



# Request for Proposals

## Emergency Shelter for Individuals Who Are Chronically Homeless or At-Risk of Chronic Homelessness

**RFP Posting:** Thursday, November 9, 2017

**Deadline for Questions:** Thursday, December 14, 2017

**Submission Deadline:** 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, December 21, 2017

**Estimated Award Decision/Notification:** March 2018

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

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## 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. Allegheny Link: The entity that runs Coordinated Entry in Allegheny County
4. Chronically Homeless: Either 1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more or 2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years
5. Continuum of Care (CoC): The network of housing options and services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including: shelter, housing and supportive services; outreach, engagement and assessment; and prevention strategies
6. Contract Services: The specific services which 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
7. Coordinated Entry: A process by which people seeking homeless services have a clear, streamlined way to access referrals across the homeless system. The process assesses their needs and makes prioritization decisions based upon those needs. In Allegheny County, Coordinated Entry is administered by the Allegheny Link.
8. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
9. HAB: [Allegheny County] Homeless Advisory Board. The HAB is the public/private partnership formed to assist Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh, the City of McKeesport and the Municipality of Penn Hills in reviewing public policy, programs, activities, data and all other efforts that will eliminate homelessness and improve the well-being of homeless individuals and families.
10. HMIS: Homeless Management Information System. HMIS is a system used to collect client-level data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
11. Housing First: A model to address homelessness based on the following principles: 1) the provision of safe and affordable housing; 2) all people experiencing homelessness can achieve housing stability in permanent housing; 3) everyone is "housing ready;" 4) many people experience improvements in quality of life as a result of obtaining housing; 5) people experiencing homelessness have the right to self-determination and should be treated with dignity and respect; and 6) the exact configuration of housing and services depends upon the needs and preferences of the population served. All programs following a Housing First model share a few key features: few programmatic prerequisites, low barrier admission policies, rapid and streamlined entry into permanent housing, voluntary and engaging supportive services, and a focus on housing stability.
12. Low Barrier Shelter: A shelter to which there are no barriers to entry or staying for anyone who fits the target population except for safety considerations
13. Motivational Interviewing: An evidence-based intervention that uses a conversational approach designed to help people address their ambivalence to change. There are four core

principles: 1) express empathy, 2) roll with resistance, 3) develop discrepancy, and 4) support self-efficacy.

14. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
15. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
16. PSH: Permanent Supportive Housing. PSH is long-term housing with supportive services for homeless individuals with disabilities.
17. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
18. RFP: Request for Proposals
19. RRH: Rapid Re-Housing. RRH are programs that assist individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness to move as quickly as possible into permanent housing and achieve stability in that housing through a combination of rental assistance, housing search and supportive services.
20. Severe Weather Emergency Shelter (SWES): Also known as the Winter Shelter, SWES provides shelter, food, clothing, counseling and warmth to homeless individuals between November 15 and March 15 and is open between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.
21. Shelter: The year-round, 24/7 low-barrier emergency shelter and its supportive services for individuals who are chronically homeless or at-risk of chronic homelessness that is being sought through this RFP
22. Street Outreach: A service within the homeless system in which workers spend time with people who live on the street, build relationships with them, identify and address their immediate needs and provide information about and linkage to longer-term forms of support.
23. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services
24. Trauma-Informed: An organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of all types of trauma
25. URA: Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh

## The RFP at a Glance

### **Purpose**

Allegheny County, on behalf of its Department of Human Services (DHS), is seeking a Successful Proposer to partner with DHS and the Homeless Advisory Board (HAB) to plan and implement a year-round, 24/7 low-barrier emergency shelter for high-needs individuals who are residing on the streets to replace the seasonal Winter Shelter (also known as the Severe Weather Emergency Shelter or SWES). DHS is seeking an emergency Low Barrier Shelter and accompanying services (henceforth referred to as the Shelter) in which there are no barriers to entry or staying except for safety considerations (e.g., the person presents a danger to self or others). DHS will determine the specific details and requirements of the Shelter through a collaborative partnership with the Successful Proposer. Once a viable plan is established, DHS expects to enter into a contract with the Successful Proposer as the provider of the Shelter.

### **Award Details**

There are two phases to this award.

