



Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
**Request for Qualifications**

**Student Assistance Program (SAP)  
Providers**

**RFQ Posting:**

Friday, November 19, 2021

**Information Session:**

1 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, December 17, 2021

**Deadline for Questions:**

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 14, 2022

**Submission Deadline:**

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 21, 2022

**Estimated Decision/Notification:**

March 2022

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

# Contents

Acronyms and Definitions

The RFQ at a Glance

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFQ

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

Section 3: Application Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Section 4: How to Submit an Application

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Application

Section 6: What Happens after an Applicant is Qualified

Section 7: Contract Requirements for Qualified Applicants

Appendix A: Cost Reimbursable Services for SAP

Appendix B: Approved Supplemental Trainings

# Acronyms and Definitions

Unless the context indicates otherwise, the following capitalized words are defined as follows for purposes of this RFQ:

1. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Qualified Applicant to provide the Contract Services
2. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3. Applicant: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting an Application in response to this RFQ
4. Application: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFQ
5. CANS: Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment, a multi-purpose screening tool used to support decision-making and identify unaddressed behavioral needs
6. CIPS: Client Information and Payment System, a DHS system for reporting and billing
7. Contract Services: The specific services which the Qualified Applicant agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFQ as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
8. DDAP: [Pennsylvania) Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs
9. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
10. JQSR: Joint Quarterly State Reports
11. OBH: [DHS] Office of Behavioral Health
12. PBPS: Performance-Based Prevention System
13. Postvention: School-based crisis counseling
14. Qualified Applicant: The Applicants(s) qualified by the County and the Court to provide the Contract Services
15. Response Form: The Word document in which Applicants respond to requested information about this RFQ
16. RFQ: Request for Qualifications
17. SAP: Student Assistance Program, a program that places SAP Liaisons in school districts to help school personnel identify students with drug and alcohol and/or mental health issues that pose a barrier to student success and to help students overcome these barriers so that they may achieve, remain in school and graduate
18. SAP Core Team: A group composed of a SAP Liaison and school staff that identifies children in need of behavioral health supports and helps them to access school and community services to address their needs
19. SAP Groups: Structured prevention programs facilitated by the SAP Liaison intended to provide drug and alcohol and mental health information to students
20. SAP Liaison: A staff member of the Qualified Applicant who is responsible for providing SAP services to school districts
21. Student Plan: Interventions and strategies, including school and/or community-based services and supports, to remove learning barriers and promote student academic and personal success developed by the SAP Liaison, SAP Core Team, parent and student

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

# The RFQ at a Glance

## *Purpose*

The Department of Human Services (DHS), on behalf of Allegheny County, is seeking Qualified Applicants to provide services under the Student Assistance Program (SAP) in one or more school districts in the County. Qualified Applicants will assist school personnel in identifying students with drug and alcohol and/or mental health issues that pose a barrier to their success. The primary goal of the SAP is to help students overcome drug and alcohol and/or mental health barriers so that they may remain in school, succeed and graduate.

Applicants may be, but are not required to be, current SAP providers or agencies. Furthermore, Applicants are not required to have SAP-certified staff at the time of Application. However, Applicants must be willing to obtain certification through state-offered SAP training prior to providing the services. If qualified through this RFQ, Applicants will enter a pool of eligible SAP providers from which school districts may select for services.

Currently, DHS provides SAP services in elementary, middle and high schools in all 43 school districts in Allegheny County. School demand drives the need for SAP services and school districts usually have only one SAP provider. Qualified Applicants are not guaranteed referrals for a set number of school districts or for any school districts at all. School districts will select a SAP provider from the pool of Qualified Applicants through a vetting and selection process conducted by the school districts. A SAP provider may serve more than one school district.

## *Award Details*

The County intends to qualify one or more Applicant(s) through this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Current SAP providers are not pre-qualified and must submit an Application and be qualified through this RFQ process in order to continue performing DHS-funded SAP services in Allegheny County school districts.

Qualification through this RFQ does not guarantee a contract with DHS. Qualified Applicants must be selected by a school district before they can enter into an Agreement with the County and begin providing DHS-funded SAP services in the school district. DHS caps SAP services at \$1.76 million per year.

## *Who can apply*

Anyone, including but not limited to non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals, is eligible to submit an Application in response to this RFQ. Applicants do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to apply, but they must meet all of Allegheny County's contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Applicants) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capabilities to provide the Contracted Services.

