



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Tenancy Sustaining Support Services Program

RFP Posting:

Thursday, May 16, 2024

Office Hours:

10 a.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, May 22, 2024

Questions Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, June 14, 2024

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, June 27, 2024

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

August 2024

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

Contents

Acronyms and Definitions

The RFP at a Glance

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing This RFP

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

Acronyms and Definitions

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

1. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
2. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3. Bonfire: The County's online procurement software. Proposers must have a Bonfire account to submit a Response to this RFP.
4. Continuum of Care (CoC): A geographically based group of representatives that carries out the planning responsibilities of Allegheny County's HUD Continuum of Care Program
5. Contract Services: The specific services that the Successful Proposer agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP as described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
6. Coordinated Entry: A standardized method for connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to the resources available in a geographic area. The Allegheny Link and its Field Unit are the Coordinated Entry entities in Allegheny County.
7. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
8. DHS Bonfire Portal: A Bonfire webpage specific to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services where Proposers can view open, past and awarded solicitations released through Bonfire
9. Family Household: A household consisting of at least one adult and one child. DHS anticipates serving up to 80 Family Households through this Program.
10. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): an information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and people at risk of homelessness
11. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Program: A program designed to support housing stability by providing permanent housing, housing assistance (e.g., long-term leasing or rental assistance) and supportive services to households with at least one member (adult or child) with a disability
12. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
13. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
14. Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Program: A program in which participants receive permanent housing, short-term (up to three months) and medium-term (4-24 months) tenant-based rental assistance, and supportive services
15. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
16. RFP: Request for Proposals
17. RFP Opportunity Page: The Bonfire webpage where the RFP and all supporting documents are listed and where the RFP submission documents must be uploaded for a Proposal to be considered for review

18. Single/Adult-Only Household: A household consisting of a single adult or multiple adults. DHS anticipates serving up to 400 Single/Adult-Only Households through this RFP.
19. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

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

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

Allegheny County, through its Department of Human Services (DHS), is soliciting Proposals from one or more Proposers to establish and operate a Tenancy Sustaining Support Services Program(s) (hereinafter referred to the Program) to provide support services to individuals and families who have recently moved into housing after experiencing homelessness. Services offered through the Program should include, but not be limited to, education, coaching and referral to additional services for tenants, communication coordination and conflict resolution/management for tenants and landlords.

DHS is engaged in an array of efforts to increase the availability of deeply affordable housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The Program(s) being procured through this RFP will provide individualized but low-intensity housing-focused support services to help these individuals and families remain stably housed. Individuals receiving these services will hereinafter be referred to as Participants.

OPTIONAL:

Please join us for a [virtual office hours session](#) on Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time. For more information, see Section 4.1.

Award Details

DHS intends to enter into an Agreement with one or more Successful Proposers to provide Contract Services for an initial term of one year with a County option to renew thereafter. Projects will begin in Summer 2024.

DHS intends to serve up to 480 individual households in the first year, including up to 80 family households (i.e., households consisting of at least one adult and one minor). Within these numbers, Proposers may propose to serve any number of Single/Adult-Only Households and/or Family Households they have the capacity to serve. Proposers should specify how many of each they are proposing to serve and provide a realistic estimate and strong justification of costs related to that target. All proposed costs will be considered for reasonableness and the final budget and contract terms will be negotiated with the Successful Proposer. DHS will work with the Successful Proposer(s) on the final award amounts.

We anticipate that the long-term sustainability of these services can be at least partially supported through Medicaid reimbursement. DHS will work with the Successful Proposers(s) regarding any future Medicaid reimbursement processes, which will be determined in compliance with Medicaid regulations and in collaboration with DHS, Community Care Behavioral Health (CCBH) and the Successful Proposer(s).

County-contracted providers are typically paid for services via a monthly reimbursement model for costs incurred. If you anticipate that your organization would benefit from an advance of funds to begin the contracted work prior to incurring costs, please detail the

requested amount in your budget and budget narrative, including a proposed schedule for total repayment of the advance, via the monthly cost reimbursement process, by the end of DHS's upcoming fiscal year on June 30, 2025.

