

**Allegheny County
Department of Human Services
Request for Qualifications Q&A
RFQ for Recruiting Talent for DHS**

March 23, 2023

1. Would these positions be full-time?

Yes

2. After reviewing the prerequisites for submitting an application we noticed that there is a requirement to have a local office in Allegheny County. Is this a strict requirement as our firm places in all 50 states, with two main offices (NJ & NY) and recruitment hubs throughout the country.

Yes, this is a requirement.

3. In reference to the requirements on Page 4 of the RFQ, to maximize the county outreach for recruiting services, would it be acceptable to have a physical office located in a neighboring county to Allegheny County?

No, you must have a physical office location in Allegheny County.

4. We are a California-based located company. Is it mandatory to have a Physical office location in Allegheny County?

Yes.

5. What would be the number of awards you intend to give (approximate number)?

We expect to award two to four Qualified Applicants for each role type (Direct Service and Administrative Support).

6. Please provide us with an estimated or NTE budget allocated for this contract.

This is an ongoing service that does not have a defined budget. DHS will consider all proposed costs for reasonableness and will negotiate the final budget and contract terms with the Successful Applicant(s). Staff will be identified and placed according to our needs and at our discretion.

7. What is the tentative start date of this engagement?

That is to be determined with the Successful Applicant(s) and contingent upon completion of the County's internal Executive Action process and negotiation of the final contract terms and budget.

8. What is the work location of the proposed candidates?

The work locations will be at DHS's office locations in Allegheny County. Remote and/or hybrid arrangement are NOT possible at this time.

9. Is this a new contract or are there any incumbents? If there is an incumbent, could you please let us know the incumbent name and pricing and are the incumbents eligible to submit the proposal again?

Yes, this is a new contract.

10. Are there any pain points or issues with the current vendor(s)?

No, we have not solicited this service before.

11. Could you please share the previous spending on this contract, if any?

No, we have not solicited this service before.

12. Is there any mandatory subcontracting requirement for this contract? If yes, Is there any specific goal for the subcontracting?

No, there are no mandatory subcontracting requirements outside of the County's Minority, Women, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) requirements. Please see blow.

Allegheny County has MWDDBE goals of 13% participation for Minority Business Enterprises and 2% participation for Women Enterprises and expects that Successful Applicants will make a "good faith effort" in assisting the County in meeting these goals. The good faith effort means to pass on those percentages to the organizations you subcontract with for inventory and services such as office supplies and janitorial services. Only organizations that are certified meet those percentages. If you do not meet those percentages, you should request a waiver. For more information, visit the [Allegheny County Equity and Inclusion Department](#) website.

Allegheny County has VOSB goals of 5% participation and expects that Successful Applicants will make a "good faith effort" in assisting the County in meeting this goal. The good faith effort means to pass on those percentages to the organizations you subcontract with for inventory and services such as office supplies or janitorial services. If a Proposer is successful in contracting with a VOSB, they must include a copy of the VOSB's DD 214 discharge form. If you do not meet this percentage, you should request a waiver.

13. How many positions were filled in the previous contract? How many requisitions will be required per year or throughout the contract?

We have not solicited this service before, and the requisitions required per year through the contract is too be determined.

14. If the proposed candidates are not available at the time of award, will the agency allow us to provide replacement personnel with similar or more skill sets?

We are not seeking proposed candidates at this time. Applicants must first apply and become Qualified Applicants to be eligible to propose candidates.

15. Can we provide hourly rate ranges for the given positions?

No, these are full-time salaried positions with starting salary ranges provided in the RFP.

16. Is it entirely onsite work or can it be done remotely to some extent / Does the services need to be delivered onsite or is there a possibility for remote operations and performance?

Yes. Remote and/or hybrid arrangement are NOT possible at this time.

17. Are resumes required at the time of proposal submission? If yes, Do we need to submit the actual resumes for proposed candidates or can we submit the sample resumes? How many candidate resumes can we submit per position?

We are not seeking proposed candidates at this time. Upon the completion of the negotiation and contracting process, we will notify Qualified Applicants of specific positions for which we are seeking candidates and the maximum number of candidates that may be submitted for each position.

