

RFQ Response Form

RFQ for Participation in a University/Government Research Partnership

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name: Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Steven M. Albert, Professor & Chair, Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences

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Partners included in this Application: Graduate School of Public Health: Dean's Office, Department of Health Policy and Management, Public Health Dynamics Lab, Center for Health Equity

How did you hear about this RFQ? Discussions with Eric Hulsey, Data Analytics and Research Evaluation, DHS

REFERENCES

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

Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as references.

Karen Hacker, MD, Director, Allegheny County Department of Health, [REDACTED]

Michael Yonas, DrPH, The Pittsburgh Foundation, [REDACTED]

Dr. David Kelley, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Medical Assistance Programs, [REDACTED]

CERTIFICATION

Please check the following before submitting your Proposal, as applicable:

By submitting this proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have 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.

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REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 75 points. Your response to this section should not exceed 10 pages.

Background (30 points)

1. *Describe your experience and/or interest in conducting research on topics related to improving local government/social services.*

The Graduate School of Public Health has a long history of research on health-related social needs and use of human services to address public health challenges. These efforts span large data analytic projects, program evaluations, and innovative interventions. Our partners include county (Allegheny County Health Department, Allegheny County Medical Examiner) and state (PA Department of Health, PA Department of Human Services, PA Department of Aging, Office of Long-Term Living) agencies, federal entities (CDC, HHS), and hospitals and managed care organizations (UPMC, Allegheny Health Network). Pitt Public Health faculty have spearheaded or collaborated on a number of relevant projects with potential to improve local government and social services. Relevant projects recently completed or currently in the field include the following:

- *PA Opioid Dashboard.* Pitt Public Health faculty are working with the PA Department of Health to bring together datasets from a broad range of Commonwealth agencies in order to visualize and contextualize data and use predictive analytics to understand the impact of the opioid crisis on families, the economy, the criminal justice system, and opioid-related medical conditions.
- *PA Falls Prevention.* Faculty continue work with the PA Department of Aging to develop the evidence base for *Healthy Steps for Older Adults* and *Healthy Steps in Motion*, two falls prevention programs developed by the Commonwealth. Our research allowed the programs to be certified as evidence-based by the federal Administration on Aging and eligible for Title IIID funding.
- *PA Long Term Care Eligibility Determination, Revision for MLTSS Transition.* Faculty are working with the PA Department of Human Services and Office of Long-Term Living to redesign assessment of disability in Medicaid waiver consumers and eligibility for long term services and supports.
- *Evaluation of Early Head Start.* The Evaluation Institute at the Department of Behavioral & Community Health Sciences (BCHS) conducts the annual evaluation of this PA program.
- *ACHD DASH.* Faculty in the Public Health Dynamics Lab and Department of Health Policy and Management (HPM) worked with ACHD to assess the effects of cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions at fine geospatial resolution and used these results to model potential improvements in life expectancy and years of life lived without disability, given changes in access to care and treatment.
- *Predicting and forecasting opioid overdose in Allegheny County.* Faculty in HPM, EPI, BCHS and the Public Health Dynamics Lab are collaborating with ACDHS and ACDHS to develop an overdose risk prediction model, conduct geospatial analyses to identify communities at high risk of overdose, and use mathematical models to

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forecast and model the impact of policy interventions on the opioid crisis in Allegheny County.

- *CDC Opioid Forecasting*. Faculty in the Public Health Dynamics Lab will be working with CDC in 2019 to model geospatial trends in the opioid overdose epidemic.
- *Allegheny County Health Survey (ACHS)*. Faculty in the Evaluation Institute at BCHS designed and conducted three rounds of the ACHS, most recently in 2015-16. This survey is an essential tool for ACHD's Plan for a Healthier Allegheny.
- *Healthy Allegheny Teen Survey (HATS)*. Faculty in the Evaluation Institute at BCHS designed and conducted HATS, a population-based survey of adolescent health, also critical for ACHD efforts.
- *PA Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System (BRFSS)*. Faculty in the Evaluation Institute at BCHS continue to conduct the annual CDC BRFSS for Pennsylvania. BRFSS is the central survey of health behavior across states.
- *UPMC Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)*. BCHS faculty have conducted three rounds of UPMC's IRS-required community health needs assessment, which, in its most recent round, covered 30 hospital catchment areas. Pitt was instrumental in bringing greater prominence to social determinants of health in hospital assessments and implementation plans.
- *Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank Mobile Unit Project*. Faculty in BCHS and Epidemiology teamed up with the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank to explore the effect of neighborhood outreach for food distribution.
- *Feeding America, Food Bank Diabetes Project*. Faculty in BCHS worked to link food distribution to diabetes screening and diabetes self-management programs.
- *ACHD-Plan for Healthy Allegheny, Health Equity Briefs*. BCHS faculty analyzed results from the Allegheny County Health Survey to assess disparities in five key areas: access to health services, chronic disease risk factors, environmental justice, maternal and child health, and mental health and substance use disorders.
- *RWJ Innovative Financing for Health*. Faculty from BCHS worked with ACHD and the Public Health Improvement Fund to assess ways that community workgroups could develop projects for philanthropic funding that would support the ACHS Plan for a Healthier Allegheny.
- *Pittsburgh Violence Prevention Initiative/GRIPS (Gunshot Reoccurring Injury Prevention Services)*. Faculty from the School's Center for Health Equity continue to work with hospital trauma services to assess the human services needs of firearm injury survivors and link survivors to services.
- *ACHD Street Outreach for Violence Prevention*. In partnership with ACHD, street outreach workers in our Violence Prevention Initiative work in schools and communities outside the city most hard hit by firearm violence (Wilkesburg, Duquesne, Penn Hills, Braddock, Rankin, McKeesport).
- *Intimate Partner Violence Screening and Hotline*. A model for screening and referral of victims of intimate partner violence developed by BCHS faculty is now being tested in a national Westat evaluation.
- *PA CDC WISEWOMAN*. The Evaluation Institute at BCHS conducts the annual evaluation of this PA program, which is designed to reduce cardiovascular disease risk in women.

