

Allegheny County

Department of Human Services

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**ONE-STOP CENTER WITH COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR
TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH**

RFP ISSUED	January 30, 2015
QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL	Until 5 Business Days Before Proposal Due Date
RESPONSES (Q & A) POSTED ON WEBPAGE	Ongoing - Final Q&A Posted 1 Business Day Before Proposal Due Date
BIDDERS CONFERENCE	March 2, 2015* - 2PM at 1 Smithfield Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15222, Liberty Conference Room
PROPOSALS DUE	April 13, 2015*
ESTIMATED AWARD DECISION / NOTIFICATION	July 2015*
ESTIMATED START DATE	September 2015*

*changed on 2/2/15

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GLOSSARY

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

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.

DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services.

IL: Independent Living (Initiative) for youth (ages 16 through 21) who are in a child welfare placement or who have aged-out of the child welfare system following a placement of at least 30 days after age 16.

Proposal: The response submitted by a Proposer to this Request for Proposals.

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

RFP: Request for Proposals

Successful Proposer: The Proposer selected by the County to provide the Contract Services.

YSP: Youth Support Partner(s), young adults, typically 19 through 25 years of age, who have personal experience with one or more human service programs, and have been hired and trained to assist youth (ages 14 through 21) who are currently receiving services through DHS. YSPs collaborate with youth and their families, service providers and other team members to help support the youth voice, participation and overall efforts toward each youth's goals.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose

DHS is soliciting proposals for the development of a Youth Center (Center), in a centralized location, in which services will be provided to transition-age youth ages 16 through 24, including current and former foster youth and those experiencing homelessness. Services provided in the Center will be designed to help the youth face the challenges of adulthood (e.g., education, employment, financial literacy, housing, mental health and substance use, personal relationships, parenthood and legal assistance).

DHS intends to use the results of this RFP process to award one contract to the Successful Proposer to provide the Scope of Services requested in this RFP (beginning on page 9) for up to three years with the option to renew. DHS estimates the annual funding to be within the range of \$2.5 and \$3 million but will consider proposals both below and above this range if they are well justified.

General Information about an 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 is included in an

RFP (see Scope of Services Requested) to measure how well a Proposal meets these guidelines; additional information and/or a presentation may be requested during the Proposal evaluation period. Following the evaluation period, an Agreement to provide the requested 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 questions and/or requests for clarification concerning this RFP must be submitted no later than five business days prior to the proposal due date in order to guarantee a response on the website.

All information about the RFP, including changes, clarifications and responses to Proposer questions, will be posted on the RFP website at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.aspx>

Eligibility

Entities eligible to respond to this RFP include non-profit organizations and for-profit organizations or businesses. Joint/Collaborative Proposals will be considered. In order to be considered under this RFP, Proposers must meet all of Allegheny County’s contractual requirements (available at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/contracting.aspx>).

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 www.county.allegheny.pa.us/mwdb.

For more information about M/W/DBEs, please refer to the MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual (link provided below). An M/W/DBE Participation Statement or Waiver Statement is **REQUIRED** with Proposal submission.

[MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)

[MWDBE Participation Statement form](#)

[MWDBE Waiver Statement form](#)

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 in the preparation and submission of a Proposal.

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 the Executive Office, DHS encompasses five program offices (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 Target Population

DHS expects that the proposed Youth Center and the services provided therein will be available to transition-age youth, ages 16 through 24. It is expected that the majority of participating youth will be those who are or were involved in the child welfare foster care system and are now participants in DHS's Independent Living (IL) Initiative (ages 16 through 21). However, the Center will also be available for other transition-age youth, such as those who are experiencing a housing crisis or are involved in other DHS services.

Transition-Age Youth

Adolescence can be a challenging time for all youth, let alone those who are struggling without strong family support, facing educational deficits, experiencing unstable housing, or dealing with mental health issues. Recent research on the brain has found that, in key ways, adolescents' brains do not reach maturity until they are in their early to mid-20s. "Mortality rates jump between early and late adolescence. Rates of death by injury between ages 15 to 19 are about six times that of the rate between ages 10 and 14. Crime rates are highest among young males and rates of alcohol abuse are high relative to other ages. Even though most adolescents come through this transitional age well, it's

important to understand the risk factors for behavior that can have serious consequences.”¹
Disconnected youth need extra supports to make a successful transition to adulthood.

National research has shown that youth with foster care experience have worse outcomes than their non-involved peers in a number of areas; they are less likely to graduate from high school or college, less likely to earn a living wage, more likely to experience early pregnancies or have a child out of a wedlock, and more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system.² Similarly, experiencing homelessness can have lifelong effects on youth. National research finds that many homeless youth begin with a history of family and peer conflict, then associate with an anti-social peer group, are exposed to drugs and alcohol, survival sex, violence and other victimization. These experiences are compounded, so that the longer they remain homeless, the more difficult it becomes for them to transition to stable living.³

The following paragraphs provide demographic information about two primary categories of transition-age youth.

- IL Youth

In Allegheny County, the majority of IL youth are African-American (63 percent); 26 percent are white⁴. This is consistent with demographic data on youth who enter the County’s child welfare system (despite the fact that African Americans represent only 13 percent of the county’s population overall). Females slightly edge out males at 55 percent of the IL population. While sexual orientation and gender identity are not currently reliably tracked in DHS data, national data indicate that 10 to 23 percent of youth in the child welfare system identify as LGBTQ (thirty-three percent of respondents to a survey distributed to all youth residing in child welfare congregate care in Allegheny County identified as LGBTQ). Youth of foreign origin, who may have limited English proficiency, are also represented in the IL population.