Current SAP providers are not automatically pre-qualified and must reapply to obtain qualification through this RFQ to continue providing SAP. As part of the Application, Applicants are required to provide copies of all mental health and drug and alcohol-related licensures for the past three years, including revoked and provisional licensures.

### ***Timeline***

There will be an information session 1 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, December 17 via Microsoft Teams. Attendance at the information session is not required in order to submit an Application. Preliminary answers will be provided orally for questions asked during the conference. Final, definitive answers to questions asked during the conference will be posted in writing on the DHS Solicitations webpage. Please join the information session by:

- Calling (267)368-7515 and using Conference ID 308 340 921#
- Or following this link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)
- Or copying and pasting this link: [https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_M2VkYThjMzAtNDhjMS00NGI1LTlkNGUtMjBkYmE5ZGFmZjYz%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%224c7924c5-3d5a-494b-ba54-242fc5f6db86%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_M2VkYThjMzAtNDhjMS00NGI1LTlkNGUtMjBkYmE5ZGFmZjYz%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%224c7924c5-3d5a-494b-ba54-242fc5f6db86%22%7d)

Deadline for Applicants to submit questions about this RFQ is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 14, 2022. Applications must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 21, 2022. We expect to notify Applicants of the County's qualification decision in March 2022.

### ***Who we are***

DHS is issuing this RFQ on behalf of Allegheny County.

DHS is the largest department of Allegheny County government and provides publicly funded services to more than 200,000 people annually, in areas including child welfare, behavioral health, aging, developmental supports, homelessness and community services.

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

## **Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFQ**

In 1984, the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Office of Drug and Alcohol Programs (now known as the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs or DDAP), with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, piloted the Student Assistance Program (SAP) in school districts that had previously developed drug and alcohol prevention programs. The intent of this program was to provide school-based interventions for students at risk for alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. In 1987, in response to the increasing adolescent suicide rate, Pennsylvania's

Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services provided funding to expand SAP services to include intervention strategies for students at risk of suicide. Due to the early successes of these initiatives, Act 211 (24 P.S. § 15-1547 of the PA School Code) was enacted in 1990. Act 211 required each school district to establish and maintain a SAP to provide appropriate counseling and support services to students experiencing problems related to the use of drugs, alcohol and dangerous controlled substances. Soon after, the Secretary of Education assigned SAPs the responsibility to, “identify high risk students who are having problems due to alcohol or drug use, depression, or other mental health problems; and intervene and refer these students to appropriate community services.”

In compliance with this law, DHS distributes funding to SAP provider agencies in order to place SAP Liaisons in public and charter schools in Allegheny County. SAP Liaisons help to identify and assist students whose unaddressed behavioral health needs act as barriers to learning. SAP Liaisons coordinate SAP Core Teams at each school (teams are composed of school staff with state-approved SAP training) that identify children in need of behavioral health supports and help them to access school and community services to address their needs. The SAP Core Team, including the SAP Liaison, helps students and parents find services and assistance within the school, and if needed, within the community. SAP Liaisons do not diagnose or treat children. Rather, they provide students and parents with the information they need to make the choices that best fit their needs and wishes.

Currently, SAP Liaisons are in more than 200 schools within Allegheny County’s 43 school districts. Those schools serve over 100,000 students. While SAP is required at each school, schools utilize SAP services to varying degrees, largely determined by the school’s culture; the SAP provider’s fidelity to the SAP process; school, parent and student buy-in; availability of resources in the school and community; and need of the school district and school staff.<sup>1</sup>

## Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking Qualified Applicants that will become part of a pool of SAP providers to provide SAP services as requested and required by school districts. (The process for school district selection of a Qualified Applicant from the pool of Qualified Applicants formed through this RFQ is outlined in Section 6 of this RFQ). When a school district selects a Qualified Applicant, the Qualified Applicant will place SAP Liaisons in the district’s schools and provide SAP services throughout the course of the school year. DHS does not expect Qualified Applicants to provide SAP services in the summer months, with the exception of Postvention crisis counseling services as needed (see Postvention services section below).

Qualified applicants must adhere to the four phases of the SAP process.

1. **Referral** – Any individual concerned about a student’s behavior (e.g., school staff, a student’s friend, a family member or community member) can refer a student to the SAP Core Team. Students can also reach out to directly to the SAP Core Team to ask

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about SAP, see <http://pnsas.org/>

for help. Once a student has been referred, the SAP Core Team contacts the parent for permission to proceed with the SAP process.