Who can submit a Proposal

Anyone, including non-profit organizations, governmental units and authorities, for-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals, is eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. Entities do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to submit a Proposal, but they must meet all of Allegheny County’s contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capability to provide the Contract Services.

What’s important to us

In order to effectively serve the target population and meet the goals outlined in this RFP, DHS expects the Successful Proposer(s) to:

- Demonstrate a strong track record of helping people remain stably housed, or the ability to.
- Have experience working successfully with both tenants and landlords, including both public housing agencies and private market landlords.
- Demonstrate a commitment to and plan for providing high-quality services to all individuals and families so that everyone feels welcome, well-served and supported regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.
- Have a flexible approach to service delivery that is responsive to the housing sustainability needs of Participants.
- Empower tenants, through education, about their rights and responsibilities.
- Possess deep knowledge of the array of existing services available to support the sustainability of housing.
- Have the ability/capacity to quickly respond to concerns and requests from Participants and/or landlords to resolve problems before they become a crisis (including eviction actions).

Proposals must be submitted electronically by logging into or creating an account on [Bonfire](#) (See Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal).

Timeline

RFP Posting	Thursday, May 16, 2024
Office Hours (see section 4.1 for details)	Wednesday, May 22, at 10 a.m. Eastern Time
Questions Deadline	Friday, June 14 at 3 p.m. Eastern Time
Last Website and Q&A Update	Thursday, June 20 at 6 p.m. Eastern Time

Submission Deadline	Thursday, June 27 at 3 p.m. Eastern Time
Estimated Award Decision/Notification	August 2024

Who we are

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 RFP

Allegheny County has been experiencing an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness. These increases are seen nationally as well, with unsheltered homelessness surpassing sheltered homelessness for individuals for the first time in 2020.¹ Allegheny County Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data² demonstrated a 24% increase in the number of people staying in emergency shelters or experiencing unsheltered homelessness between 2022 and 2023.³

Fundamentally, homelessness is a housing problem, driven by the gap between rising rental costs, low rental vacancy rates and incomes that are not keeping pace. In 2022, Allegheny County experienced a 14.8% increase in rental prices. A single person living alone on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) was receiving only \$841 per month, while the cost of a modest efficiency apartment in Allegheny County was \$917 per month. Not a single room for rent available in the County rented for less than 70% of an SSI payment. In Pennsylvania, a person making minimum wage needs to work 130 hours to afford a modest 2-bedroom apartment. When looking at individuals staying for longer than two weeks in an adult-only shelter,⁴ local data demonstrate that 64% are at relatively lower risk for adverse effects occurring⁵ with 76 percent experiencing homelessness for the first time and 46 percent of those having some income. Together, these results suggest that many of the individuals staying in shelter could successfully sustain housing with a relatively low level of support, if it were accessible to them. Additionally, through longstanding engagement between DHS/providers and landlords, we know of many landlords who have been reluctant to provide housing to people

¹ <https://www.usich.gov/federal-strategic-plan/overview>

² The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is an annually conducted count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

³ <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/2023/05/23/point-in-time-count-of-people-experiencing-homelessness-annual-reports/>

⁴ Homeless Management Information System Data

⁵ [The Allegheny Housing Assessment \(AHA\)](#) uses administrative data to predict the likelihood of three types of events occurring in a person’s life if they remain unhoused over the next 12 months: a mental health inpatient stay, a jail booking and frequent use (4 or more visits) of hospital emergency rooms. These events serve as indicators of harm if a person remains unhoused. The AHA assigns a risk score that is used as part of the prioritization process for homeless housing programs.

exiting shelter without a formal tie to a service program but who would do so if they had quick access to a provider to call if concerns arose. This new service is meant to expand housing opportunities for people with no formal Rapid Rehousing (RRH) or Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program involvement by offering responsive but low-intensity support services that landlords and participants can access, when necessary, to allay some of these landlord concerns.

As DHS works with several partners across the County to bring more deeply affordable housing units online and make them available to individuals and families experiencing homelessness, the Program(s) procured through this RFP will support Participants in successfully maintaining that housing. We anticipate that supplementing housing with a light level of housing-sustaining support will help these households maintain their housing.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is requesting Proposals for a Tenancy Sustaining Support Services Program that will effectively help maintain safe and stable residency for individuals who had been experiencing homelessness and are now newly housed.