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- *HRSA Public Health Training Center.* The Center for Public Health Practice provides training through webinars addressing topics in public health for the mid-Atlantic region. In July 2018, Pitt faculty delivered a webinar on public health social work.
- *HRSA Public Health Social Work Leadership Training.* This program offers a joint MPH/MSW and links the Graduate School of Public Health and School of Social Work. Students conduct practicum placements in social service agencies and related settings.
- *Representative Payee Program and HIV Care.* In a newly funded NIH project, BCHS and Epi faculty are conducting a clinical trial to determine if participation in the representative payee program (in which a patient allows an agency to manage Social Security or SSI benefits) is associated with lower viral load and better HIV management.
- *Pitt Center for Medicaid Services Research/Health Policy Institute.* Faculty in Health Policy and Management have productively merged Medicaid claims with social service program data (SNAP, housing) to assess the effect of meeting social needs on health outcomes.

Infrastructure (45 points)

2. *Describe the specific resources (academic/administrative staffing, materials, etc.) that will be dedicated to this project.*

- **Two GSPH faculty will serve on the Collaborative Steering Committee.** We will draw from faculty most involved with research on health-related social needs and use of human services to address public health challenges. Steven Albert from BCHS and Julie Donohue from Health Policy and Management will serve initially and will be backed by a committee at GSPH of like-minded researchers from other departments and relevant centers, including the Health Policy Institute, Medicaid Research Center, Evaluation Institute, Center for Health Equity, Center for Social Dynamics and Community Health, Public Health Dynamics Lab, and Center for Public Health Practice. This GSPH **public health human services workgroup** will allow effective schoolwide involvement with DHS and ensure that this involvement reaches the many departments and centers across GSPH. It will also allow us to draw on a greater range of expertise and ensure that students from across the School can be involved in projects.
- **GSPH will contribute in kind resources as well as financial support for projects, where appropriate.** The School has considerable computational resources, including analysts and programmer staff, who will be able to join projects. Staff and faculty will work collaboratively with DHS staff and other Qualified Applicants and make staff available for meetings, workshops and trainings.
- **GSPH faculty and staff are skilled in both quick turn-around and long-term projects and have successfully taken analyses to completion with peer-reviewed publications.**
- **GSPH has a long history of working with community stakeholders for the design of research and sharing results with stakeholder communities.** BCHS faculty, for example, are known nationally for community-partnered and community-based participatory research.

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The GSPH public health human services workgroup, mentioned earlier, will be valuable for proposing research projects, co-designing analytic approaches and products for dissemination with DHS, and conducting analyses of national importance using DHS's integrated data. We will push this effort forward by developing a monthly seminar for presentation of research protocols and review of proposals and papers involving joint efforts with DHS. We anticipate that DHS staff will be co-presenters in this effort. Data analyses involving Allegheny County data may also suggest larger scale research proposals to NIH and other funders, and we envision joint PI or co-investigator roles for GSPH and DHS investigators.

- **The GSPH public health human services workgroup will also help spread the word about DHS data analytic efforts and the relevance of human services for public health within the School and across Pitt's academic units.**
- **GSPH faculty will also be able to develop implementation strategies in the case of analyses suggesting strong DHS program effects.** The Evaluation Institute is skilled in designing such studies, which may also lead to fundable proposals.

3. *Describe the governance structure within your organization that will support this project, integrating other faculty, students, etc.*

As mentioned earlier, we envision a larger workgroup of GSPH faculty to support this university/government research partnership. The **public health human services workgroup** will include researchers from relevant departments (BCHS, HPM, EPI, Microbiology & Infectious Diseases, Environmental Health) and centers (Health Policy Institute, Medicaid Research Center, Evaluation Institute, Center for Health Equity, Center for Social Dynamics and Community Health, Public Health Dynamics Lab, Center for Public Health Practice). Faculty serving on the DHS Collaborative Steering committee will convene the workgroup, which likely will include 8-10 faculty, and the workgroup will meet monthly. Meetings will be open to students with an interest in public health social work, data science, program evaluation, and related areas. In this way, the partnership will have wide visibility in GSPH, involve a greater number of faculty and students, and increase student involvement in practicum placements with DHS. As mentioned earlier, we anticipate workgroup meetings as a place to present research ideas and review manuscripts reporting research as well as grant proposals that emerge from analyses. The workgroup will also review and vet projects proposed by Pitt faculty for possible research collaboration with DHS.

4. *Describe activities, such as internships and fellowships, that will support this project.*

The MPH program requires that students complete a 200-hour practicum, and some programs, such as the joint Public Health Social Work program, require multiple placements. At any given time, 2-4 GSPH students are completing practicum placements in DHS agencies. Many continue on as paid employees. Given the practicum requirement, the proposed partnership will likely increase the number of students completing placements with DHS. Our proposed public health human services workgroup will increase visibility of this opportunity and will encourage students to get involved in research projects emerging from the partnership. This will strengthen current training in GSPH. For example, HPM's doctoral program in health services research and policy has some students who are currently collaborating with AC DHS on projects.