2. **Team Planning** – The SAP Core Team gathers objective information about the student’s performance in school from all school personnel who have contact with the student. Information is also collected from the parent. Together, a plan is developed that includes strategies for removing the learning barriers and promoting the student’s academic and personal success to include in-school and/or community-based services and activities.
3. **Intervention and Recommendations** – The plan is put into action. The SAP Core Team assists in linking the student to in-school and/or community-based services and activities. The team might recommend a drug and alcohol or mental health assessment.
4. **Support and Follow-Up** – The SAP Core Team continues to work with and support the student and their family. Follow-up includes monitoring, mentoring and motivating for academic success.

## **A. Target Population**

Upon selection by one or more school districts, Qualified Applicants will serve students in elementary, middle, high, vocational and charter schools with unaddressed behavioral needs that serve as a barrier to learning. Anyone (e.g., school staff, a student’s friend, a family member or community member) may refer a student to SAP. Students also may reach out directly to the SAP Core Team to ask for help.

Successful Applicant(s) must promote respect and utilize approaches that are tailored to serve diverse students, families and communities. Successful Applicant(s) must be committed to providing high-quality services to all students and families regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

## **B. SAP Liaison Role and Responsibilities**

### Consulting with the School District and SAP Core Team

The SAP Liaison acts as a consultant (in the areas of both drug and alcohol and mental health) with the school district, particularly during the meetings of the SAP Core Team. The SAP Liaison is expected to attend SAP Core Team meetings at least twice per month. The SAP Core Team receives referrals and gathers objective information about a student’s school performance from all school personnel who have contact with the student and from the parent. The SAP Core Team meets with a student’s parents and the student to discuss the data collected. Through these meetings with the SAP Core Team, parent and student, the SAP Liaison guides the development of a Student Plan that provides interventions and strategies to remove learning barriers and promote student academic and personal success. The Student Plan may include school and/or community-based services and supports.

Beyond consultation at SAP Core Team meetings, the SAP Liaison supports the school by offering refresher courses in the goals of SAP, providing education about SAP to school staff and

parents and providing updates on emerging SAP issues. SAP Liaisons must be flexible and responsive to the needs of the school and students. When necessary, SAP Liaisons co-facilitate SAP Groups for students (with school staff or the school-based mental health treatment provider) to discuss behavioral health issues and/or provide technical assistance to schools around policy development related to mental health and drug and alcohol issues.

### Screening

If the SAP Core Team, with input from the SAP Liaison, determines that a student needs a behavioral health screening, the SAP Liaison will administer the SAP Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS), a multi-purpose screening tool used to support decision-making and, for purposes of the SAP Liaison, identify unaddressed behavioral needs. If recommended by the SAP Core Team, the SAP Liaison should complete the SAP CANS as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days from the date of receiving parental consent to screen (see more about obtaining consent below). The completed SAP CANS will help inform the Student Plan and must be entered into the DHS KIDS platform (KEY Information and Demographics System).

### Implementing Student Plans

The SAP Liaison helps students and families put their Student Plan in action by linking students to in-school and/or community-based services and supports as well as referring them to (and conducting, where appropriate) any mental health and/or drug and alcohol screenings identified by the SAP CANS and/or during the development of the Student Plan. Qualified Applicants must give families knowledge and choice of support services and providers they can access. A Qualified Applicant is not required to provide school-based mental health and drug and alcohol treatment services.

The Qualified Applicant must work cooperatively and collaboratively with mental health and drug and alcohol providers already in the school. For treatment and supportive services outside of the school, Qualified Applicants must collaborate with the existing network of human service providers in Allegheny County. DHS recognizes that some Qualified Applicants also may offer treatment or supportive services within their own organization. Qualified Applicants must consider the student's and family's unique needs (e.g., best fit, insurance status, geographic location, preference) when developing the Student Plan for treatment or other supportive services and may not give undue preference to services offered by their own organization. Qualified Applicants' only priority in making referrals must be the best interest of the student and family.

The SAP Liaison must support the student/family in following through with their Student Plan by checking-in with the student/parents and by mentoring/motivating the student. Further, the SAP Liaison may facilitate a school-based plan for students who are returning to school from treatment.

### Providing Postvention Services

In the event of an incident that could adversely affect the behavioral health of students and the school community (e.g., the death of a student or teacher, a violent event in the community, a



natural disaster), the SAP Liaison will facilitate, as requested by the school district, Postvention school-based crisis counseling. The SAP Liaison also will determine which students require services beyond Postvention crisis counseling and will connect students to those services. Schools may require postvention services in the summer. School staff will determine whether on-site postvention is warranted.