IL youth are likely to have participated in other human services in addition to child welfare. An analysis of service utilization by youth who participated in IL programs from 2010 through 2014 shows high involvement in mental health services (41%) and drug and alcohol services (75%), and some overlap with intellectual disability services (5%).⁵

In addition to receiving IL services, since 2012 all foster care youth in Allegheny County are eligible to remain in child welfare from age 18 through 21. For youth without stable housing, this is often a good option. Out of all youth in child welfare placement who turned 18 in 2013, 31% decided to stay in placement. Some youth leave care at age 18, but later elect to return. For example, between July 2013 and June 2014, 28 young people asked the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas - Family Division to approve their return to child

¹ National Institute of Mental Health: *The Teen Brain: Still Under Construction*, "<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-still-under-construction/index.shtml>

² Courtney, M., et al. 2007. Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Care Youth: Outcomes at Age 21. Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/ChapinHallDocument_1.pdf

³ Whitbeck, Les; Hoyt, Dan; and Yoder, Kevin. A Risk-Amplification Model of Victimization and Depressive Symptoms among Runaway and Homeless Adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 27:2, pp. 273–296. 1999.

⁴ This analysis was conducted on a sample of 1915 unduplicated youth. The sample represents individuals who received IL services starting in January 2010 through June 2014. The data were retrieved from the Data Warehouse, DHS’s central repository of social services data.

⁵ These percentages indicate youth who received services in any of these program areas between 2010 and 2014 but it does not indicate the intensity of involvement. For example, the range of youth receiving Drug and Alcohol or Mental Health services includes someone who had a brief initial assessment as well as a youth experiencing extended episodes in inpatient residential facilities.

welfare placement, on average around seven months after originally leaving. Nearly all (26 of 28) of the requests specifically cited homelessness as a factor in their decision to seek resumption of services (including two individuals who were transitioning out of other institutional facilities).

- Homeless Youth

Despite Allegheny County's varied array of services to prevent and address homelessness, a recent DHS report about homeless youth, "I'll Never Get Used to It: Young People Living on the Street," estimated that approximately 240 young people, ages 18 through 24, are living on the street, in abandoned buildings and in shelters.⁶ The homeless youth population is "heterogeneous and in flux" in the length and frequency of their episodes of homelessness, so it is important to be cautious about drawing conclusions about all youth based upon studies of more (or less) chronically homeless youth.⁷ Even so, young adults who are homeless differ from the general population of youth in significant ways. They are more likely to be male, identify as LGBTQ, have experienced sexual abuse, be involved in juvenile or criminal justice, and be a high school drop-out. National and local experience also indicates that 30 to 40 percent have been in foster care at some point.

Allegheny County's Independent Living (IL) Services:

The proposed design for the Center and its services emerged from experience with and by youth in Allegheny County's IL services. A general description of those services follows; supplemental information about the intensity and duration of existing IL services can be found on page 24.

Allegheny County currently provides IL services to youth, ages 16 through 21, both while in child welfare placement and after discharge. All services are voluntary. To be eligible for the IL program, youth must have had at least 30 days in foster care after turning 16 years old. Historically, the core of IL services has been case management.

Along with case management, youth may also work one-on-one with one of eight DHS educational liaisons. Each educational liaison provides stable and continuous academic and career development support to an average of 75 youth each year. In addition, as a Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative⁸ site, DHS is rolling out a new program in Fiscal Year 2014/15 that is aimed at improving youth's financial literacy and capacity to save money. The Opportunity Passport™ is a matched savings plan that provides youth with the financial know-how to save, and to have those savings matched to purchase assets. DHS anticipates that 150 youth will participate in the Opportunity Passport™ Program and related financial literacy curriculum in the first year.

DHS IL staff, child welfare caseworkers and contracted provider staff work together to ensure that each youth receives services necessary to achieve a successful transition. They cross-refer to IL initiatives such as the Youth Support Partners (YSP) program and Creative Life Support as well as other DHS services including mental health and drug and alcohol treatment, housing supports, intellectual disability supports and preventive services.

⁶ "I'll Never Get Used to It: Young People Living on the Street," *DHS Report*, Kathy McCauley (May 2014).

⁷ Tompsett, C. J.; Toro, P. A.; Guzicki, M.; Manrique, M.; and Zatakia, J. Homelessness in the United States: Assessing changes in prevalence and public opinion. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 37(1/2), 47-61. 2006.

⁸ <http://www.jimcaseyouth.org/>

In calendar year 2013, 965 young people participated in at least one service through DHS' IL services program. This represents 55 percent of the total population of eligible IL youth (ages 16 through 21). This gap between served youth and eligible youth is not surprising, given that services are voluntary; not all youth seek such support or assistance, and many youth participate for a while, leave and possibly return when they have a specific need. Moving forward, DHS is hoping to increase the percentage of eligible youth who actively participate in services.

The Proposed Center: A New Approach to Transition-Age Youth Services

One-stop shops or service clearinghouses have been emerging across the country as a more effective and appealing way to serve transition-age youth. Their services and target populations differ but most of them were created to provide centralized support to the most vulnerable youth.⁹ One of the central recommendations of the 2014 DHS report on homeless youth was to open a drop-in center, in/near downtown Pittsburgh, to offer services and supports under one roof. Although this is a relatively new approach and there is not yet strong empirical evidence that this mode of service provision necessarily improves youth outcomes, DHS believes this approach will provide a more youth-driven environment in which to engage and motivate youth and will offer more flexibility and breadth of services to appropriately respond to youth's complex set of needs.

