵ guidance on community needs assessments):

- Improved organizational and community coordination and collaboration
- Strengthened partnerships
- Identified strengths and weaknesses to address in quality improvement efforts
- Ability to leverage data for strategic planning, advocacy and fundraising

A second example of a community engagement strategy is the *Fuerza Unida* method developed by Casa de Esperanza Minneapolis. Under this approach, Latinx community members are trained as focus group facilitators and presenters. This approach empowers community members, builds leadership capacity and increases social connectedness.⁶

2.4 Cultural Competency

The Successful Proposer must have experience working with diverse populations. Proposers will be asked to demonstrate the behaviors, attitudes, policies, structures and methods that enable them to work effectively on a cross-cultural basis.⁷

2.5 Language Access

We envision that qualitative data collection through focus groups and/or interviews will be a key element in identifying the current needs of the Latinx community in Allegheny County. Proposers must describe how they will communicate in Spanish (in outreach, facilitation, etc.)

³ [Holkup et al, “Community-Based Participatory Research: An Approach to Intervention Research with a Native American Community,” 2009](#)

⁴ [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Community Health Assessments & Health Improvement Plans,” 2018](#)

⁵ [Community Action Partnership, “Conducting a Community Needs Assessment,” 2018](#)

⁶ https://casadeesperanza.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/2013-FuerzaUnida_Final.pdf

⁷ [National Center for Cultural Competence, “Definition of Cultural Competence,” 1998](#)

and budget for language assistance services, if necessary. Proposers also must detail how they will meet the need for language assistance if additional languages and dialects are needed.⁸

2.6 DHS Support

DHS will provide the following support to the Successful Proposer during the Assessment:

- A single point of contact for the Successful Proposer to rely upon for access and information
- Access to individuals who are key informants/stakeholders and who can contribute ideas, context and information
- Access to individuals, including DHS and other leaders, who will be implementing the recommendations
- Access to analytic teams that can pull information from DHS's Data Warehouse, which integrates client and service data from a wide variety of sources. The Data Warehouse provides information regarding the service activity of clients across the multiple programmatic service areas administered by DHS (e.g., child welfare, mental health, drug and alcohol, homelessness, aging, intellectual disability and other community services) as well as additional individual client-level information provided to DHS by external sources (e.g., Public Housing Authorities, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the Allegheny County Jail).
- Connections to local stakeholders and advisory bodies, such as the Immigrants and Internationals Advisory Council (IIAC), a diverse, representative group of immigrant leaders and service providers who can provide their expertise. (Latinx-serving providers on the council include Latino Community Center, Casa San Jose, among others).

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 65 points, as outlined in the following sections.

3.1 Experience (15 points possible)

- Experience performing Community Needs Assessments (5 points)
- Experience engaging diverse populations (5 points)
- Roster of personnel with experience and availability to complete the Assessment within the nine-month time frame (5 points)

⁸ Other languages may include, but are not limited to, Portuguese, French and Mayan dialects.

3.2 Assessment Description and Plan (45 points possible)

- Overall Assessment plan, including the methodology for data collection and analysis proposed to achieve Assessment outcomes (15 points)
- Community engagement strategies proposed to engage a sample of the Latinx community, including communication methods and special considerations for hardest-to-reach populations (15 points)
- Description of how the Proposer will communicate in Spanish and proposed language access measures (5 points)
- Anticipated challenges in conducting the Assessment and a plan to mitigate those challenges (5 points)
- Detailed timeline including specific deliverables (5 points)

3.3 Financial Management and Budget (5 points possible)

- A budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with the Assessment and a budget narrative that clearly explains all line items (5 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 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. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal, which includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
 - Response Form
 - MWDBE documents
 - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
 - Audited financial reports for the last three years
 - W-9
 - Budget, as desired
- d. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed above and on 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 through Allegheny County.

- f. Make sure to complete each section of the Response Form and to stay within any word counts or page limits that may be specified in the Response Form.
- g. **Proposals must be submitted electronically to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, September 18, 2020 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.
- 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 Evaluation Committee 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 with the Successful Proposer.
- 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 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.

6.3 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).

6.4 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.

6.5 New Provider Requirements

If awarded an Agreement, Successful Proposers who do not have current Allegheny County contracts will be required to complete the [DHS New Provider Application](#), available at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Prospective-Providers.aspx>. While not required as part of your Proposal, Proposers may wish to review the requirements of this application.