### Obtaining Consents

The school shall be responsible for obtaining consent before the SAP Core Team may discuss a student in a formal SAP Core Team meeting. Qualified Applicants must obtain completed consent forms from parents to complete a CANS assessment and any time they have individual contact with a student.

### Involving Parents in SAP

Qualified Applicants should operate under the knowledge that it is the parent's right to be involved in the SAP process and to have access to all school records under applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Involvement of parents in the SAP process underscores the parents' role and responsibility in the decision-making process affecting their child's education and is key to the successful resolution of problems. Qualified Applicants will assist parents in accessing the appropriate services and provide follow-up with parents regarding screening and treatment. Qualified Applicants must consult with schools regarding strategies for engaging parents in the SAP process.

### Building a Relationship with School Districts

The key to successfully implementing SAP and acting as an effective SAP Liaison is building trust with the school district and facilitating productive communication with school staff, students, parents, and mental health/drug and alcohol providers. If selected by a school district, Qualified Applicants, together with the school district, will compose a letter of agreement that outlines the specific expectations of the school district. Qualified Applicants and school districts will negotiate and sign letters of agreement annually.

Furthermore, DHS expects school districts and Qualified Applicants to adhere to DHS's established conflict resolution process if issues arise between the selected Qualified Applicant and the school district. The conflict resolution process includes the following steps:

1. The SAP Core Team, including the SAP Liaison and school leadership/representative, meets to discuss the conflict.
2. If the conflict is not resolved in Step 1, school leadership/representatives meet with leadership from the Qualified Applicant's agency.
3. If the conflict is not resolved in Step 2, DHS's Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) leadership meets with school leadership/representatives, leadership from the Qualified Applicant's agency and leadership from the state.
4. If the conflict is not resolved in Step 3, the school district may select a new SAP provider from the pool of Qualified Applicants at the beginning of the following school year.

In the event of a legal violation or egregious offense to students, parents or school faculty, DHS is entitled to make exceptions to this process.

### Collecting and Reporting Data

Qualified Applicants are responsible for tracking what SAP services that they perform and how long they perform each service, entering this information into DHS's MPER (Master Provider Enterprise Repository) and the state's WITS (Web Infrastructure for Treatment Services) system. Reimbursable services include (see Appendix A for more detail):

- Attending SAP Core Team meetings
- Conducting SAP Groups
- Following up with a student or parent after a referral
- Meeting with a parent or teacher
- Conducting a screening
- Consulting with school staff regarding SAP-related issues
- Providing Postvention services
- Presenting information/providing training about SAP to staff, parents or the community

Information that Qualified Applicants must enter into DHS's MPER and the state's WITS system includes, but is not limited to:

- School district
- SAP Liaison name
- Service
- Date of service
- Length of service
- SAP Group name

Services entered into WITS must be commensurate with the amount of the invoice entered into MPER.

In addition to the above-listed data necessary for reporting into MPER and WITS, Qualified Applicants also must collect and enter evidence of their activities (e.g., SAP Group sign-in sheets) into WITS and the state required database, Joint Quarterly State Reports (JQSR). See Appendix A, monitoring column, for a minimum list of materials that Qualified Applicants must maintain by service.

Qualified Applicants also will enter similar data in the state-required databases: WITS and Joint Quarterly State Reports (JQSR).

DHS encourages Qualified Applicants to conduct periodic quality assessments of their services and to have a plan in place for quality improvement. Quality assessment may include surveying students and school staff about their experience with SAP.

### C. SAP Liaison Qualifications

Qualified Applicants should either have identified a staff person to serve as a SAP Liaison or have a strong plan in place for recruiting and hiring SAP Liaisons. Qualified Applicants should provide appropriate supervision of SAP Liaisons by staff knowledgeable about SAP in schools and the local behavioral health system. **The SAP Liaison is required to consult on all behavioral health issues. This includes both mental health and drug and alcohol issues.**

Staff of a Qualified Applicant should have at least one year of experience as a SAP Liaison or in the behavioral health field and a bachelor's degree in a field related to mental health, drug and alcohol addiction, or education. Prior to providing services, Qualified Applicants should ensure that SAP Liaisons receive the following training:

- SAP Core Team Training (facilitated by a state approved trainer)
- DHS New Hire Service Coordination Training (Once this training has been re-initiated)
- CANS Screening Tool Training
- Department Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) Confidentiality
- DDAP Addiction 101
- 12 hours of approved supplemental training each year (See Appendix B)

Any person who provides Liaison services must have the SAP Core Team Training and become certified. Providers must become SAP certified within three months from the date of selection by a school district but no later than June 30.

