

Allegheny County

Department of Human Services

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**Evaluation of a Predictive Risk Modeling Tool for Improving the
Decisions of Child Welfare Workers**

RFP ISSUED	December 1, 2015
QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL	Until December 23, 2015
RESPONSES (Q & A) POSTED ON WEBPAGE	Ongoing- Final Q&A Posted December 31, 2015
OPTIONAL PROPOSERS' CONFERENCE WEBINAR	<p>December 11, 2015 1:00-2:00 PM EST Please call in to (866)-770-8629, passcode 4890998</p> <p>Please also log-in to the webinar: http://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?sigKey=mymeetings&i=743086573&p=&t=c</p> <p>Meeting Number: 743086573 Meeting Passcode: None Meeting Host: TERRY LANE</p>
PROPOSALS DUE	January 4, 2016
ESTIMATED AWARD DECISION / NOTIFICATION	February, 2016
ESTIMATED START DATE	March, 2016

GLOSSARY

Agreement: The contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services.

Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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.

CYF: [The Allegheny County Department of Human Services] Office of Children, Youth and Families is responsible for protecting children from abuse and neglect, preserving families (whenever possible) and providing permanent, safe homes for children either by assuring safety within the child's own family, or by finding an adoptive home or another permanent setting for those children who cannot be reunified with their family. CYF provides a wide range of preventive, protective, supportive and direct services through caseworkers, case aides and other support staff, as well as a network of contracted agencies.

Data Warehouse: The DHS Data Warehouse is a central repository of social services data which allows DHS to track and report client demographic and service data across its program offices and beyond. The Data Warehouse contains approximately 1.25 billion records for more than one million distinct clients. It contains data from 29 data sources (internal and external to DHS), including child welfare, behavioral health, school districts, family support centers, criminal justice system and public benefits.

DHS: [The Allegheny County] Department of Human Services

KIDS: The Key Information and Demographic System (KIDS) is the electronic case record for clients of the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families.

MCID: Master Client Identification Number is a unique client identifier established upon interaction with a service included in the Data Warehouse.

PRM: Predictive Risk Modeling in the context of this solicitation refers to the application of automated algorithms to already collected (administrative) data. The objective is to stratify individuals based on the likelihood they will experience some adverse future event.

Proposal: The response submitted by a Proposer to this RFP.

Proposer(s): The entity or entities submitting a Proposal to the County in response to this RFP in an effort to become the Successful Proposer.

RFP: Request for Proposal.

Successful Proposer: Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

Purpose

Allegheny County, through its Department of Human Services (DHS), is soliciting Proposals for a process and impact evaluation of its child welfare Predictive Risk Modeling (PRM) tool. The purpose of the PRM tool is to improve the screening process/outcomes of calls related to suspected child maltreatment. Proposers may propose to conduct one or both of the evaluation components (process and impact).

Allegheny County intends to use the results of this solicitation to award up to two contracts to perform the evaluation for a total cost not to exceed \$200,000.

General Information about a Request for Proposal (RFP)

Allegheny County issues RFPs to identify Proposers with the ability to meet the identified needs and quality standards within specified program and funding guidelines. Evaluation criteria are included in an RFP (see Evaluation Criteria) to measure how well a Proposal meets these criteria. The County may request additional information and/or a presentation during the Proposal evaluation period. Following the evaluation period, an Agreement to provide the Contract Services may be awarded to the most qualified Proposer(s), that is, the Successful Proposer(s).

The issuance of this RFP does not obligate the County to enter into an Agreement with any Proposers.

Communication about this RFP

DHS is the "Issuing Office" for this RFP and is the sole point of contact for all questions and communication regarding this RFP. All communication about the RFP, including requests for additional information or clarification, should be submitted via email to: DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

All information about the RFP, including changes, clarifications and responses to Proposer questions, will be posted on the RFP website at: <http://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Current-Providers.aspx>

All questions and/or requests for clarification concerning this RFP must be submitted no later than **December 23, 2015** in order to guarantee a response on the RFP Website.

Eligibility

All entities are eligible for this solicitation, including but not limited to, government organizations, education organizations, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals. Evaluators with experience in the study of decision-making under risk, quasi-experimental methods in evaluation of field trials, and child welfare and human service evaluations are especially encouraged to submit a Proposal.