March 29, 2023

18. Could you please provide the list of holidays?

Holidays and the number of days given off may differ slightly depending on the calendar year and depending on which position a candidate is hired for. A list of holidays and days off will be sent to Qualified Applicants to share with their Successful Referrals at the appropriate time.

19. Are there any mandated Paid Time Off, Vacation, etc.?

Yes, positions will include an attractive benefits package, including holidays, vacation and paid time off.

20. In your RFQ, you mentioned that you're looking for creative solutions through community partners to build up and ramp up staffing in Pennsylvania. Are you only looking for firms based in Pennsylvania, and if not, what sort of community ties are you looking for applicants to have with the community in Allegheny County?

To be eligible for the opportunity, organizations must have a physical office location in Allegheny County, as outlined in the RFQ. While it is not required for the organization to be based in Allegheny County, a physical office location is mandatory. We encourage applicants who are not based in Allegheny County to identify a partner in the area to fulfill this requirement.

We are seeking to partner with individuals or organizations who can refer potential candidates interested in direct services roles, such as caseworker positions. We're open to collaborating with a broad range of organizations beyond traditional recruiting firms, such as nonprofits experienced in placing individuals in full-time work.

21. How would recruiting organizations coordinate with the complexities of the Civil Service system and what should they know about the process?

The Civil Service process is not necessarily complex, but it does take more time than a typical hiring process. Therefore, we need people who can help their referrals stay engaged and not lose interest during the longer hiring process. The process involves candidates applying through a state portal, which qualifies them based on their resume and responses to questions. Once qualified, the state provides the county with a list of applicants, and interviews are conducted to make offers. Referrals must remain engaged throughout the longer process, which takes about 6-8 weeks from posting to offer. Further information can be found on the State's website.

22. What have been the biggest barriers to recruiting and retaining staff across the different positions described in the RFQ?

One of the biggest challenges is that many of these jobs require in-person work and are not remote or hybrid. Additionally, many of the jobs are emotionally challenging and require a great deal of emotional labor. However, these jobs also offer great rewards for those who find the work important and fulfilling.

Another challenge is that many people may not be aware of the breadth of jobs available in county government. While many people know about caseworker positions, there are also opportunities in fields such as finance, information technology and data analytics. These are union and Civil Service positions that offer good benefits, holidays and pensions. However, we need to improve our communication about these benefits to attract more candidates.

23. Is it correct to say that the successful agency would use your referral tracker to make candidate referrals, and candidates would apply through the relevant portal (Great Lakes, NeoGov, Allegheny County Civil Service, etc.)? Would this process be linked together?

Yes, that's correct. Once a candidate is in our referral tracker, they can apply through the appropriate portal for the position. If we hire them for any position within about a year, we will consider it a success. We don't require a probationary period or that you guarantee your work, unlike some agencies. Our goal is to be more generous with our definition of success.

24. What are the requirements for vendors or companies interested in becoming vendors for Allegheny County? Do we need to submit any additional documents or forms besides the response form and W-9? And are there any other agencies or forms we should be aware of before pursuing procurement opportunities with the county?

To apply, you only need to fill out the Response Form, provide a W-9, show proof of a physical office in Allegheny County, and complete MWDBE and VSOB documentation. If selected, you will be subject to our contracting process, which requires additional documentation as briefly detailed in Section 7, but the required attachments mentioned previously are all you need to complete at the time of submission.

April 6, 2023

25. Can we submit nonlocal candidates who are open to relocating. If yes, will the county pay relocation charges?

Yes, however DHS does not typically pay for relocation costs except in the case of certain senior positions.

26. What is the average length of time it currently takes DHS to fill direct role positions and administrative positions?

8-10 weeks depending on the position.

27. What does the hiring process look like for DHS currently?

Generally, candidates are qualified either internally or by the state for civil service positions. Interviews are conducted and individuals are selected by a Hiring Manager. Provisional offers are made contingent of verification of eligibility (residence, drug test, background check, etc.) and finalized following those verifications.

28. Does DHS currently have recruitment staff in place for the current hiring practices?

No.

29. If yes, does DHS want the awarded agency to interview the current staff and use them?

Please see the response to question 28.