The coordination of services is core to this model. A recent policy brief by the American Youth Policy Forum argues that "coordinating services reduces burdens on youth by making it easier to access services, and it creates more positive outcomes by strengthening results and accountability... With so many services overlapping at different times, it is difficult for young people to understand and manage their transition in a way that ultimately empowers them to be successful, independent adults."¹⁰

Bringing services under one umbrella has been welcomed by youth. Interviews and focus groups with young people in other cities have provided early support for the site-based approach: "Youth reported the most helpful aspect of programs to be the support, trust, safety, consistency and connection they offer via program staff and facilities. This support provides a base from which youth are able to focus on education and employment."¹¹

The DHS youth advisory board, *System Improvement through Youth* (SITY), has also discussed the concept of a one-stop center for youth. They identified services and resources that they would be able to access at a centralized location: space to exercise, dance, or do physical activities; space for arts and creative pursuits; a kitchen where youth can cook and share meals; short term childcare while teen parents attend workshops; and "teaching stations" where youth can seek assistance for a variety of issues, from job readiness and employment to housing, educational assistance and post-secondary planning. These youth also indicated that a center should "have someone you can talk to" although not a "therapist" per se. They felt the environment should be casual – "not like a school" - with friendly and

⁹ Some examples of one-stop centers for foster care and other disconnected youth include: The Door (www.door.org); The Next Generation Center (www.childreainsociety.org/next-generation-center); Covenant House (www.covenanthouse.org); First Place for Youth (www.firstplaceforyouth.org/what-we-do/programs/first-steps-community-center); The Neutral Zone (neutral-zone.org); More Than Words (mtwyouth.org); Achieving Independence Center (www.vyhphila.org/locations/philadelphia/aic); and Hillside Youth Moving On (www.hillside.org/programs/youth-moving).

¹⁰ "Creating Access to Opportunities for Youth in Transition from Foster Care," An AYPF Policy Brief, Erin Russ and Garet Fryar (December 2014); p.27.

¹¹ "When you have a rocky life, sometimes it feels like nobody is on your side": How the Powering Potential Workforce Development Initiative Provides Essential Support in the Lives of Young People Aging Out of the Child Welfare System, April 2014 (A report based on site visits and focus groups prepared by Sara Goodkind and Jeff Shook).

warm décor that youth would help select. Along the same vein, they suggested that the Center have a pet (a cat or dog).

Similarly, youth and providers interviewed for the DHS report on homeless youth recommended that a drop-in center be located in Downtown Pittsburgh and that a van be available to provide transportation to other services around the City. They also suggested that it be open “all day, every day” and be available for any young person. One young adult who is homeless said, “The key is knowing about a consistent location,” and another suggested, “There needs to be one set spot.” The center could serve as a home base where providers, such as nurses, employers, schools and job training agencies could go to engage young people.

SCOPE OF SERVICES REQUESTED

The purpose of the RFP for Transition-Age Youth Services is to create a one-stop shop [hereafter referred to as “the Center”] for the target population that offers comprehensive, welcoming and youth-oriented services as well as space to simply hang out with other youth and caring adults. DHS expects the Center to serve approximately 1,500 youth in the first year. The majority of these youth will be eligible for IL services (current and former foster youth). The Center will help youth to feel welcomed, safe and supported while offering the services and connections to help them face the challenges of adulthood, including education, employment, financial literacy, housing, health, mental health and substance abuse, personal relationships, parenthood and legal assistance. The Center will bring these offerings together in one location through a combination of:

- core services and supports
- specialized services offered on-site through sub-contracted agencies
- partner agencies that will co-locate or schedule regular hours
- teaming with other DHS programs
- flexibility to invite organizations or programs with needed expertise and like-minded missions to offer special opportunities to youth on-site.

Goal and Objectives

By centralizing the services for youth aging out of foster care and other youth that access its services, DHS aims to help youth successfully transition to adulthood, minimize negative future involvement in the human services system and achieve self-sufficiency.

Through this RFP process, DHS wants to achieve the following **objectives**:

- Provision of high-quality programming
- Assurance of a capacity sufficient to meet the needs of the target population
- Increased youth engagement in supportive programming
- Streamlined collaboration among agencies that serve the target population and allow for more efficiencies in service delivery
- Assurance of client access to co-located services and flexible hours
- Focus on youth outcomes, particularly in the following areas:
 - Graduating high school and increasing youth enrollment in post-secondary education
 - Obtaining and retaining self-sustaining employment

- Finding safe and affordable housing and ensuring housing stability
- Promoting health outcomes and discouraging teen pregnancy
- Enhancing life skills that are critical to achieving self-sufficiency

The Scope of Services being requested by DHS consists of three specific components as described in detail below.

I. Center Management and Services Coordination

The Successful Proposer will operate the Center, provide a core group of services, and coordinate the core services with additional services provided by subcontracted agencies and partner agencies.