Planning: Phase One is a planning process to fine tune and finalize the most appropriate scale, scope and location for the Shelter. Decisions will be based upon:

- Local data
- Visiting and learning about shelter models serving a similar population in other jurisdictions
- National best practices
- Successful Proposer's experience with and knowledge of the needs of the target population
- Input from providers, the City of Pittsburgh, the County, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA), community development corporations, and other knowledgeable stakeholders on possible sites
- Input from shelter clients and/or street homeless individuals

The Successful Proposer is not expected to do this alone but to be part of a team in conjunction with DHS and other stakeholders to design a Shelter that best meets the needs of the community. DHS will make all final decisions about the Shelter program design but the Successful Proposer will have important input. DHS expects Phase One to last up to six months.

Implementation: Phase Two is operating the Shelter. Once the Shelter design is approved and finalized, DHS expects to enter into an annual contract with the Successful Proposer to operate the Shelter. The County has the option to extend the term of the contact. Typically, emergency shelters in Allegheny County have multiple funding sources and DHS covers only a fraction of the beds at a per diem of \$15 per client. Because planning the Shelter and its services, and identifying partners and resources, is part of this RFP, an appropriate operating budget and funding level will be developed through that process. Given current funding availability, DHS does not expect this contract to exceed \$500,000.

The award does not include funding for renovating or building out space for the Shelter. However, if the space identified in Phase One does require work to become a useable Shelter space, DHS and the HAB are committed to working closely with the Successful Proposer to identify private or other external funding to make that possible.

***Who can apply***

All entities are eligible to respond to this RFP, including but not limited to, government organizations, education organizations, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations and small businesses. Entities do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County but must meet all of Allegheny County's contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capability to conduct the Contract Services.

Entities may collaborate and submit a joint Proposal in response to this RFP; however, one of the collaborating entities must be identified as the lead agency in the Proposal. Entities may participate in more than one collaborative Proposal.

***What's important to us***

The Successful Proposer must fully participate in the design and planning of the Shelter with the expectation that, once a viable design and plan are established, the Successful Proposer will implement the service upon DHS approval. The Shelter must be a safe environment, open 24/7, year-round with no barriers for entry beyond safety considerations. The Shelter must be accessible and provide services during the day. The Successful Proposer must be committed to a participatory process, be open to partnerships with other providers for ancillary services, and above all, put the needs of the target population, as describe in sections one and two of this RFP, at the forefront.

***What we don't want***

We do not want a new Shelter that serves individuals who are already being served at existing shelters. The new Shelter must be designed to engage and serve individuals who are otherwise opting to live on the streets.

***Timeline***

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions is Thursday, December 14, 2017.  
Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, December 21, 2017.  
Proposers will be notified of their selection status by March 2018.

***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.

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

## Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP

The reasons why people are living on the streets or are chronically homeless can be quite complex. Research suggests that the problem originates in: undiagnosed mental health disorders, increasing substance use, the lack of affordable housing for people living on a fixed income, rising utility rates, increasing poverty in inner city neighborhoods, and the lack of a livable minimum wage. These societal conditions have forced many of our most vulnerable citizens to live in the streets.

After a year-long community planning process, the HAB approved a new five-year plan – *Allegheny County Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*<sup>1</sup> – in July 2017. One of its key strategic initiatives is to provide access to a year-round, low-barrier emergency shelter, meaning that the shelter accepts people as they are and does not turn people away for reasons such as alcohol/drug use or mental health challenges, for example. While part of this initiative is to make sure all shelters in the Continuum of Care (CoC) have low barriers to entry and focus their staff on rapidly returning shelter residents to permanent housing, a critical piece of the initiative is to expand the Winter Shelter services to 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the entire year.

Allegheny County's current system of emergency shelters cannot meet the demand for low-barrier beds. Currently, the County, through DHS, supports a Winter Shelter with two locations (one for men and one for women) in downtown and uptown Pittsburgh with a total maximum capacity of approximately 200 (with a nightly average of 145 people). The Winter Shelter operates 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. between November 15 and March 15, with occasional additional dates due to severe weather. In addition to a congregate sleeping area, the two Winter Shelter locations contain a kitchen area, showers and restrooms. They are easily accessible for police departments, fire departments and outreach workers from other homeless shelters to bring individuals to the locations for the night. The Winter Shelter provides a warm place for the homeless population who normally live on the streets and do not utilize one of the other existing emergency shelters. It also provides food, winter clothing, and basic medical care for its occupants. The Winter Shelter is operated in temporary spaces that have other uses during the day, requiring all clients to leave each morning with their possessions.