Organizations do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to be selected for a contract award but must meet all of Allegheny County's contractual requirements (available at: <http://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Current-Providers.aspx>) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capability to conduct the evaluation as described in the "Scope of Services" section of this RFP. Collaborative Proposals are encouraged but not required. Entities may collaborate on Proposals for the process evaluation, impact evaluation or both the process and impact evaluation.

Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (M/W/DBE) Requirements

This RFP contains requirements for Proposers to assist Allegheny County in meeting its M/W/DBE goal (all contracts and other business activities entered into by Allegheny County having overall goals of 13% for MBEs and 2% for WBEs). A listing of M/W/DBEs certified by Allegheny County and the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program can be found at <http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/mwdbe/index.aspx>

For more information about M/W/DBEs, please review the following. An M/W/DBE Participation Statement or Waiver Statement is **REQUIRED** with Proposal submission.

[MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)

[MWDBE Participation Statement](#)

[MWDBE Waiver Request](#)

Proposal Preparation Costs

The Proposer is responsible for all costs related to the preparation and submission of a Proposal. Allegheny County is not obligated, in any way, to pay any costs incurred.

BACKGROUND

About DHS

DHS was created in 1997 to consolidate the provision of human services across Allegheny County. It is the largest department within Allegheny County government. In addition to its Executive Office, DHS encompasses five program offices reporting to the Executive Deputy Director of Integrated Program Services (Behavioral Health; Children, Youth and Families; Community Services; Intellectual Disability; and the Area Agency on Aging) and three support offices (Administrative and Information Management Services; Community Relations; and Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation). Last year, DHS served more than 210,000 individuals (approximately one in six County residents) through an array of 1,700 distinct services.

DHS is responsible for providing and administering publicly-funded human services to Allegheny County residents and is dedicated to meeting these human service needs, particularly for the County's most vulnerable populations, through information exchange, prevention, early intervention, case management, crisis intervention and after-care services.

DHS provides a wide range of services, including: services for older adults; mental health and drug and alcohol services (includes 24-hour crisis counseling); child protective services; at-risk child development and education; hunger services; emergency shelters and housing for the homeless; non-emergency medical transportation; job training and placement for public assistance recipients and older adults; and services for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

DHS provides services to eligible individuals without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation, disability, familial status, military service, or religious, community or social affiliations.

About Predictive Analytics in Child Welfare at DHS

DHS's child welfare office, the Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF), receives over 10,000 child maltreatment calls (also known as referrals) per year, from both mandatory reporters (such as courts, police, school personnel and medical practitioners) and non-mandatory sources (e.g., families or anonymous sources). Each of these calls is evaluated by a call screening team (comprised of call screening staff, supervisor and manager), and a decision is made about whether further investigation of the call is warranted. If the investigation establishes sufficient grounds, the family's case can be "accepted for services" and appropriate services are provided on a regular basis. In a situation in which there are significant concerns about the child's safety, the child may be removed from home and placed in out-of-home care.

Given the high volume of calls and the potential impact of the decision on the child/family, call screeners do their best to access background records to assist in their decision-making process, but the process is time-consuming and unsystematic. Aside from the child's child welfare history, call screeners also are able to access a variety of administrative data sets such as County jail records, behavioral health service records, and involvement in public welfare and homelessness services. However, these data sets are just descriptive

and there is no mechanism by which call screening staff can sift through all these data sources and determine the relevance and impact of this information on a child's current risk. As a result, many calls are screened-out, when in fact there might be a situation of sufficient risk to warrant investigation. Many of these screened-out children/families are re-referred after a further episode.

In 2014, DHS issued an RFP to improve the delivery of services to its clients by using data to improve decision making. In December 2014, DHS began its partnership with a group of principal researchers from AUT Enterprises, Ltd., which includes the following researchers: Rhema Vaithianathan, Emily Putnam-Hornstein, Tim Maloney, Nan Jiang, Time Dare, Marianne Bitler and Eileen Gambrill. This group is currently engaged in Phase 2 of four phases to implement Predictive Risk Modeling (PRM) in child welfare operations. To date, data have been shared with AUT Enterprises, models have been developed and presented as options to DHS, and work has begun to develop the algorithms and incorporate PRM into existing DHS technology for use by frontline child welfare workers. Overall, the work is progressing on the timeline originally presented by the group and is scheduled to continue as planned, with full implementation occurring in 2016 and an evaluation completed by mid-2017.