DHS expects the Center, and all services, to be based on the following features or characteristics:

- **Accessible:** The Center requires a safe, central location to maximize public transportation access from most areas of Allegheny County. It should be open seven days a week. It also requires operating hours which match the times when youth might seek services, such as after-school and evenings. The specific operating hours should be monitored over time to make sure they are meeting the needs of the diverse youth at the Center.
- **Youth-Centered:** The Center should not be seen as part of the “system” but rather an inviting space where youth want to congregate and where their voices are heard and respected. By playing a formal role in the decision-making process and conflict resolution through a Youth Advisory Board, youth should feel they are part of a community and feel a responsibility to that community. Mechanisms should exist to solicit youth feedback on an ongoing basis (including a grievance procedure), communicate that feedback and use it to improve the services.
- **Youth-Driven:** Every youth should be supported in understanding and exploring their strengths and needs and establishing their own path through the services and supports available at the Center. It is the Center staff’s role to win the trust and confidence of youth in order to best guide them on that path and to maximize what youth gain from participating in the Center.
- **Inclusive:** The Center should be prepared, both with expertise and compassion, to serve a diverse population. All youth should feel welcomed and well-served, regardless of their ethnic or racial heritage, sexual orientation or gender identity, intellectual or physical disability, English language proficiency, or life experiences.
- **Trauma-Informed:** The youth served by the Center have all survived traumatic life experiences and may find it difficult to trust others or ask for help. Most lack social and emotional supports. The Center should be designed and managed in a trauma-informed manner, incorporating best practice interventions so staff and the overall environment can mitigate the effects of trauma.
- **Flexible:** The Center staff and programming should be nimble to respond to emerging needs or interests of the youth, new partnerships and new opportunities to strengthen the Center over time.

DHS further expects that the Center will be managed and staffed as described below. For each position, Proposers should provide as an attachment the CV of the proposed staff person or a proposed job description:

- Program Director: This person will set the tone of the Center and as such, this is a key position and must be filled by a strong, passionate and welcoming leader. The Director will oversee Center staff, collaborate with other providers on-site be responsible for quality assurance and monitoring of outcomes and be the main contact with DHS.
- Youth Coaches: These positions are a replacement of the current system of IL case managers. A job requirement is to genuinely like and enjoy working with this age group. The Coaches will introduce all youth to the available services and answer youth questions. They will work with youth to identify strengths and needs, to develop their individualized service plans, and to help overcome challenges or crises. For those youth without other case management supports (e.g., homeless youth or youth out of placement), the Coaches should be prepared to provide intensive supports as needed. For youth still involved in child welfare, the Coaches will communicate regularly with their caseworker, coordinate with their transition plan, be available to testify in court, and participate in Conferencing and Teaming.
 - When youth are first introduced to the Center, they will be assigned a Youth Coach; however, over time, they have the option to switch Coaches if they develop rapport with a different staff person. We hope that this approach will allow youth more flexibility in identifying those staff with whom they can best forge a supportive relationship. Proposers should estimate (and reflect in their budget) the number of Youth Coaches they will need for the Center.
- Outreach: Not all youth will be interested in coming to the Center and others may not be able to travel there easily. For example, public transportation from the Mon Valley to downtown could pose a barrier for some youth to fully participate in Center activities. The Center will need staff to serve as a mobile outreach team to provide supports and opportunities to these youth. This would also include engaging and offering preliminary services to youth who are placed out-of-county but are expected to return to Allegheny County. The outreach team should look for opportunities to partner with the YSP program to broaden and strengthen the impact of outreach. The Center will need to have at least one van to pick up groups of youth when necessary to attend Center activities or to go on special outings.

Proposers should take into consideration the information on the target population presented in the Background section of this RFP when designing their proposed program. They should feel free to suggest a name for the Center that will appeal to youth. DHS expects the program design to include the following elements but Proposers are encouraged to expand on these or to suggest alternative ideas:

- Engagement: Because services are voluntary and the Center will rely mostly on youth taking their own initiative to come to the site, the programming must be designed to appeal to youth and to provide mechanisms that help guide them toward taking advantage of services. All staff must be trained in how to best engage youth. Youth might initially join the Center to access a particular class or to hang out with friends but they will stay engaged if they feel supported and part of a community. The ability of the Center to keep youth engaged - measured in part by their participation in activities and services - will be tracked over time as part of the Performance-Based Contract [see page 18].

- Membership: In part to create a sense of community and belonging for youth, and in part to establish a mechanism to track participation and youth engagement, the Center is expected to create a formal membership process. All members will receive an ID card that will need to be swiped to enter the Center. Any youth that is eligible for IL services in Allegheny County may become a member. Most services will also be available to other disconnected youth without child welfare involvement (e.g., homeless youth, high school drop-outs, unemployed youth, and justice-involved youth).
- Assessment and Plans: As part of the membership intake process, youth should complete an assessment that captures their strengths, needs and interests. A proper and timely assessment will set the stage for successful engagement. With this input, the intake specialist or coach should work with the youth to identify activities and classes they might want to consider and to develop an Independent Service Plan (ISP). Each ISP can change and grow over time. Proposers should specify approaches to encourage youth to "own" their goals and mechanisms to track if youth are achieving their goals. As part of the Conferencing and Teaming process, the ISP should be coordinated with any other existing services plans that a youth might have (e.g., child welfare transition and permanency plans).
- A regular calendar of events: Youth should know when different activities and services are available and be able to plan around that schedule. Proposers should have a plan for sharing this information both at the Center and through the use of social media and other technologies, such as Facebook, Twitter, Google, Steel City Safe and other applications. The schedule should include regular classes held at the Center, services offered by partnering agencies that may only be offered weekly or monthly, volunteer opportunities, and opportunities to build life skills such as cooking a meal together, checking credit histories, or obtaining key documents (e.g., birth certificate, transcripts, driver's license). Proposers should consider offering issue-specific support groups for youth seeking peer support and guidance (e.g., parenting, LGBTQ or gender-specific subjects, post-secondary challenges). Youth can also be involved in planning special activities each month, such as guest speakers (including successful alumni) on youth-generated topics, field trips to colleges or career fairs, and holiday celebrations.
- Innovation: Proposers should design strategies for using technology and other innovations to encourage and track youth's participation (quality, duration and intensity), milestones reached, and medium and long-term outcomes achieved. For example, some ideas [please do not limit responses to these] include:
 - using the membership card to track all classes, activities and supports
 - a computer-based system that will alert staff when youth have entered the Center so that they can go out to greet a member that they haven't seen in a while or with whom they want to do some follow-up coaching or to just make the youth feel welcome.
 - a touch screen at entry that asks each youth to answer one or two questions to get any life updates (e.g., Are you still working at the supermarket? Are you still at CCAC? Where are you living?). Or it could ask a different question each day, but the same question of all youth, like a flash survey (e.g., Are you employed? Are you experiencing a housing crisis? Are you dressing up for Halloween this year?)
 - offer youth electronic badges or apps to collect for each major milestone or goal achieved. Help turn learning and achieving into a game.