30. How many recruiters does DHS have running the current number of open positions?

None.

30. Who makes the final decision on extending an offer to a qualified referral?

DHS Hiring Managers will make the final decision. Offers may require additional approvals depending on salary, position level, etc.

31. Who extends the offer to the referral? The awarded agency or DHS?

DHS.

32. In order for this program to be successful, we believe a hybrid model of fixed-rate and fee-service schedule will be needed. For instance, having a fixed base price for stability of staffing on behalf of the awarded agency will be needed. Then having a lower fee-service such as 12% for successful attainment of those positions seems reasonable. Otherwise, the awarded agency may be sending several qualified candidates and DHS may close the positions leaving the awarded agency with the true cost of providing the service not being reimbursable. Would it be acceptable to provide a hybrid payment structure?

DHS envisions a pay on success model. However, Applicants may propose other structures.

33. How would the awarded agency know that a staff person "starts work" for our invoicing to occur?

DHS will communicate with Qualified Applicants when a Successful Referral has begun working. We expect Qualified Applicants would also be notified by their Successful Referral.

34. What defines "starts work" on page 5?

The selection of a Successful Referral by DHS and completion of all the steps necessary to begin working as a full-time employee.

35. Does the DHS hiring manager intend to interview qualified referrals that are sent to DHS by the awarded agency?

Yes. In the case of Civil Service, Hiring Managers will schedule interviews with candidates qualified by the state. For other positions, the decision on which candidates to interview will be at the discretion of the Hiring Manager(s).

36. What is the process for the Civil Service test currently?

More information is available here:

<https://www.employment.pa.gov/additional%20info/apply/pages/applying-to-an-exam.aspx>

37. How will the awarded agency know if the position is Civil Service eligible?

The positing for each position will clearly indicate this.

38. Will the awarded agency have access to the Civil Service Application Portal to view potential candidates and to see if referrals have taken the exam as the awarded agency continues to engage them through the steps of the process?

No. The State runs this part of the process, and neither DHS nor the Qualified Applicant will have visibility into it.

39. If a person passes a Civil Service exam previously but didn't apply - will the awarded agency be able to identify those candidates in the Civil Service Portal and be able to engage them?

Civil Service exams are to be completed in accordance with a job application. Candidates must apply for Civil Service positions and appear on a list of qualified applicants before DHS can interview them. Please also see the response to question 38.

40. Is the awarded agency required to interview every candidate that has passed the Civil Service exam? If so, is there a certain requirement, such as the top three scores?

DHS must interview candidates before they can be hired and will do so at its discretion. Qualified Applicants are not required to interview candidates.

41. Would the awarded agency be required to use Bamboo HR or can they use their own Applicant Tracking System?

Yes, Qualified Applicants will be required to use Bamboo HR.

42. Which party would complete the onboarding/training?

DHS.

43. If more than one agency is awarded the agreement - how will jobs be distributed? There is a concern that multiple agencies may be fighting to attract the same candidates.

All Qualified Applicants will receive notifications of postings for the type of jobs they are qualified to recruit for. With DHS's workforce approaching 1500, we anticipate there will always be vacancies to fill for both Direct Service Roles and Administrative Support Roles.

44. What if the awarded agencies refer the same candidate? Who will receive the referral fee?

Referrals will be credited on a first-in basis. The Applicant Tracking System will determine which Qualified Applicant submitted the candidate first, and the Successful Referral will belong to that Qualified Applicant.

45. Our agency is part of a national management structure under one management umbrella. Our agency is a sister company to one of the current contracted Allegheny entities. The sister company is located in Allegheny County, but our staffing company currently has all remote employees with the Director having a physical office space at the headquarters. The Director is able to be housed in a physical space within our sister organization to have a physical location within Allegheny County. Would that be permitted?

The Applicant, or one of the parties in a collaborative response must have a physical office in Allegheny County.

46. Please explain the payment process (invoicing, automatic generation of fees, etc).

Payment terms will be contained in the contract awarded to successful applicants. In general, DHS remits payments monthly based upon invoices which are entered into a billing database.