About the PRM Tool

The subject of the evaluation is a PRM tool that will be made available in the child welfare case management system at the time of a referral. When a referral is received, the call screener enters identifying information (e.g., first name, last name, date of birth and gender). The PRM searches these identifiers to determine whether the child/family has an existing Master Client Identification Number (MCID), which would have been established upon *any* previous interaction with a service included in the Data Warehouse. An estimated 90 percent of clients who have been referred to CYF will have a previously-established MCID. Once the Data Warehouse identity is matched, a risk score is generated. The PRM tool's risk score attempts to capture the latent risk of a child having adverse outcomes and is based on a weighted average of up to 220 variables derived from mining a variety of historical administrative data about each client in a referral. A single risk score is generated for the referral based on the *maximum* risk score for any child included in the referral.

SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUESTED

DHS is seeking both a process evaluation and an impact evaluation of the PRM Tool. Proposers may submit a Proposal to conduct the process evaluation only, the impact evaluation only, or both the process and impact evaluations. **Proposers must be willing and able to work closely with the group of principal researchers who are implementing the PRM tool, including joint publication of results.**

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation will describe: 1) ways in which the PRM Tool modified the experience of CYF call screeners and other users; 2) the implications of its use for CYF practice and policy; and 3) perceptions and reactions by CYF leadership and the broader set of community partners. More specifically, the process evaluation *may* consider some or all of the following questions:

- How workers interpret and incorporate different displays of the same data into their assessments
- CYF frontline workers' sense of confidence in the information
- How using the PRM Tool changed the CYF business process and/or the length of time needed to make a decision
- How other partners (including CYF leadership and the Courts, i.e. – the Juvenile Section of the Family Division of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas) view and value the PRM tool

Impact Evaluation

The impact evaluation may consider some/all of the following questions:

- How did the tool change the screening decisions of call screeners?
 - Were some families with particular characteristics more/less likely to be screened in as a result of the screening tool?
- Did the tool increase or decrease unwarranted variation in screening decisions?
 - By individual screeners?
 - By call screeners as a group?
- Did the tool reduce or increase overall rate of calls “screened-in,” or referred by the call screener for further investigation?
- Did the tool reduce or increase disparities in screening outcomes?
 - Racial disparities
 - Economic disparities
 - Other disparities
- Did the tool decrease the number/rate of “bad” screen-outs? (e.g., families who were re-referred within a certain number of days of being screened out; fatalities or near fatalities among families screened out)
- Did it decrease unnecessary screen ins and investigations?

While the Successful Proposer might design an impact evaluation that presents the risk score visually in a variety of ways, DHS has ruled out having a control group in the evaluation (i.e. the evaluation will not compare a test group to a control group). The Successful Proposer may design an evaluation that isolates the impact of a variety of tools. For example, suppose that in one component of the trial, call screeners receive a detailed risk score (1 through 20) and in another component they receive scores of high, medium or low. In the first treatment, call screeners might treat scores of 16 and 20 differently, while in the second, they will be treated the same (since screeners would not be able to distinguish between a 16 and 20 in the category of high risk). Ideally, the evaluation would consider a variety of strategies.

Other potential methods might include using difference-in-difference or pre-post analysis conducted at the individual call screener level. That is, decisions made prior to the introduction of the PRM Tool could be compared with decisions made after the PRM Tool was introduced. This could be done for each call screener individually to account for individual variation in decision making. Because turnover among call screening staff is relatively low, and personnel are fairly stable, a reasonably long history of screening decisions will be available. DHS is seeking economical evaluation methods; lowest cost methods are preferred.

Outside of Scope

These evaluations should not be construed as a evaluations of the PRM modeling techniques themselves. These modeling approaches are undergoing a separate peer review and, as such, are not in the scope of this evaluation. Proposers should assume that the modeling approaches are high-quality, if not optimal.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

A complete Proposal must include all of the components listed below, submitted as a Word or PDF document (proposed pricing must be submitted in Excel). Use 1-inch margins, 12 point font and numbered pages. Single spacing is permissible. Please adhere to page limitations indicated below. Only required attachments may be included in your Proposal.