- Youth Incentives: Proposers should design diverse strategies for recognizing major life milestones (e.g., birthdays, high school graduation) and incentivizing accomplishments (e.g., completing a vocational training course, retaining a job for six months). For example, incentives could range from a birthday party to money for clothing for a new job. The Center should also reward achievement through leadership positions and/or jobs at the Center. While IL programs have traditionally used cash incentives, and may continue to do so among other options, our research found cash incentives to spur program compliance often failed to improve the level of youth engagement.
- Crisis Management: The Center should be prepared to deal with behavioral health crises, personal conflicts and violent incidents that might occur at the facility. Proposers should develop an approach that integrates best practices with staff training and does not rely upon denying youth services when they do cause a problem. Proposers should have a strategy for training staff in approaches including (but not limited to) Restorative Justice, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and the Sanctuary Model.
- Coordination: Proposers should develop a plan for how they will integrate the various providers and partners into a shared decision-making process while maintaining the overall environment of a youth-led, trauma-informed and supportive space.
- Information Clearinghouse: In addition to all the resources available at the Center, the Center should stay proactively informed of other programs and opportunities that might become available in the community and of interest to the youth. For example, the Center staff should be familiar with workforce training and/or internship programs, Financial Opportunity Centers and performing arts opportunities.
- Facilitate Access to DHS-provided services: Center staff will be expected to participate in Conferencing and Teaming and to proactively work with DHS program offices such as Children, Youth and Families, Office of Behavioral Health, Office of Community Services and Office of Intellectual Disability, to help ensure youth are accessing needed services not available at the Center. In addition, the DHS IL Initiative offers several services that should be marketed, integrated and offered within the Center. They include but are not limited to:
 - *Education Liaisons*: DHS staff works one-on-one with youth to provide stable and continuous academic support. They assist each youth with their pursuit of high school graduation or a GED, post-secondary education, employment, vocational training, financial aid, scholarship searches and programs to enhance post-secondary success.
 - *Steel City Safe*: This is a web-based document storage service that is being customized for Allegheny County with youth input. All youth at the Center should be encouraged to create an account and to upload their life documents for safekeeping. Over time, DHS envisions Steel City Safe being used by youth for more than document storage. The portal could also provide an online space for youth to share advice and opinions with each other on services and opportunities around the County.
 - *Opportunity PassportTM*: This is a matched savings and financial education program in which DHS will match any savings designated for an approved purpose (e.g., a car, a computer, apartment security deposit). DHS is staffing this program and will provide the financial education curriculum. The Center will be expected to collaborate with the program to reach as many youth as possible and to offer the curriculum on-site.

- *Family Finding*: This model offers methods and strategies to help youth locate and engage with relatives. It is part of the Conferencing and Teaming process. The goal of Family Finding is to strengthen a youth's permanent connections. The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) should also be integrated into the services offered at the Center.
- *Youth Support Partners (YSP)*: YSPs are young adults, typically 19 through 25 years of age, who have personally experienced involvement in one or more human service systems. They are hired and trained to support youth, ages 14 through 21, who are currently receiving services through DHS.

II. Core Services

DHS has identified certain services that are to be provided within the Center. For each service, Proposers should specify if they will be provided by the Successful Proposer's own staff, sub-contracted to specialized providers (be specific), or provided by a community partner through co-location/use of the space. DHS has included below some community partners interested in providing services within the Center on a regular schedule; they will require space and coordination. In addition to these, the Proposer should propose other services and partners that it would incorporate into the Center and why.

Required Services:

- Life Skills: Center should offer a variety of ways and opportunities for youth to gain hands-on or interactive experiences with basic skills they will need as independent adults. These skills include: communication, dress, nutrition, cooking, hygiene, budgeting and financial literacy, and renters' rights and responsibilities. Beyond building skills, youth should have opportunities to create an email address, receive mail and/or voicemails at the Center, set up a checking or savings account, check credit reports and repair credit, as well as get assistance in obtaining a library card, a drivers' license, academic records and other essential documentation. Finally, the Center should offer bus passes/tickets to youth who have transportation obstacles.
- The Arts: The Center should offer an assortment of creative enrichment activities such as music, dance and/or visual arts. The arts can enrich youths' lives, be therapeutic, and often serve as the initial draw for youth to start coming to the Center.
- Housing: The Center should have the capacity to help youth navigate housing options - including emergency shelter, Independent Living residential programs, subsidized housing and rental assistance programs - and ensure that any youth experiencing a housing crisis receives appropriate support. DHS has reserved shelter beds for homeless youth. Family Links, Community Human Services (CHS) and Action Housing are existing DHS providers that serve homeless youth.
- Workforce Development: The Center should facilitate access to classes in job readiness, including résumé writing, workplace expectations and job search skills. The Center should have the capacity to link youth to job training programs, job leads and job placement within the community. The Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (3RWIB) recently issued an RFP for Career Pathway Centers for youth aged 16 through 24 (<http://www.trwib.org>). DHS and 3RWIB anticipate that the successful applicant to the 3RWIB RFP will provide these workforce development services within the Center. As such, Proposers to this RFP do not have to identify a workforce partner within their program design but should be prepared to collaborate with the Career Pathway Center.