From November 15, 2016 to March 31, 2017,<sup>2</sup> the following data was collected about individuals using the Winter Shelter:

- 1,026 individuals (803 men and 222 women) stayed at the Winter Shelter. That is a 189 percent increase from the year before when the shelter was only open on 45 nights (for severe weather only).
- The maximum number of men on any one night was 185 men and the average per night was 115 men. The maximum number of women on any one night was 51 and the average per night was 30. Viewed together, the two Winter Shelter locations served on average 145 people per night, with the maximum on one night reaching 211.
- Ten percent of clients stayed for 2 days or less; 40 percent stayed for 60 days or longer.
- Thirty-six percent of the Winter Shelter clients self-reported having a substance abuse problem and 40 percent reported a mental health problem. DHS records show that 23 percent of these clients had received drug or alcohol services and 32 percent had received mental health services

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442457208>

<sup>2</sup> The Winter Shelter stayed open additional days in 2017 because of severe winter weather.

at some point in the two years prior to enrolling in the Winter Shelter. An additional five percent began to receive drug and alcohol services and an additional five percent began to receive mental health services during or after their participation in the Winter Shelter.

- Where they came from: Of the 1,026 Winter Shelter clients, 66 percent self-reported coming to Winter Shelter from “a place not meant for habitation” (e.g., the street) and 23 percent reported coming from a different emergency shelter.<sup>3</sup> Four percent said they had been staying at a family member or friend’s home. In comparison, of individuals staying at other shelters in the homeless system at the same time, only 11 percent reported coming from a place not meant for habitation and 16 percent reported staying at a family member or friend’s home prior.
- Where they exited to: Unfortunately, upon exit, 79 percent of Winter Shelter clients self-reported they were returning to a place not meant for habitation and one percent exited shelter for jail. Data from the DHS Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) shows that 74 individuals (seven percent of Winter Shelter clients) moved into a regular shelter within 60 days of the Winter Shelter closing.
- Point-in Time: The winter Point-in-Time (PIT) count, conducted one night at the end of January 2017, found 53 people “unsheltered” (living on the street) and 195 at the Winter Shelter. Assuming the individuals at the Winter Shelter would have been on the street otherwise, that is 249 individuals. In August 2017, Street Outreach teams conducted a summer PIT count that found 205 “unsheltered” individuals. This indicates that the Winter Shelter was highly successful at keeping people off the streets during the cold months.

These data and analyses will be used during the planning process to determine the appropriate size and services for the new Shelter being sought through this RFP. The Winter Shelter appears to serve a greater proportion of street homeless than the shelter system overall. Some of the 1,014 Winter Shelter clients, however, may have been able to be served within other shelters. The new Shelter should attempt to identify for service the most at-risk individuals who are not or cannot access services otherwise. This could be accomplished through a combination of referrals from Street Outreach workers and DHS data analysis to identify high-risk clients.

The goal of the proposed Shelter is to provide this hard-to-serve chronically (or at risk of chronic) homeless population all the services it needs to help them secure permanent housing, while eliminating the barriers that have historically prevented them from seeking shelter. Providing safe shelter significantly reduces the risks faced by people experiencing homelessness who would otherwise be on the streets. By expanding the services currently offered by our Winter Shelter to a 24/7 year-round Shelter, we expect to build stronger engagement capacity and reduce repeated discharges from and readmissions to shelter, which can disrupt case management activities that are critical to helping clients to secure permanent housing.

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<sup>3</sup> This self-report may be exaggerated. HMIS data indicates that only 21 Winter Shelter clients were enrolled in a different emergency shelter at all during the 60 days prior to the Winter Shelter opening. During the four months it was open, 125 Winter Shelter clients also stayed at some point in a different shelter, either before or after their Winter Shelter stay. Some used the Winter Shelter until they could get a spot in a regular shelter.



## Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS's Bureau of Homeless Services is seeking a Successful Proposer to partner with DHS and the HAB to plan and implement a 24/7 low-barrier emergency Shelter for high-needs street homeless to replace the seasonal Winter Shelter.

DHS will finalize specific details and requirements of the Shelter through the collaborative partnership. If Phase One of the process (Planning) concludes with a viable plan, DHS presumes the Successful Proposer will remain involved in Phase Two (Implementation) as the contracted provider of the Shelter and its services.

### 2.1. Target Population

The Shelter will seek to serve the population of hard-to-serve chronically (or at risk of chronic) street homeless individuals who currently use the Winter Shelter but tend not to seek services at other year-round shelters due in part to their rules, curfew limitations, individuals' past experiences, the need to remove all possessions during the day, and other concerns. It also will seek to serve individuals and couples that avoid all shelters, opting instead to sleep outside or in places not meant for human habitation. (This target population will henceforth be referred to as clients).