Proposals should directly address the standards and requirements included in this RFP and clearly demonstrate how the proposed services will meet or exceed those standards and requirements. Proposals must include the following sections, in correct order, and address the content provided further below, at a minimum. Failure to include any of the requested information may result in rejection of the Proposal.

Required Sections for Submission

1. Executive Summary (1 page limit)
2. Narrative (10 page limit)
3. Budget and Budget Narrative (2 page limit)
4. References (1 page limit) Provide the name, affiliation and contact information (include email address and telephone number) for three references who have direct knowledge of and can address the current and/or past experience of your organization relevant to the services sought through this RFP.
5. Required Attachments (*These forms are available on our website at [http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Solicitations-\(RFP/RFQ/RFI\).aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Solicitations-(RFP/RFQ/RFI).aspx))
 - a. Cover Page*
 - b. MWDBE Participation Statement form*
 - c. W9*
 - d. Vendor Creation Form*
 - e. CVs/resumes
 - f. Organizational chart

Narrative Content

1. Organizational Experience

- Describe your specific experiences in the study of decision-making under risk, quasi-experimental methods in evaluation of field trials, or child welfare and human service evaluations.
- Include information about the personnel who will be involved in the evaluation (including CVs/resumes and an organizational chart which will not be counted in the page limit)

2. Approach to Process and/or Impact Evaluation

(Please note: Proposers may submit a Proposal to conduct the impact evaluation, the process evaluation or both evaluations. If submitting a Proposal to conduct both evaluations, please complete this section separately for each evaluation.)

- Describe how you would approach the process and/or impact evaluation.
- Describe how you will manage the evaluation, including information on how you will work with self-selected collaborators, the existing research team, and the Allegheny County team.
- Describe in as much detail as you can the analytic methods you would look to utilize in assessing the impact of the PRM Tool in practice.
- Describe the perceived requirements/limitations/challenges.
- Describe a plan for assessing validity/strength of results.

Budget and Budget Narrative

The page limit pertains to the budget narrative only. There is no page limit on the budget submission and the Proposer's financial audits.

- Provide a detailed 1 year budget for each type of evaluation that you are proposing to provide in separate Excel documents. Please note that preference will be given to Proposals with a low cost evaluation design.
- If your organization's Proposal to provide the component services described in the Scope of Services Section of this RFP will exceed the amount that DHS has budgeted for an Agreement for the Scope of Services, provide a justification for higher costs in your organization's Proposal.
- Include a budget narrative that explains each item of the proposed budget.

- Please include your most recent financial audit and other documentation providing evidence of your organizational stability. If your organization is for-profit and this information is not publically available, please indicate this in the budget narrative.

SCORING AND SELECTION PROCESS

Scoring Criteria

The narrative and budget sections will be evaluated on a scale of 100 points as detailed below.

Narrative (80 points)

Organizational Experience (50 points)

Approach of Process and/or Impact Evaluation (30 points)

Budget and Budget Narrative (20 points)

Selection Process

DHS will use a formal evaluation process to select the Successful Proposer, including review of the Proposal and additional information/presentation as requested. DHS may contact individuals or entities with whom the Proposer has had dealings in the past, regardless of whether or not they are included as references in the Proposal.

DHS will perform an initial screening of all Proposals received. For a Proposal to be eligible for evaluation, the Proposal must be:

- **Received from the Proposer by the due date/time**
- **Properly signed by the Proposer**
- **Properly formatted and include required forms and sections**

Proposals that do not meet the initial screening are subject to rejection without further evaluation.