- **Education:** The Center should facilitate access to regular GED classes, credit retrieval and other alternatives to completing high school. It should encourage post-secondary options in part by offering college tours. In addition, DHS Education Liaisons will be co-located at the Center to assist youth with high school retention and provide assistance in attaining their post-secondary educational goals.
- **Childcare and Parenting Supports:** The Center should offer childcare during some classes and activities to enable parenting youth to participate fully in the Center's offerings. Classes should also be offered specifically around the needs of parents such as learning appropriate child development and parenting skills. In addition, special supports for parenting teens – such as connecting them to a home visitation program – should be developed.
- **Food:** The Center should be prepared to meet youth's emergency food needs. This might include referrals to a food pantry, the provision of gift cards to purchase groceries or access to meals within the Center's kitchen.
- **Behavioral Health:** The Center should have the ability to counsel youth, provide brief treatments and make referrals to more intensive services when necessary. Proposers should have a strategy for how to integrate behavioral health services in such a way as to overcome the stigma and mistrust that youth may identify with these supports. Staff should be trained to respond to crises and be prepared to work with youth to connect them to more intensive mental health treatment when necessary. The Center might also consider linkages to Re:solve Crisis Network which can provide information and resources or assist with a behavioral health crisis.
- **Legal:** KidsVoice and the Office of Conflict Counsel¹² are interested in providing legal services on-site on a regular schedule. Proposers might consider other partnerships with legal agencies that work on issues not addressed by these agencies.
- **Prevention Education:** The Center should provide engaging and research-informed programming to educate and help youth make smarter decisions about smoking, drug and alcohol use, relationships, pregnancy and STDs.
- **Additional Support Services:** Other potential services and supports that Proposers might choose to include (as an in-house service or as a regularly scheduled partnership) are: a medical clinic, a gym, mentoring (including encouraging natural mentors and peer supports), or work/entrepreneurial opportunities within the Center. The Center should assist youth in accessing all resources and supports not available at the Center.

III. Facility Development

DHS expects the Successful Proposer to identify a space (either to rent or to create within its existing facilities) and to develop it into a Center that will be a comprehensive one-stop shop for transition-age youth services. In some cases, this will require working with an architect, space planner and/or contractor. Proposers should identify how they will select their partners for designing and developing

¹² These agencies find advocacy and legal representation for children and youth involved in the child welfare system.

the space, provide a timeframe for this process from beginning to the point when space will be ready for service provision, and provide a separate budget for this one-time process.

DHS prefers sites that require minimal new space design and minor renovation of existing space. DHS encourages Proposers to consider locations such as Wood Street Commons which allow for natural collaborations with other tenants in the same building. Proposers are encouraged to include a strategy for incorporating input from youth on the space design and amenities. DHS will be available to collaborate with the Successful Proposer to hold focus groups with youth.

Facility Criteria:

- **Environment**: The physical environment should be warm and welcoming. Youth input must be incorporated to design a space that youth find comfortable and appealing. Youth should see this space as a safe environment where they can hang out, seek advice and/or access services. It must be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.
- **Location**: Given the distances between neighborhoods in Allegheny County, limitations of public transportation and ease of access, DHS will initially support one site with comprehensive services in downtown Pittsburgh (or a Downtown-adjacent location). The identified location must be easily accessible by public transportation from as many areas of Allegheny County as possible. In the future, DHS may consider adding satellite centers in outlying areas such as the Mon Valley, with a smaller service array and a van for transporting youth downtown for additional services.
- **Facility Amenities**: At a minimum, the facility should include:
 - An entry foyer for greeting visitors and checking member identification
 - A common room/lounge for youth and staff to relax and interact in an informal setting and, potentially, to eat meals
 - Computer lab
 - Multi-use room for group meetings and classes
 - Kitchen (properly equipped) to prepare group meals and where youth can learn cooking skills
 - Office space and cubicles for staff (and partnering agencies)
 - Private one-on-one meeting spaces
 - Bathrooms: Separate men's and women's bathroom, as well as a family bathroom for teen parents or transgendered youth who would prefer not to use a gender-specific bathroom. The family bathroom should include a shower.
 - Lockers (with temporary locks)
 - Washer/dryer
 - Art and/or Music room (*designed with youth input*)
 - Some space for exercise or physical activity (e.g. basketball; dance) (*designed with youth input*)

Performance Measures:

The Successful Proposer will be expected to track both quantitative and qualitative data as described below. Given the drop-in nature of the Center, this will require innovative practices to collect outcome data and to support strong data management. The Successful Proposer will have a plan (some preliminary ideas were included above in the Scope of Services) for appropriate use of technology and incentives to encourage youth participation in data collection. The Successful Proposer will deliver

regular, timely and accurate client-level and Center-level data into the Allegheny County Key Information and Demographics System (KIDS) application. These data will be verified by DHS. Because the model of service delivery is changing and the population of served youth is expanding, baselines or targets for youth outcomes are not included at this time.