### D. Role of the School

School districts are responsible for designating staff to join their school's SAP Core Team and for connecting their staff to SAP training. School districts must connect their SAP Core Team staff to professional SAP training, which is consistent with state guidelines and conducted by a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania-approved training provider. The Commonwealth requires this training to ensure:

- Appropriateness of SAP services
- Effective interagency collaboration
- Compliance with state and federal laws protecting the privacy rights of parents and students
- That team members have received up-to-date professional training consistent with accountable standards and appropriate procedures (as required by school boards, school administrators, parents, students and the general public)

Schools are expected to provide an appropriate, adequate place for screenings, communicate with the SAP Liaison about scheduling SAP Core Team meetings, and provide an initial SAP consent form to the child/parent.

## **E. Role of DHS**

DHS will contract with Qualified Applicants to provide SAP services, monitor Qualified Applicants for compliance and performance, and provide technical assistance to Qualified Applicants on specific SAP-related issues as requested and needed. DHS also will participate in the conflict resolution process as warranted.

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

DHS will evaluate Applications based upon the awarding of points by using the evaluation criteria listed below. Applicants must address their qualifications in their Application by responding to the requested items or questions in the Response Form. Applicants 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 that an Application can receive is 105 points, as outlined in the following sections.

### **A. Organizational Experience (25 points)**

- Experience identifying children and families in need of mental health supports and connecting them to appropriate services based on a strong working knowledge of the mental health system in Allegheny County (5 points)
- Experience identifying children and families in need of drug and alcohol supports and connecting them to appropriate services based on a strong working knowledge of the drug and alcohol system in Allegheny County (5 points)
- Experience working in schools or with school-aged children and their families, including school-aged children and families from diverse backgrounds (5 points)
- Current mental health- and drug and alcohol-related licensures and certificates of compliance are in good-standing (10 points)

### **B. Service Delivery (50 points)**

- Plan for completing screenings within 30 days of referral (5 points)
- Plan for involving families in SAP activities and for obtaining parent feedback (5 points)
- Commitment to collaboration with the network of human service providers in Allegheny County to find the most appropriate referral for students (5 points)
- Strategy for giving families information about and choice in service provider (5 points)
- Strategy for engaging families from diverse backgrounds through the referral process and while they receive treatment or other services (5 points)
- Strategy for addressing SAP scenarios listed in the RFQ Response Form (10 points)
- Commitment to the SAP Program and understanding of its goals and objectives (5 points)
- Plan for building a flexible, cooperative and responsive relationship with school districts (5 points)

- Plan for providing Postvention services (5 points)

### **C. Staffing (10 points)**

- Plan for recruiting and retaining diverse staff that reflect the students and families served (5 points)
- Plan for recruiting and retaining qualified, committed and knowledgeable staff with the skill set required to successfully implement SAP (5 points)

### **D. Data Collection and Delivery (10 points)**

- Plan for tracking, entering and reporting data in a timely way (5 points)
- Plan for quality assurance (5 points)

### **E. Budget (10 points)**

- Line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing SAP (5 points)
- A budget narrative that clearly justifies costs outlined in the budget (5 points)

## **Section 4: How to Submit an Application**

### **4.1 Submission Process**

- Applicants should take time to review and understand the RFQ in its entirety including:
  - The background (see Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFQ)
  - The narrative (see Section 2: What We Are Looking For)
  - The requirements (see Section 3: Application Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)
  - The evaluation process (see Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Application)
- Applicants must use the Response Form to develop your Application. Type your responses to each requested item directly into the Response Form. It is available at our Active Solicitations website with the RFQ announcement at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations).
- Applicants must submit a complete Application. The Application includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
  - Response Form
  - Current mental health- and drug and alcohol-related licensures and certificates of compliance
  - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
  - Audited financial reports or other financial documentation for the last three years
  - Internal Revenue Service Form W-9
- Applicants should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or in the Response Form.

- e. If an Applicant does not have audited financial reports for the last three years, then the Applicant may submit other financial documentation that attest to the Applicant's financial health of your organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing adequate financial documentation is a requirement of contracting with Allegheny County.
- f. Make sure to complete each section of the Response Form and to stay within any word counts or page limits that may be specified in the Response Form.
- g. **Applications must be submitted electronically to [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 21, 2022 to be considered for review.**
- h. All Applications must be submitted before the deadline! If an Application is late, it will be rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee (as described in Section 5 below) for review and scoring.
- i. Applicants will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their Application. If an Applicant does not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting their Application, please contact: [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).