April 13, 2023

47. We recently submitted a response to an RFQ - Staff Augmentation Services for Information Technology, Data Management and Data Analysis - from Allegheny County Department of Human Services in Feb 2023 which included the required MEDBE and VOSB Documentation. Are we required to submit the MWDBE and VOSB Documentation again for this RFQ?

No, you are not required to submit MWDBE and VOSB documentation again if you have submitted it with a recent proposal (within the last two years).

48. What documentation will be acceptable as 'Certification of an office location in Allegheny County'?

Please provide any form of documentation that shows proof of a physical office location in Allegheny County. This information will be verified upon selection and must be accurate to enter an Agreement.

49. Is this a new requirement or an existing requirement?

This RFQ is for a new service.

50. How many incumbents are there performing this work?

There are no incumbents.

51. What are the incumbent names, contract #s, and revenues received under the incumbent contract?

Please review the responses to questions 49 and 50.

52. How many FTEs were on the previous contract? Has the PWS Changed?

There are no previous contracts for this work.

53. What did you like about the previous contract? Dislikes?

Please see the response to question 53.

54. What is the estimated budget for this opportunity?

Please see the response to question six.

55. If we have a teaming agreement with a subcontractor, does the subcontractor's experience count as experience for the prime?

Yes, we are interested in the experience of the team responding to the RFQ including the lead agency and any identified subcontractors.

April 20, 2023

56. What are your Key Performance Indicators?

We do not have any Key Performance Indicators at this time besides the intended outcomes and requirements stated in the RFQ.

57. If applicable, who is the incumbent for these services and for how long have they served the County in this capacity?

Please see the response to question 50.

58. What are the County's current rates and markups for the positions listed in the solicitation?

There are no previous contracts for this work, thus, there are no current rates or markups.

59. What is the anticipated annual and total spend for this contract?

Please see the response to question six.

60. Is it required that we subcontract in order to bid on this solicitation?

Please see the response to question 12.

61. How many awards does the County anticipate making?

Please see the response to question five.

62. Are respondents required to bid on all positions in order to be deemed responsive?

No. Respondents may apply for qualification to provide Direct Service roles, Administrative Support roles or both.

63. If not all-or nothing, will bidding on only select positions negatively impact respondents' evaluation score?

No. Please also see the response to question 62.

64. Will the County provide detailed job descriptions for the positions listed in the solicitation?

Yes.

65. What specific background checks and/or drug screens are required of the temporary staff?

Please see the response to question 67.

66. To ensure FCRA compliance, it is our company's policy to provide clients with an attestation of completion of background check pursuant to client's requirements, but not the actual results. Will the County accept letters of attestation in lieu of actual background check results?

No.

67. Will respondents be allowed to pass through the costs for background checks and drug screens (at no additional markup) to the County?

Background checks and required drug screen will be handled by the County at no cost to the candidate. However, there are other required Pennsylvania Act Clearances candidates must obtain themselves, including Act 33, 34 and 114, depending on the position.

68. Will respondents be disqualified or adversely impacted during the evaluation process if they were to submit exceptions to the County?

Applicants must submit a complete application following all requirements as described in Section 4.2 of the RFQ.

For further details on how Applications will be evaluated, please see Section 5: How DHS Will Evaluate Your Application.

69. With respect to Affordable Care Act (ACA) costs, would the County prefer these charges as a separate line item on the invoices, or instead incorporated directly into each respondent's proposed rates?

All proposed costs in the pricing fee structure will be considered for reasonableness, and the final budget and contract terms will be negotiated with the Successful Applicants.

70. Does the County accept remote online notarized signatures and secure remote online documents?

The County may accept remote online notarized signatures and secure remote documents in the appropriate situation, however, for the purposes of this RFQ, all documents must be submitted through the stated appropriate portals.

71. We are a certified MWBE, can we satisfy the participation goals as the prime?

You may count yourself towards the one of goals. If you are already certified as a Woman Business Enterprise, you must make a good faith effort to meet the Minority Business Enterprise goal. Conversely, if you are already certified as a Minority Business Enterprise, you must make a good faith effort to meet the Woman Enterprise goal. If you are registered as both, you must choose one to count towards the contract goals. You cannot cover both.