An implementation challenge will be to develop a process to divert those that could be served elsewhere in the homeless system or that have options to avoid entering the homeless system altogether. DHS will collaborate closely with the Successful Proposer to design an intake process that accomplishes this while keeping access to the Shelter for the target population as easy and as close to no barrier as possible.

### 2.2. Phase One: Planning

In close collaboration with DHS, the Successful Provider will:

- Become familiar with national best practices and exemplary shelters in other locales
  - This might involve conference calls to other shelters and/or site visits<sup>4</sup>
- Finalize answers to outstanding Shelter program design questions, such as:
  - Do men and women need separate shelter buildings or can both be accommodated safely in one facility?
  - As part of the target population described above, how can the Shelter best meet needs of specific sub-populations, such as:
    - LGBTQ community
    - Clients with pets
    - Clients unable to stay in congregate settings
    - Couples/clients with partners of any gender
    - Clients with severe/debilitating mental health needs
    - Youth

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<sup>4</sup> A relevant model nationally is the Navigation Center ( <http://www.ecs-sf.org/programs/navcenter.html>) first piloted in San Francisco, CA. It has since been replicated in Seattle, WA and could provide important lessons learned and best practices for this initiative.

- Clients with active substance use disorders
  - What are the core services that are essential to the Shelter function and must be provided by the Successful Proposer?
  - What complementary services should be available during the day (not necessarily provided by the Successful Proposer)? DHS does not foresee these services being part of this contract award but rather sees an opportunity to explore co-location and collaboration with services that pertain to the target population. Some possibilities include:
    - Coordinated Entry (Allegheny Link) satellite
    - Street Outreach hub
    - Transportation options
    - Medical and dental services
    - Behavioral health services and access to diagnoses required to enter Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)<sup>5</sup>
    - Mental health case management/service coordination
    - Sobering Center<sup>6</sup>
    - Overdose prevention outreach
    - Housing navigator services
  - What additional partners and funding sources are needed to provide the identified services?
- Identify Shelter space(s). Proposers are encouraged to propose location(s) for the Shelter but are not required to have an identified space at the time of the Proposal. The location must be accessible to the target population while not being disruptive to the neighborhood. See next section for some facility requirements.
  - The Successful Proposer must work with the City of Pittsburgh, the County, URA, community development corporations and developers to identify appropriate facilities
  - The Successful Proposer must participate in any community outreach/education activities as needed
- Seek, in partnership with DHS and the HAB, additional funding partners as needed for both facility build-out and day services unrelated to emergency shelter.

### 2.3 Phase Two: Operating the Shelter

The space(s) must be flexible to meet the number of “beds” needed at any given time. Based upon the Winter Shelter experience, the Shelter is expected to accommodate approximately 200 clients per day in a congregate setting at its peak in the winter. The norm, however, is expected to be approximately 75 clients per day. This will require an intake process, perhaps driven by Street Outreach referrals, that limits Shelter access to the target population. The Shelter could be located in more than one location; however, cost effectiveness will be an important factor in the planning phase.

The Shelter must be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. It will address the basic and immediate needs of homeless clients with the following amenities and services.

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<sup>5</sup> This could be modeled after the Community Engagement Centers currently funded under the county’s Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI) grant.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.nationalsobering.org/>

## A. Facility

The facility in which the Shelter is located must include:

- Bathroom and showers
- Lockers and storage for belongings
- 24/7 food
- First Aid
- Accessibility to public transit
- Internet access
- Laundry facilities
- Clothing
- Phone and message center
- Mailing address
- Space for collaborating service providers
- Office space for staff to work and to meet with clients in private
- Pet accommodations<sup>7</sup>

## B. Services

The Shelter's services must include:

- Diversion services: Shelter staff must provide diversion services by working with clients to resolve their housing crisis without entering the Shelter, if possible. This might include: providing mediation with family, friends or a landlord; aiding with groceries or utilities; or connecting to programs for security deposit or rental assistance.
- Housing-focused case management: The primary purpose of services in the Shelter is helping clients to quickly obtain permanent housing. To do so, the Shelter must have case managers who provide clients with housing-focused case management. While services will be voluntary, case managers must be proactive in engaging and motivating clients to exit homelessness to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Each client will receive assistance with creating a plan for returning to housing within seven days of entering the Shelter. A space must be designated to provide case management that is as private as possible. During the day, the Shelter will be a place where clients can receive assistance resolving their housing crisis. This should include housing navigation assistance, computers for clients to conduct a housing search, guidance to obtain identification and other documents, and connections to public assistance, food stamps, social security, and other benefits.
- Collaboration with Coordinated Entry System (The Allegheny Link): Although DHS does not foresee requiring Coordinated Entry to access the Shelter, the Successful Proposer will ensure that clients connect to Coordinated Entry within three days of entering the Shelter to be assessed and to receive housing referrals.
- Support community efforts to rapidly return households to housing: The Successful Proposer must commit to operating the Shelter within the County's CoC crisis response system rather than as an autonomous, standalone program. The Successful Proposer will work closely with

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<sup>7</sup> Experiences in other jurisdictions has found the inability to stay with one's dog or to keep it safe is a serious impediment to convincing someone to come into a shelter from living on the street.

Rapid Re-housing (RRH), PSH and other service providers to ensure clients exit the Shelter for permanent housing as quickly as possible.

### **C. Environment**

The Shelter must follow the principles of Housing First<sup>8</sup> while providing adequate provisions to ensure the health and safety of all clients. The Shelter should have few rules, limited to those designed for the safety of the client and others. Entry to anyone who fits the target population will be denied only if the person presents a danger to self or others.

Experience in low barrier shelters in other jurisdictions has shown that strict rules and curfews often serve as an impediment to bringing in individuals who are chronically street homeless. The Shelter should strive to create a space and environment that would allow clients to come and go throughout the day and night with no curfew.

In addition, the Successful Proposer will create an explicitly welcoming environment for LGBTQ individuals and households. The Shelter will establish and implement written non-discrimination policies and staff training that align with Equal Access and Fair Housing regulations.<sup>9</sup>

The Successful Proposer also will be expected to operate the Shelter in a way that supports a positive relationship with the Shelter's neighbors.

### **D. Staffing and Staff Qualifications**

The Shelter's staff must be proactive in engaging everyone who enters, with the goal of helping individuals experiencing homelessness develop plans for returning to permanent housing quickly. The Shelter's staff must:

- Have previous experience working with homeless and low-income individuals
- Quickly assess and respond to a variety of situations, including medical emergencies, mental health issues, conflict resolution and intervention, as well as other emergencies
- Have direct work experience related to crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques and implementation, as well as a strong knowledge of social services, domestic violence, substance use disorders, HIV/AIDS and mental health resources for low-income individuals
- Use Motivational Interviewing and a Trauma-Informed approach to provide case management services focused on securing an appropriate alternative housing option as quickly as possible
- Enter all required data in HMIS in an accurate and timely manner
- Ensure the safety and security of residents

Proposers must propose a staffing team to fulfill the Shelter's goals and responsibilities. The final makeup of the staff will be developed and refined during the Phase One planning process.

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<sup>8</sup> See <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/housing-first/>

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.equalhousing.org/fair-housing-topics/lgbt-discrimination-and-hud-equal-access-rule/>

## **E. Data Collection and Reporting**

The Successful Proposer must enter data into HMIS within 48 hours of clients' entry into and exit from the Shelter. The Successful Proposer is also responsible for reviewing data in HMIS and submitting all reports within the HMIS system in alignment with the Allegheny County CoC *HMIS Policies and Procedures Manual* and written standards. Filling a critical role in the CoC, the Successful Proposer must participate actively in annual Point-in-Time counts and other initiatives to strengthen the CoC crisis response system.

## **F. Performance Outcome Goals**

Outcome goals for the Shelter are:

- 85% or more clients spend 30 days or less in the Shelter
- 5% or fewer involuntary terminations
- 85% or greater utilization of base units (the Shelter is expected to have a large number of overflow units as well to accommodate fluctuating need)
- 85% or more clients exit to permanent housing (including RRH or PSH, as defined by the HUD)
- 5% or less data missing in HMIS

### **2.4 Budget**

DHS expects to enter into an annual Agreement with the Successful Proposer to operate the Shelter. Allegheny County shall have the right to renew the term of the Agreement. The Agreement will pay a per diem of \$15 per client, but is not expected to exceed \$500,000, depending upon the results of the planning process and other funding sources that may be identified.