At a minimum, the Successful Proposer will track and report on the following measures:

- number and demographics of program referrals
- number and demographics of membership
- Multiple client-level measurements of engagement and service usage, tracked over time:¹³
 - attendance at the Center
 - participation in each program, class or activity
 - satisfactory completion of each program, class or activity (where appropriate)
 - substantive contacts with staff (e.g., Youth Coaches)
 - outside referrals

In addition, based upon the outcome measurements collected by the PA Department of Human Services, the successful Proposer will track and report on the following youth outcomes:

- Employment
 - number of youth who obtained employment (at least 80 hours/month)
 - number of youth who retained a job for at least six months Average hourly wage of employed youth
 - Education
 - For youth of high school age, number attending school and number passing to the next grade level
 - For youth of high school age, number actively preparing for post-secondary education (e.g., tutoring, applications, FAFSA, scholarship searches, college tours, counseling)
 - For youth eligible to have graduated high school, number who graduated high school, number who earned a GED
 - For youth who graduate high school or earned a GED, number enrolled in post-secondary education, number enrolled in military/armed forces
 - number of youth who graduated from a post-secondary education program
 - Housing
 - number of youth within a year who experienced homelessness for one night or more
 - number of youth paying rent and maintaining an independent home for at least six months
 - number of youth over the age of 18 involved with housing services other than shelter
 - Financial Capability
 - number of youth with a checking account
 - number of youth with a savings account
 - number of youth who purchased an asset through Opportunity Passport
 - Prevention and Well-being
-

- number of pregnant youth/number of parenting youth
- % of parenting youth who are caring for their children in their own home
- % of parenting youth who are active with CYF as a parent
- number of youth who report having a regular medical provider
- number of youth who report exercising at least twice a week
- number of youth with documented health insurance (including Medical Assistance)
- Permanency/Community Connections
 - number of youth who can name at least one permanent connection (positive, caring adult in their life who is not a paid staff member)
 - number of youth with a photo ID, birth certificate and Social Security card
 - number of youth with a driver's license
 - Of those youth who end their Center membership (at age 24 or before), number who have the skills, supports and financial capacity to be self-sufficient

Finally, DHS is interested in tracking qualitative outcome data. The Successful Proposer must have mechanisms in place to track qualitative outcome data for the areas below:

- Youth satisfaction with the Center's environment
- Youth satisfaction with services and resources available
- Youth satisfaction with their involvement in decisions and operation of the Center
- Youth satisfaction with their overall experience at the Center
- Impact of youth voice on the Center's operation

Increasingly, DHS is introducing performance-based payments into contracts throughout its program offices. While the core funding for the Center will be program funded, DHS will move toward a payment structure that includes incentives for performance. For example, if the Center can successfully increase the number of youth served, assist them to engage in services and achieve major milestones and outcomes, the Successful Proposer will be rewarded financially. The first year of the contract will be used to increase youth involvement in services and activities. DHS will work closely with the Successful Proposer to establish baseline measurements and select key outcomes for performance-based payments moving forward.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND FORMAT

A complete Proposal must include all of the components listed below, submitted as a word document or PDF (budget may 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; other than required attachments, no additional attachments will be accepted (attachments may be included as a link).

Proposal Content

Required Attachments:

1. **Executive Summary (1 page)** should include:

- a) Proposer information including key staff and a description of organizational capacity to operate the Center
- b) A brief description of the proposed vision and strategy for creating and running the Center

2. Scope of Services Narrative (20 pages) should respond to all three components of the Scope of Services requested by DHS in the manner set forth below:

Component One: Center Management and Service Coordination

- Describe your Vision for the Center and Strategy to operationalize that Vision
- Describe your Program Design and Strategy to operationalize the Program Design
- Describe outreach strategies and methods to engage youth
- Identify strategy for Core Staffing (CVs and/or job descriptions may be attached and do not count against the 20 page narrative)
- Describe your strategy for staff training, supervision and quality assurance
- Describe your strategy for tracking and reporting Center outcomes and youth outcomes (see Performance Measures, pp. 16-18)

Component Two: Core Services

- For each service listed on pp 14-15, specify how that service will be provided (e.g., Proposer's staff, specific sub-contracted providers, or a community partner that is interested in co-location or providing the service at the Center on a regular basis)
- Describe the qualifications of each and why each approach was selected
- Include, as attachments, Letters of Support from all proposed service providers and partners
- Describe and justify any additional proposed services

Component Three: Facility Development

- Describe your plan for locating and designing the Center and how it addresses the criteria included on pages 15-16
- Describe a strategy for incorporating youth input into the design
- Prepare a detailed timeline for site acquisition/rental and build-out. Include implementation dates for deliverables and status updates

3. Organizational Experience Narrative (3 pages)

- a) Provide a brief overview of your entire organization, the range of all services you offer, current contracts, your geographic coverage and the size of your operating budget.
- b) Describe your organizational experience working with at-risk youth ages 16 through 24. Include data that demonstrates the extent to which your work assisted clients in achieving desired outcomes.
- c) Describe your organizational experience running a facility-based program. Include specific examples of how you dealt with (a) coordination or collaboration with other agencies; (b) a clientele accessing voluntary services; and (c) outreach.
- d) Describe your organizational experience using data to measure and improve program and client outcomes.

- e) Given your organizational experience, why do you think a one-stop shop approach can improve the engagement of youth in services and increase youth achievement? What are the challenges you anticipate from this model?
- f) Describe your experience providing culturally-competent, linguistically-competent, trauma-informed, and gender-responsive services. Include specific information on staff training, how staff skills and proficiency are assessed in this area, and what steps supervisors and managers take to ensure that services delivered meet these criteria.