#### 4.2 How to Contact DHS about this RFQ

- a. All inquiries and questions must be submitted via email to [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us) by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 14, 2022.
- b. All information about the RFQ, 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 check this website regularly for answers to questions, additional information or changes to the RFQ or the RFQ process.

#### 4.3 Other Information

- a. **The issuance of this RFQ does not obligate the County to accept any Application, qualify any Applicant or enter into an Agreement with any Applicants. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Applications and not enter into an Agreement for the Contract Services.**
- b. Any Agreement originating from this RFQ is subject to all the Terms and Conditions specified in Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Applicants.
- c. Applicants are responsible for all costs related to the preparation and submission of an Application.
- d. Applications become the property of the County and may become part of any subsequent Agreement between the Applicant and the County.
- e. Successful Application(s) will be posted online in the DHS Solicitations Archive after an Agreement has been fully executed by the County and the Successful Applicant(s).

#### 4.4 Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law

Applicants should be aware that all documents and materials submitted in response to this RFQ may be subject to requests for access to public records made pursuant to Pennsylvania's Right-

To-Know Law (RTKL). Under the RTKL, records in the possession of a public agency like the County are presumed to be public records and the County may have to make documents and materials submitted by the Applicant available to a requestor after an award of an Agreement is made.

If the Applicant includes any information within its Application that the Applicant asserts is either a “trade secret” or “confidential proprietary information,” as those terms are defined under the RTKL, the Applicant must include with its Application a written statement signed by an authorized representative of the Applicant identifying those portions or parts of its Application that the Applicant believes constitute a “trade secret” or “confidential proprietary information” and provide contact information to enable DHS to contact the Applicant in the event that the County receives a Right-To-Know request for the Application. The Applicant shall have five (5) business days from date of receipt of any notification from the County to provide a written statement signed by an authorized representative of the Applicant explaining why the Application or any portion thereof is exempt from disclosure as a trade secret, confidential proprietary information or other legal reason. The County shall consider this statement in either granting or denying a request for public access to the Application or any portion thereof. The County will notify the Applicant of its decision whether to grant or deny the request either in whole or in part.

## **Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Application**

DHS will convene an Evaluation Committee to evaluate Applications. The Evaluation Committee will assign scores to each Application by awarding points based on the evaluation criteria in Section 3: Application Requirements and Evaluation Criteria, by using the point scale listed in Section 5.1 b.

### **5.1 Evaluation of Applications**

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. DHS will form an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee will be comprised of evaluators with expertise in the subject matter of this RFQ and may include: community members with lived experience, external subject matter experts or provider representative(s), representative(s) from key partners or funders and DHS internal staff.
- b. All Evaluation Committee members will individually review and score each Application. Each Evaluation Committee member will award points for each response on an Applicant’s Response Form utilizing their personal expertise and best judgment of how the Application submitted by that Applicant meets the evaluation criteria in Section 3 using the following scale:
  - 0 – Not addressed in Application
  - 1 – Poor
  - 2 – Below expectations
  - 3 – Meets expectations
  - 4 – Exceeds expectations

### 5 – Outstanding

- c. Each 0-5 score will be multiplied by the appropriate weight for the number of possible points noted after each evaluation criterion in Section 3. For example, for a criterion worth 15 points, the 0-5 score would be multiplied by three. An “Outstanding” response would receive 15 points, while one that “Meets Expectations” would receive nine points.
- d. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the average scores, and arrive at a consensus on which Applicant(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFQ. The Committee will have the discretion to proceed as follows: (i) to recommend to the Director of DHS that a reduced number of Applications be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation to the Committee; or (ii) to recommend to the Director of DHS that DHS request authorization for the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Applicant(s).
- e. As described in c above, DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have the exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Applications for more extensive review. In this case, DHS may request that shortlisted Applicants make a formal oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee. Each Committee member will individually score the oral presentation of the shortlisted Applicants using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that a shortlisted Applicant’s oral presentation can receive is 15 points:
  - Presentation demonstrates Applicant’s ability to implement the Contract Services effectively (5 points)
  - Applicant’s answers to Evaluation Committee’s questions (5 points)
  - Applicant’s presentation is thoughtful and professional (5 points)
- f. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee to the shortlisted Proposer formal oral presentations and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the scores, and arrive at a consensus on which Applicant(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFQ.
- g. The Committee will submit its recommendation for qualification to the Director of DHS for approval. The Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement or Agreement with the Successful Applicant(s).
- h. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact an Applicant to discuss any areas of the Application needing clarification or further explanation.
- i. As part of determining Applicants’ eligibility to enter into a contract with Allegheny County, all Applicants’ financial audits or other documentation will be reviewed by DHS fiscal analysts to ensure Applicants’ financial stability.
- j. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with an Applicant as a result of this RFQ. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Applications.**
- k. All Applicants will be notified of the County’s final decision of which Applicant(s) will be qualified.