The award does not include funding for renovating or building out the Shelter space. However, if the space identified in Phase One does require work to become a useable Shelter space, DHS is committed to working closely with the Successful Proposer to identify private or other external funding to make that possible.

Before initiating the Agreement for operating the Shelter, DHS will need to approve a realistic operating budget provided by the Successful Proposer. It will include anticipated sources of funding beyond those available through this RFP. This may include funding from foundations or funding from private or other public sources that will support the cost of the Shelter.

## **Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria**

Proposers must meet the following evaluation criteria and must 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](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations). The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 100 points, as outlined in the following sections.

### **A. Organizational Experience (50 points possible)**

- Experience serving the target population, as described in the RFP (10 points)
- Experience running a low-barrier shelter or housing program. For those Proposers with current DHS contracts for homeless services, performance data will be reviewed during the selection process. (10 points)
- Experience in designing and implementing a program that moves people from homelessness to permanent housing (5 points)
- Experience working collaboratively with partners and funders to design and implement a program or initiative (5 points)
- Experience providing cultural competency trainings and other approaches to ensure staff is responsive to a diverse population (5 points)
- Track record for collaborating with community partners to deliver the wide range of services required to connect the target population to housing and to the services necessary for them to maintain housing (5 points)
- Track record working with Coordinated Entry or with a system of admissions to a service that prioritizes those with the highest level of need (5 points)
- Experience entering data into HMIS in an accurate and timely manner. For those Proposers with current DHS contracts for homeless services, HMIS performance data for existing programs will be reviewed during the selection process. (5 points)

### **B. Approach to Service Provision (40 points possible)**

- Approach to identifying a site(s) for the Shelter, including client access and neighborhood impact. If a Proposer already has a specific facility identified, it is described. (10 points)
- Proposed plan for collecting and integrating client/target population input into the design of the Shelter (5 points)
- Proposed plan for diversion services (5 points)
- Proposed plan for housing-focused case management (5 points)
- Approach to creating a welcoming, low-barrier environment as described in section two of this RFP (5 points)
- Approach to staffing to meet the requirements outlined in section 2.3, D, Staffing and Staff Qualifications, including proposed roles, responsibilities, qualifications and supervisory relationships (5 points)
- Proposed plan for recruiting qualified staff and training them in necessary skills such as Trauma-Informed care, Motivational Interviewing, mental health training (e.g., Mental Health First Aid) and other critical skills (5 points)

### **C. Financial Management (10 points possible)**

- Strong financial health, as evidenced by audits or other supporting financial documentation (5 points)
- Demonstrated history of fiscal and management capacity to manage program funds in a fiscally responsible manner. For those Proposers with current DHS contracts, fiscal management for existing programs will be reviewed during the selection process. (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](http://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
- d. Proposer should not send any attachments other than those listed above and on the Response Form.
- e. If you do not have audited financial reports for the last three years, you may submit other financial documentation that attest to the financial health of your organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing 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](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, December 21, 2017 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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 enter into an Agreement with any Proposers. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.
- b. Any Agreement originating from this RFP is subject to all of 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. The Successful Proposal will be posted online in the DHS Solicitations Archive after an Agreement has been fully executed by the County and the Successful Proposer(s).
- f. Proposers also should be aware that all documents and materials submitted in response to this RFP are subject to requests made pursuant to Pennsylvania's Right-To-Know Law and that the County may have to make submitted documents and materials available to a requestor after an award of an Agreement is made.

## **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 based on the evaluation criteria in Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria using the scale listed in Section 5.1 b.

### **5.1 Evaluation Model**

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. An Evaluation Committee will be formed by DHS and may consist of some or all of the following:
  - Content experts from within DHS, selected for their expertise and/or experience
  - Representatives of foundations, educational institutions, community and civic organizations, businesses and/or non-profit agencies
- 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 according to their 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. The Evaluation Committee members then will meet collectively to discuss the individual scores and evaluations of each committee member.



- d. DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have 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. The Evaluation Committee will score the oral presentation and add it to the Proposer's Proposal score. The oral presentation will be scored using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that an 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. At any time during the review process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
- f. The Evaluation Committee will submit their recommendation for award of an Agreement to the Director of DHS for his approval, who in turn will submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
- g. **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.**
- 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@allegchenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@allegchenycounty.us).

## 5.2 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
- 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](http://www.allegchenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations), available at [www.allegchenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.allegchenycounty.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 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 your organization 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 your organization will request 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](http://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](#)
- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County MWDBE 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](http://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.