4. Budget and Budget Narrative

1. Include a copy of your organization's most recent audited financial statements.
2. Operating Budget (one year) and Budget Narrative: Provide an annualized line item budget and narrative that explains the purpose of each line item and how amounts were calculated. Use the attached budget template. The budget should clearly relate to the Proposer's program design, including all sub-contracts, as described in the Narrative. Please include on-going facility-related costs (rent, utilities, etc.) in this budget. Clearly indicate any additional funding sources and if they are tied to specific budget line items. The annual budget should fall within an estimated range of \$2.5 to \$3 million, net to County.
3. Facility Development Budget and Budget Narrative (separate from the amount specified above): Provide a line item budget and narrative that explains the purpose of each line item and how amounts were calculated. For comparative purposes, the costs for the space design and renovation should be amortized over a one-year period even if in practice some of the costs will be amortized over multiple years.

5. References (1 page)

Include name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization.

6. Required Attachments (These forms are available on our website at

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.aspx>)

- Cover Page
- MWDBE Participation Statement form
- W9
- Vendor Creation Form
- Budget Template

SCORING AND SELECTION PROCESS

Scoring Criteria

The narrative and budget sections will be evaluated on a scale of 100 points, based on the content of the proposal as described above.

1. Narrative on Scope of Services (75 points)

2. Organizational Experience (15 points)

3. Budget and Budget Narrative (10 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:

- 1. Received from the Proposer by the due date/time**
- 2. Properly signed by the Proposer**
- 3. 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 evaluation committee will use an appropriate evaluation method, such as a matrix, to analyze each Proposer's qualifications and responses.
- The County retains the 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

Shortlisted Proposers may be invited to give an oral presentation. In that case, selected 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.

Final Award Process

Based upon evaluation results, references, DHS contract history (if applicable), oral presentations and/or negotiations, the evaluation team may 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 would then issue a recommendation to the County Manager who will make the final determination concerning the award of the 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 April 13, 2015. 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/dhs/solicitations.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. DHS may post the Successful Proposal on the *Archive of Past Solicitations* section of the DHS website.

CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Agreement Terms and Conditions

Following approval by the County Manager, 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. Information about contracting with DHS and the standard County terms and conditions which will be included in the Agreement can be found on the DHS website at: <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/contracting.aspx>

[HIPAA compliance](#)

DHS is a “covered entity” under the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The Successful Proposer must describe how it will 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

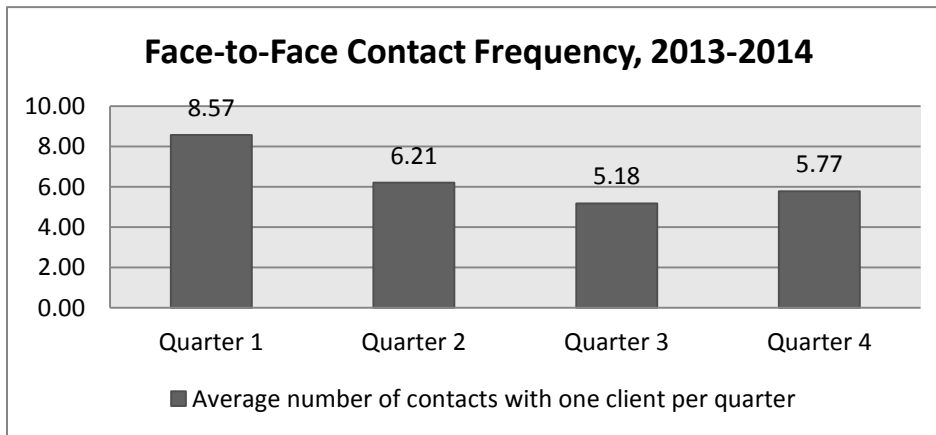
Proposer agrees to not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, consumer or any other person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression,; sexual orientation, disability, marital status, familial status, 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.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Intensity and Duration of Existing IL Services

Intensity

An analysis of face-to-face staff (DHS and provider) contacts with the 199 youth who began IL services between January and June 2013 showed that the frequency of contacts decreased over time. **Chart 1** shows the average number of face-to-face contacts with a youth per 90-day quarters beginning with the day of first contact. Of the 199 youth in this cohort, only 36 (18%) sustained a high-level of service intensity the entire year, with an above average number of contacts in each quarter. Conversely, 87 (44%) received low intensity services with a below average number of contacts for each quarter of the year. While the reasons for differences in service intensity among youth are complex, DHS is hoping to increase (and measure) the volume of meaningful interactions that youth have with services.

Chart 1: Face-to-Face Contact Frequency by Quarters, January 2013 through June 2014



Duration

An analysis of four years' worth of data on youth who have exited services shows that youth stay in the IL program on average for 1.25 years, without much of a statistical difference for gender or race. **Table 1** shows the breakdown of different time periods and the percentage of youth associated with these tiers. Age for enrollment into the program varies although most youth (71 percent) begin IL services when they are 16 or 17 years old. The enrollment rate significantly drops for older youth. In the belief that youth will benefit from extended access to services, moving forward, DHS is interested in increasing the average length of time that youth participate in transition age programming

Table 1: Length of Stay for Exited Youth, 2010 through 2014

Year Breakdown	Number of Youth	% of Youth
0-1	546	49%
1-2	318	28%
Over 2 years	259	23%
Grand Total	1123	100%