1. Applicants not qualified who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).

## **5.2 Other Requirements**

For an Application to be eligible for evaluation, it must be:

- a. Received by the due date/time
- b. Properly formatted and include responses to all requested information
- c. Complete with all required forms and attachments

Applications which do not meet the above requirements will be automatically rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee.

## **Section 6: What Happens after an Applicant is Qualified**

After qualification by DHS, Qualified Applicants may be selected to provide SAP services by school districts. If selected by a school district, Qualified Applicants will be required to enter into an Agreement with Allegheny County, on behalf of DHS, under which services will be purchased and reimbursed.

DHS will send the list of Qualified Applicants and their Applications to all school districts. Schools will invite selected Qualified Applicants to interview based on their review of Qualified Applicant Applications. Each school will select a SAP provider from the pool of Qualified Applicants based on their interview. Only one SAP provider will be selected per school district, with the exception of Pittsburgh Public School District.

Qualification obtained through this RFQ will be effective for up to five years at the discretion of the County.

Qualified Applicants may opt out of the pool of Qualified Applicants or an Agreement by providing 90 days notice to DHS, preferably at the end of the school year; however, this may preclude their inclusion in the pool of Qualified Applicants, should they choose to seek qualification, in the future.

## **Section 7: Contract Requirements for Qualified Applicants**

In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, Applicants must comply with all contract requirements listed below and all standard terms and conditions contained in a County contract for provision of services to DHS and its offices. Additional details about contracting with

Allegheny County are provided in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations), available at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations).

## 7.1 Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) Requirements

Allegheny County has MWDBE goals of 13% participation for Minority Business Enterprises and 2% participation for Women Business Enterprises and expects that Qualified Applicants will make a “good faith effort” in assisting the County in meeting these goals.

- a. All Applications must include a completed Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form and supporting documents. The Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form should be completed as follows:
  - All Applicants must complete Section 1 – Contact Information and attach their MWDBE Diversity Plan (see Section 4 – Sample Diversity Policy).
  - If the Applicant is able to meet the MWDBE contract goals, the Applicant should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement. Applicants also must attach the MWDBE certifications of the firms cited in the Participation Statement.
  - If the Applicant would like to request a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, the Applicant should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement and Section 3 – MWDBE Participation Waiver Request Form.
- b. MWDBE forms and resources can be found at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations):
  - [Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form](#)
  - MWDBE Resources
    - [MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)
    - [MWDBE Guide for DHS Proposers](#)
- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion website](#).

## 7.2 Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) Requirement

Allegheny County also has a goal of 5% participation for veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) in all contracts. The County, therefore, expects that Qualified Applicants will make a “good faith effort” in assisting the County in meeting this goal.

- a. A veteran-owned small business is defined by the County as a business having 100 or fewer full-time employees and not less than 51% of which is owned by one or more veterans, or in the case of any publicly owned business, not less than 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more veterans, and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by one or more veterans. The VOSB vendor **MUST** provide proof of veteran ownership including percentage and name and address of business.
  - For contracts under \$100,000, VOSB vendors shall be exempt from all bonding requirements.
- b. All Applications must include either of the following:
  - If the Applicant is able to meet the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement is required. You must also attach a copy of the VOSB

vendor(s) DD 214 discharge form(s) that you intend to use with the Participation Statement.

- If the Applicant requests a waiver from participating in the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement and VOSB Waiver Request are required.
- c. VOSB forms can be found at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations):
  - [VOSB Participation Statement](#)
  - [VOSB Waiver Request](#)

### **7.3 HIPAA Compliance**

DHS is a covered entity under the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Therefore, a Qualified Applicant must comply with all HIPAA requirements.

### **7.4 Cyber Security**

- a. Qualified Applicants must meet the minimum computer specifications that 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. Qualified Applicants also must 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).

### **7.5 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Requirements**

By submitting an Application, an Applicant 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.

### **7.6 Language Diversity Requirements**

Successful Proposer(s) must assure resources are secured and/or made available for participants/consumers/clients with limited English proficiency or other communication barriers. Such actions shall include but not be limited to assessing the need for interpreters, evaluating the need for alternate language materials, identifying internal and external resources to meet identified needs, and accessing services contracted by DHS through their assigned contract monitor(s).