After the initial screening has occurred, the evaluation process for Proposals is as follows:

- DHS will designate a committee to review and evaluate all Proposals submitted in response to this RFP. The evaluation committee may consist of some or all of the following individuals:
 - County employees/contractors
 - Representatives of foundations, educational institutions, community and civic organizations, businesses and/or non-profit agencies
 - Individuals selected for subject matter/content expertise or experience, or by virtue of other relevant experience/knowledge
- The committee will evaluate the Proposals based upon the Scoring Criteria listed above.
- The County shall have exclusive discretion to shortlist a small number of Proposals receiving the highest or most satisfactory evaluations for more extensive review.
- If determined necessary, DHS may contact the Proposer for the purpose of clarifying any ambiguities in the Proposal, requesting Proposal modifications, or discussing Budget modifications.

Oral Presentations and Site Visits

DHS may create a short-list of Proposers who will be invited to give an oral presentation. In that case, short-listed Proposers will be notified of the time and location, and will be provided with an agenda or topics for discussion. Questions asked during oral presentations or site visits will be for the purpose of

clarifying the scope and content of the written Proposal. Oral presentations will be used scored using the same criteria outlined in the Scoring Section of this RFP.

Final Award Process

Following the review process, which may include oral presentations and/or negotiations, the committee will tabulate and submit an award recommendation to the DHS Director (the County reserves the right to recommend that none of the Proposals be selected). The DHS Director will then issue a recommendation to the County Manager who will make the final determination concerning award of an Agreement.

NOTHING HEREIN SHALL BE CONSTRUED OR INTERPRETED IN ANY WAY AS OBLIGATING THE COUNTY TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH ANY PROPOSER. THE COUNTY RESERVES THE RIGHT AT ALL TIMES NOT TO AWARD OR ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR THE SCOPE OF SERVICES FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Proposals must be submitted by email to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us, **no later than 3:00 p.m. EST on January 4, 2016**. Proposals received after this time will not be accepted. The County reserves the right to extend or postpone the date and time for RFP activities; in the event of a change, the information will be posted on the website at [http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Solicitations-\(RFP/RFQ/RFI\).aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Solicitations-(RFP/RFQ/RFI).aspx)

If necessary, attachments may be sent via U.S. Mail, Courier or hand-delivery, by the date/time above, to:
Maria Wallace
Allegheny County Department of Human Services
One Smithfield Street – Suite 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2221

You will receive an email confirmation of receipt of your Proposal. Please contact us (via email or by calling Maria Wallace at (412) 350-7144 if you do not receive an email confirmation.

To be considered, the Proposal must include all of the specified information. DHS may request additional information and/or conduct investigation as necessary to determine the Proposer's ability to provide the requested service. This additional information may become part of the County's final award decision-making process.

All Proposals are the property of the County and may become part of any subsequent Agreement. Additionally, the Successful Proposer's proposal will be posted online in the DHS Solicitations Archive.

CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Agreement Terms and Conditions

The Successful Proposer will enter into an Agreement with the County of Allegheny, on behalf of DHS, for performance of the Scope of Services specified in this RFP and set forth in the Proposal. The Scope of Services specified in the RFP shall become the Contracted Services. The Successful Proposer will not enter into subcontracts for any of the services listed in the Scope of Services section of this RFP without obtaining prior approval by DHS. The Successful Proposer agrees to accept full responsibility for the quality and quantity of any work performed as part of the Scope of Services by any of its approved subcontractors. Information about contracting with the County on behalf of DHS and the standard terms and conditions for

County contracts for services for DHS which will be included in the Agreement can be found on the DHS Website at:

<http://allegHENYcounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Current-Providers.aspx>

HIPAA Compliance

DHS is a “covered entity” under the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The Successful Proposer must comply with HIPAA requirements.

CYBER Security

A significant portion of DHS business activities and related billing carried out under this RFP are done through information management systems or tools, including email. Proposers should meet the minimum computer specifications beginning on page 14 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#) and should make sure their computers, laptops and other electronic devices have sufficient security software and settings to minimize the risk of a breach of information. In addition, the Proposer should have policies and procedures in place to assure that their electronic devices are physically secure when not in use (e.g., locked in a vehicle trunk, password protected, etc.).

Conflict of Interest

By submitting a Proposal, the Proposer certifies and represents to the County that the Proposer has not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient’s decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Non-Discrimination

By submitting a Proposal, the Proposer agrees to not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, consumer 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 of any individual or independent contractor or because of the disability of an individual with whom the person is known to have an association or on any other basis prohibited by federal, state or local law.