A. Target Population

Programs may serve single or family households--with or without children—who had been experiencing homelessness and are now newly housed. These households would have recently been staying in shelter; it was likely their first experience with homelessness. Relative to other households experiencing homelessness, they are at a lower risk for experiencing a mental health inpatient stay, a jail booking and frequent use (4 or more visits) of hospital emergency rooms if they remain unhoused over the next 12 months. As such, these households are not prioritized for more intensive housing programs, such as PSH or RRH, and they will have recently moved into housing that they are paying for through their own income and/or permanent subsidies, such as the housing choice voucher program or public housing. This program is designed to provide support services to help them maintain their housing.

In our shelter system, Black households are overrepresented, with Black individuals making up 51% of people using adult-only shelters, and 77% of the heads of households in family shelters, while Black individuals make up only 14% of the County population. Successful Proposers must have the capacity to provide high-quality services to all individuals and families so that everyone feels welcome, well-served and supported regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

Further demographic information regarding shelter use in Allegheny County can be found at the links available below:

- <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/2024/02/08/people-using-adult-only-emergency-shelters-in-allegheny-county/>

- <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/2024/02/08/families-using-emergency-shelters-in-allegheny-county/>

B. Service Description

Programs will be expected to effectively engage with both tenants and landlords in support of maintaining housing stability for Participants. The Program is intended to provide low-intensity support focused on core housing stability issues. The Program will not provide rental assistance but will provide tenancy-sustaining supports for up to one year for each Participant.

The specific supports provided will be guided by the needs of each Participant. In practice, this means that the degree of engagement with individual Participant will vary, based on their needs, but no Participant is expected to receive the level of intensive one-on-one case management provided in RRH or PSH programs. As such, Proposers will be expected to effectively establish processes and mechanism so that tenants and landlords know they are available and how to connect with them, ensuring that when needs arise, Proposers are accessible, available and responsive. To this end, we anticipate that Proposers will maintain regular communication with both tenants and landlords. Communication may take the form of group outreach to all Participants, such as automated text messaging, hosting regular educational workshops (e.g., a forum on the rights and responsibilities of tenants), developing and distributing accessible materials for tenants and landlords, as well as other group and individual methods of continued engagement.

Tenant Support

- Education on tenant and landlord roles, rights and responsibilities
- Eviction prevention planning & coordination
- Coaching on developing/maintaining relationships with landlords/property managers
- Coaching and/or education on independent living and life skills including, but not limited to budgeting, financial literacy and credit improvement
- Assistance resolving disputes with landlords and/or neighbors
- Referrals for additional and/or more intensive supports related to housing maintenance, such as mediation, credit improvement, benefit enrollment and life skills
- Programs are not expected to conduct assessments or establish holistic service plans with Participants. However, should needs arise that put the Participant's housing tenancy in jeopardy, we expect that the Program will be able to make referrals to services, including resources and services for behavioral health needs.

Landlord Support

- Consistent and responsive point of contact regarding new tenants who recently experienced homelessness
- Communication designed to build trust, resolve problems and foster a mutually beneficial working relationship
- Mediation and conflict management

D. Staffing

Successful Proposer(s) will establish a staffing complement with sufficient full-time equivalents and qualifications to address the target population's needs. Successful Proposer(s) are also expected to have the necessary knowledge and experience to leverage other housing sustaining services in the County by making appropriate referrals.

E. Referral Process

DHS expects that all referrals to the Programs managed by Successful Proposer(s) will be made through DHS's Coordinated Entry unit (Allegheny Link). Successful Proposer(s) will be responsible for accepting a referral and quickly engaging the Participant.

Referrals will be made when a person exits shelter and moves into housing they are renting with their own income and/or permanent subsidies. Upon receiving the referral, the Successful Proposer(s) is expected to make contact with the Participant to inform them about the Program and how to access services.

F. Data Collection and Reporting

Successful Proposer(s) will be responsible for entering data into HMIS, including basic data about service provision and narrative reports; DHS will work with the Successful Proposer(s) to determine which data will be shared with DHS.