### **7.7 New Provider Requirements**

If awarded an Agreement, Qualified Applicants who do not have current Allegheny County contracts will be required to complete the DHS New Provider Application.

## Appendix A: Cost Reimbursable Services for SAP

Service Title	Service Description	Monitoring
SAP Core Team Meetings	Structured SAP Core Team meetings facilitated by a professionally trained team, including the SAP Liaison, school staff and representatives from community drug/alcohol and mental health agencies. Meetings are intended to identify problems, determine whether or not the presenting problem lies within the responsibility of the school, and develop recommendations to assist the student and the parent.	Sign-in sheets
SAP Groups	Structured prevention programs intended to provide substance use/mental health information for students whose substance use/mental health issues may be interfering with their school performance.	Sign-in sheets
Referral Follow Up	Refers to a follow-up meeting or phone call with an individual SAP-identified student to check-in regarding progress/status related to treatment or intervention goals. This meeting with the student takes place after referral to the SAP Core Team and discussion at an SAP Core Team meeting. This code also captures non-SAP follow-up meetings that may take place to meet with parents, family members, or individuals to address referrals. Examples are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Checking-in with an SAP-identified student after return from school- or community-based treatment services (this may be part of a drug/alcohol (D/A) aftercare plan.)</li> <li>2. Checking-in with an SAP-identified student to see if s/he is benefiting from the referred SAP Group support services.</li> <li>3. Checking-in with individuals to ensure they received the services to which they were referred and, if appropriate, assisting the family in overcoming barriers that may be impeding access to service.</li> </ol>	Call log
SAP Parent/Consultant/Teacher Meeting	Refers to meetings that SAP Liaisons have with parents/guardians; may include school staff. These meetings may take place face-to-face or by phone.	Log sheets

	Infrequently, may include attending an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting upon request of parent/student or the school and parent/student for consultation during planning of educational adaptations for youth returning to school from treatment.	
SAP Initial Screening	Initial CANS-SAP screening that takes place subsequent to the initial referral to the SAP Core Team to determine if a drug and alcohol level of care assessment or psychological evaluation is warranted.  This also includes drug and alcohol Policy Infraction Screening with combined CANS-SAP and a validated drug and alcohol youth substance use screening/assessment such as the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI).	Copy of screening
SAP Consultation	SAP Consultations involve in-person meetings or phone calls with school staff such as school counselor, school nurse, teacher, principal or other administrator to discuss issues regarding a student who has been referred to SAP. These consultations are NOT SAP Core Team meetings or parent/teacher meetings. Examples are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meeting with teacher to discuss a student's academic progress and participation</li> <li>2. After obtaining parental permission, SAP Liaison meeting with school counselor to discuss a student's return to school after completing treatment</li> </ol>	Log sheet
Postvention	Postvention services involve facilitating and/or assisting, when requested, with crisis intervention services in the event of any traumatic life events that may adversely affect the school community. Examples are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Death of a student, teacher or community member</li> <li>2. Natural disasters</li> <li>3. Community violence</li> </ol>	Log sheets
SAP Education	SAP Education involves presentations and trainings conducted at <i>school sponsored events</i> by SAP Liaisons, directed toward SAP Core Team members, school staff, parents, or community members specifically for the purpose of increasing mental health awareness and discussing mental health resources. This can also include meetings	Training log

	<p>with school personnel for the specific purpose of promoting or increasing the utilization of SAP within the building. This does not include time spent at various community events promoting specific provider services.</p> <p>Examples are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time spent presenting about the SAP process at a school assembly</li> <li>2. Training SAP Core Team members or teachers on crisis intervention services during an in-service day</li> <li>3. Meeting with the school principal to discuss/review the SAP process within the building</li> </ol>	
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## Appendix B: Approved Supplemental Trainings

Each year, SAP Liaisons are required to have 12 hours of approved supplemental training that can include:

- Trauma, PTSD and Addiction
- Harm Reduction
- American Society of Addition Medicine (ASAM)
- HIV/AIDS & Hepatitis C
- Motivational Interviewing
- DDA Approved Screening and Assessment
- Recovery and Relapse Prevention
- Referral Resources for Youth
- HIPPA Review Training
- 302 Process and Procedures and ACT 53 Process and Procedures
- Ethics for Behavioral Health Service providers
- IEP - Eligibility, Rights Process and Procedures
- CPR/First Aid