There may be some cases in which a Proposer desires to collect more detailed data on the intervention than required. If requested, DHS will provide technical assistance to Proposers to support data collection. Below are a few examples of the types of data DHS may require or that a Proposer may wish to collect:

- Narrative summary of services provided and the impact those services have had on individuals, their loved ones and/or their community
- Narrative summary indicating what is working well about the Project and what challenges or barriers the Program is facing
- Number of unique individuals/families served
- Number of services provided
- Number of referrals to other services (and type of service)

H. Budget

The Proposer should provide a detailed line-item budget for a one-year program term. The budget and accompanying narrative should describe all assumptions and clearly articulate how costs were calculated. This should include reference to the total number of Participants served in the Proposed Program and Participant-to-staff ratio.

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

DHS will evaluate Proposals based upon the evaluation criteria listed below. Proposers must address their qualifications in their Proposal by responding to the requested items or questions in the Response Form. Proposers should download and type their responses directly into the Response Form available on the Active Solicitations webpage at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us/>. The maximum score that a Proposal can receive is 105 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Organizational Experience (30 points total)

- Clear and concise statement about why you feel that you are the best candidate for delivering the Program and how the proposed Program fits within your mission (5 points)
- Clear description of organization's experience providing tenancy-sustaining supports to households, including working with landlords to help low-income households maintain housing and helping low-income households address challenges in maintaining housing (10 points)
- Commitment to and plan for providing high-quality services to all individuals and families so that everyone feels welcome, well-served and supported regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency and/or life experiences. Include demographics of Proposer's leadership and staff (5 points)
- Strong organizational and management structure including evidence of effective internal communication, external coordination, an adequate financial accounting system, and an absence of unresolved monitoring or audit findings for any grants (5 points)
- Experience maintaining databases/using software for reporting/analysis, tracking service interactions and/or staff management (5 points)

Tenancy Sustaining Support Services Plan (45 points)

- Description of the project scope, including the number of Participants and household types to be served annually (5 points)
- Comprehensive plan for provision of support to help Participants sustain housing. The response should clearly describe how you will deliver the scope of services as described in this RFP. (20 points)
- Engagement strategy with tenants and landlords that will ensure that services are accessible and appropriately utilized (10 points)
- Demonstration of ability to effectively make linkages to other community services, as appropriate, to support Participants in maintaining their housing (10 points)

Program Staffing and Administration (20 points)

- Strong staffing plan including Participant-to-staff ratio, Program staff positions, qualifications, recruitment, training and performance management (10 points)
- Appropriate schedule for the proposed activities, a management plan, and a method for assuring effective and timely completion of all work (5 points)
- Plan to track and achieve performance standards (5 points)

Budget and Budget Narrative (10 points)

- Detailed line-item budget that reflects the costs associated with implementing the Program for a one-year period (5 points)
- A budget narrative that clearly explains all assumptions and justifies all line items in the proposed budget (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Prepare

a. Office Hours

- DHS will hold “RFP open office hours” at 10 a.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, May 22, 2024, via Microsoft Teams. Anyone interested in the RFP and in submitting a Proposal may drop in during this time to ask questions.
- Attendance during office hours is not required in order to submit a Proposal. Preliminary answers will be provided orally for questions asked during the office hours. Final, definitive answers will be posted in writing on the RFP Opportunity Page and the DHS Solicitations webpage.
- Prospective Proposers can join the office hours by:
 - Calling (267) 368-7515 and using Conference ID 992 770 151#
 - 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_ODA5ZWVmMTUtOWM1Zi00MTg4LWI1YjMtMUY1YmNjNmZkZDMz%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2214304098-3e8b-4bb4-b68e-65e6055b37bf%22%7d

4.2 Submit a Proposal

- Proposers should take time to review and understand the RFP in its entirety including:
 - The background (see Section 1: Why DHS Is Issuing This RFP)
 - The narrative (see Section 2: What DHS Is Looking For)
 - The requirements (see Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)
 - The evaluation process (see Section 5: How DHS Will Evaluate Your Proposal)
- Proposers must use the Response Form to develop your Proposal. Type your responses to each requested item directly into the Response Form. It is available on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) on our DHS Bonfire Portal and on our Active Solicitations webpage with the RFP announcement at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us/>.
- Collaborative Proposals
 - Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more entities partner to apply together, are permitted. Collaborative Proposals can include:

- i. **Lead Agency:** The County can enter a contract with only one partner of a Collaborative Proposal. Therefore, a Collaborative Proposal must identify one entity as the Lead Agency that will be the contracting party with the County. The Lead Agency should be the Proposer.
 - ii. **Partners:** Partners must be committed to a role in carrying out the Contract Services and will be compensated for that role. Collaborative Proposals must attach a signed letter of commitment from each Partner that details and agrees to their role in the Contract Services.
 - Entities may participate in more than one Collaborative Proposal.
- d. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal that includes the following attachments:
 - Response Form (available on the RFP Opportunity Page and the Active Solicitation Webpage)
 - Partner commitment letters, if applicable
 - W-9
 - Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 7.1 and 7.2)
- e. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed either above or in the Response Form.
- f. Proposers must make sure to complete each section of the Response Form and to stay within any word counts or page limits specified in the Response Form.
- g. **Proposals must be submitted electronically by logging into or creating an account on Bonfire at <https://allegHENYcountyDHS.bonfirehub.com> and uploading the required submission documents to the appropriate [RFP Opportunity Page](#) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, June 27, 2024, to be considered for review. If you are having trouble making an account or uploading your documents, please contact Bonfire Support. You can also reach out to the DHS Procurement Team at DHSProposals@allegHENYcounty.us or (412) 350-6352.**
- h. All Proposals must be submitted before the deadline! Once the deadline has passed, the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) will no longer accept Proposals. If a Proposal 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. Proposers will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their Proposal. If a Proposer does not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting their Proposal, please contact: DHSProposals@allegHENYcounty.us.

4.3 How to Contact DHS about this RFP and RFP Communications

- a. If you have any questions about this RFP, please use the Vendor Discussion feature through the DHS Bonfire Portal at <https://allegHENYcountyDHS.bonfirehub.com> on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#), or email us at DHSProposals@allegHENYcounty.us.
 - a. All content-related questions must be submitted by the Questions Deadline at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, June 14, 2024.
 - b. You may submit technical or logistical questions at any time, even after the Questions Deadline.

- b. All information about the RFP, including answers to all content-related questions and any changes or amendments, will be posted on the [Bonfire RFP Opportunity Page](#) and on our Active Solicitations website at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us/>. Once you have created an account and indicated you are interested in this RFP, you will receive automatic email updates through Bonfire when any questions, changes or amendments are available.
 - a. Please check our DHS Bonfire Portal and the website regularly for answers to questions, additional information and changes to the RFP or the RFP process.
 - b. The webpage will be updated only on Thursdays, with any new information visible after 6 p.m.
 - c. The last Q&A and website update for this RFP will be on Thursday, June 20, 2024, at 6 p.m. We will make every effort not to post any new information after this time; however, we reserve the right to post new information in emergency circumstances.

4.4 New Provider Requirements

Any Successful Proposer(s) without a current Allegheny County DHS contract must submit the DHS New Provider Application and its supporting documents upon Notice of Intent to Award. Proposers are not required to submit this documentation with their Proposal.

- a. The DHS New Provider Application is available at our Active Solicitations website under the “Required documents” bar at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- b. The DHS New Provider Application asks for audited financial reports for the last three years. If a Proposer does not have audited financial reports for the last three years, then the Proposer may submit other financial documentation that attest to the financial health of the organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing adequate financial documentation is a requirement of contracting through Allegheny County.

4.5 Other Information

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

4.6 Pennsylvania’s Right-to-Know Law

Proposers should be aware that all documents and materials submitted in response to this RFP 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 Proposer available to a requestor after an award of an Agreement is made.

If the Proposer includes any information within its Proposal that the Proposer asserts is either a “trade secret” or “confidential proprietary information,” as those terms are defined under the RTKL, the Proposer must include with its Proposal a written statement signed by an authorized representative of the Proposer identifying those portions or parts of its Proposal that the Proposer believes constitute a “trade secret” or “confidential proprietary information” and provide contact information to enable DHS to contact the Proposer in the event that the County receives a Right-To-Know request for the Proposal. The Proposer 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 Proposer explaining why the Proposal 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 Proposal or any portion thereof. The County will notify the Proposer of its decision whether to grant or deny the request either in whole or in part.

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

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

5.1 Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

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

- 3 – Meets expectations
- 4 – Exceeds expectations
- 5 – Outstanding

- c. 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 Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP. The Committee will have discretion to either: (1) recommend to the DHS Director that a reduced number of Proposals be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation to the Committee, interview or a site visit or (2) recommend to the DHS Director that DHS request authorization for the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Proposer(s).
- e. As described in d above, DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have the exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Proposals for more extensive review. In this case, DHS may request that shortlisted Proposers make a formal oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee. Each Committee member will individually score the oral presentation of the shortlisted Proposers using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that a shortlisted Proposer’s oral presentation can receive is 15 points:
 - Presentation demonstrates Proposer’s ability to implement the Contract Services effectively (5 points)
 - Proposer’s answers to Evaluation Committee’s questions demonstrate Proposer’s ability to implement the Contract Services (5 points)
 - Proposer’s presentation is thoughtful and well prepared (5 points)
- f. DHS will tally the 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 scores and arrive at a consensus as to which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP.
- g. The Committee will submit its recommendation for award of an Agreement or Agreements to the DHS Director for approval. The Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
- h. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
- i. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer’s references.
- j. As part of determining a Proposer’s eligibility to enter a contract with Allegheny County, all Proposers’ financial audits or other documentation will be reviewed by DHS fiscal analysts to ensure a Proposer’s financial stability.
- k. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with a Proposer as a result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**

- l. All Proposers will be notified of the County’s final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
- m. Proposers that are not awarded an Agreement but who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

5.2 Other Requirements

For a Proposal 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.

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

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, Successful Proposers 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. In addition, Successful Proposers must be able to meet the insurance requirements necessary to provide the Contract Services. Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County and the insurance requirements are available in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#) and the [Insurance Requirements Overview](#).

6.1 Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE) Requirements

Allegheny County has MWDBE goals of 13% participation for Minority Business Enterprises and 2% participation for Women Business Enterprises and expects that Successful Proposers will make a “good faith effort” to help the County meet these goals.

- a. All Proposals 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 Proposers must complete Section 1 – Contact Information and attach their MWDBE Diversity Plan (see Section 4 – Sample Diversity Policy).
 - If the Proposer can meet the MWDBE contract goals, the Proposer should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement. Proposers also must attach the MWDBE certifications of the firms cited in the Participation Statement.

- If the Proposer would like to request a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, the Proposer should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement and Section 3 – MWDBE Participation Waiver Request Form.
- b. MWDBE forms and resources can be found on the [RFP Opportunity page](#) and through the links provided below:
 - [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](#).
- d. A listing of certified DBE vendors can be found at <https://paucp.dbesystem.com/>.

6.2 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 Successful Proposers will make a “good faith effort” to help the County meet 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 are from all bonding requirements.
- b. All Proposals must include either of the following:
 - If the Proposer can 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) cited in the Participation Statement.
 - If the Proposer requests a waiver from participating in the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement and VOSB Waiver Request are required.
- e. VOSB forms and resources can be found on the RFP Opportunity page and through the links provided below:
 - [VOSB Participation Statement](#)
 - [VOSB Waiver Request](#)
- c. A listing of Small Businesses, Small Diverse Businesses, and Veteran Business Enterprises (SB, SDB, and VBE) can be found at www.dgs.internet.state.pa.us/suppliersearch.

6.3 HIPAA Compliance

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

6.4 Cyber Security

- a. Successful Proposers must meet the minimum computer specifications that begin on page 14 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- b. All electronic devices must have sufficient security software and settings to minimize the risk of an information breach.
- c. Successful Proposers must also have policies in place to ensure that electronic devices are physically secure when not in use (e.g., locked in a vehicle trunk, password protected).

6.5 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Requirements

By submitting a Proposal, a Proposer agrees to not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, independent contractor, client or any other person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, familial status, age (40 or over), or use of a guide or support animal because of blindness, deafness or physical disability.

6.6 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).