



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFQ Response Form

RFQ for Student Assistance Programs

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name: Human Services Administration Organization (HSAO)

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Lisa Ashbaugh, Executive Director

Address: 2801 Custer Avenue Pittsburgh PA 15227

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Website: www.hsao.org

Legal Status: For-Profit Corp. Nonprofit Corp. Sole Proprietor Partnership

Date Incorporated: April 27, 1998

Partners and/or Subcontractors included in this Application: Donnelly-Boland and Associates

How did you hear about this RFQ? *Please be specific.* As a contracted provider, HSAO receives email notifications from Allegheny County – Department of Human Services detailing all RFP's. Furthermore, HSAO reviews all available Requests for Proposals from AlleghenyCounty.us website to determine where our organizations strengths match the needs of the community.

Does your organization have a telecommunications device to accommodate individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing? Yes No

REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Lisa Ashbaugh	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Contract Processing Contact	Susan Levi	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chief Information Officer	Fay Boland	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chief Financial Officer	Eduard Rakach	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
MPER Contact*	Lori Kozarian	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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* [MPER](#) is DHS's provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.

* Ryan Agona, Controller 412-882-5383 x 1145

BOARD INFORMATION

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.

See Attached

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Fay K. Boland, President

Board Chairperson Address: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email: [REDACTED]

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.

Dr. Maura Paczan, Pine Richland School Psychologist [REDACTED]

Elena Runco, Director or Student Support Social Worker at Pittsburgh Public [REDACTED]

Amanda Pinto, School Counselor at Provident Charter School [REDACTED]

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Date Submitted 1/21/2022

Amount Requested: \$ 373,633

CERTIFICATION

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

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I have read the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts and the requirements for DHS Cyber Security, EEOC/Non-Discrimination, HIPAA and Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law.

By submitting this Application, 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 RFQ.

Choose one:

My Application contains information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information and I have included a written statement signed by an authorized representative identifying those portions or parts of my Application and providing contact information.

OR

My Application does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information.

ATTACHMENTS

Please submit the following attachments with your Response Form. These can be found at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations>.

- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- Audited financial reports or other financial documentation for the last three years
- W-9

CAPACITY AND PREFERENCE

List your top three preferences for school districts that you would like to serve.

HSAO is committed to the continued service and support of our current school districts and open to any newly proposed opportunities.

List your current SAP capacity, if any (e.g., how many school districts do you currently serve? How many SAP Liaisons do you currently employ?).

HSAO currently serves 42 schools in seven districts and one private Charter School. HSAO provides postvention only support for an additional seven Pittsburgh Public Schools. HSAO currently employs eight trained SAP Liaisons, four of which are full time school based liaisons. The management team, Unit Managers and the Executive Director, are SAP trained and support

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the liaisons and districts in numerous activities including SAP Core Team coverage, postvention, SAP Assessment and Team Maintenance.

List your ideal SAP capacity (i.e., I currently serve 2 school districts, but I hope to serve 5).

HSAO will build capacity as needed to accommodate additional school districts. The attached budget contains the current compliment of staff. If additional school districts are acquired, we would need to assess staff caseloads and responsibilities and make any necessary additions to the team.

QUALIFICATIONS

Please respond to the following questions. The maximum score an Application can receive is 105 points. Your response to this section should not exceed 15 pages.

Organizational Experience (25 points)

1. Describe your experience identifying children and families in need of mental health supports and connecting them to appropriate services based on your working knowledge of the mental health system in Allegheny County.

Over the past twenty years, Human Services Administration Organization (HSAO) has been committed to serving the needs of children / families across Allegheny County. Some of our earliest work centered on the community integration of clients from Mayview State Hospital. From this early foundation, we have remained committed to recognizing the underserved / high-risk populations, including:

- the uninsured/underinsured
- victims of sexual exploration and trafficking
- youth with mental health needs involved in juvenile justice and CYF
- young men and women aging out of Children, Youth and Families care
- our immigrant community
- displacement of clients when a Residential Treatment Facility closes
- youth that are transitioning from the child to adult system
- multi-system involved youth

Each time we recognized an unaddressed need for these groups, we sought out new programs or arranged for specialized training / resources for existing staff and programs. We have designed a robust array of targeted programs to respond with niche programming that is agile and quickly responsive to the changing needs of those we serve.

As a result of this responsiveness, we are often called upon by Allegheny County OCYF, Juvenile Probation, school districts, physicians, OBH and many others in times of need. These stakeholders see us as their “go-to” resource. They also see that our passion for working with these marginalized groups centers on our belief that every client is resilient and able to find a unique pathway to recovery.

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The mission of HSAO is to *empower individuals, families and communities by improving their quality of life through specialized, personalized, enhanced and effective service coordination*. HSAO is home to 11 specialized child and adolescent service coordination units. Our service coordinators provide support across the Continuum of Care from those who require a single initial mental health referral through those who are placed in Residential Treatment Facilities (RTF's). All HSAO service coordinators are trained in a variety of assessments. The EC CANS, CANS and ANSA assessments are a few. Every active client at the agency receives a comprehensive assessment within 30 days of case commencement and subsequently as needed or mandated. The CANS assessment, for instance, is completed in interview form at the home of the client / family. All involved community partners are consulted for the assessment both by phone and in person as available. The completion of appropriate assessment(s) becomes the foundation of the service coordination plan that will ultimately govern all subsequent referrals and linkages. HSAO staff are diligent about identifying client mental health needs, community needs, familial strengths/needs, and developing family rapport. Our ultimate goal is to identify the most appropriate, least restrictive, community accessible support(s).

2. Describe your experience identifying children and families in need of drug and alcohol supports and connecting them to appropriate services based on your working knowledge of the drug and alcohol system in Allegheny County.

HSAO is home to a comprehensive Drug and Alcohol Program comprised of several services including Adult D&A Case Management, Opiate Use Disorder Housing Support Case Management, Emergency Response Drug and Alcohol Case Management, Overdose to Action Case Management, Children's Court IMPACT Program, Drug and DUI Court, Act 53 and most recently Child and Adolescent D&A Case Management. General D&A Case Management referrals alone have exceeded 2,500 since the program's inception in March 2019.

Through a process of screening, evaluation and referral linkages specialized service coordinators assist individuals in navigating a myriad of barriers often previously insurmountable. In early 2020 HSAO was contracted to provide an Act 53 Case Manager. This individual is responsible for assisting families through the difficult task of involuntarily committing their adolescent and young adult children ages 12 -18 years to necessary drug and alcohol treatment. Once the adolescent is engaged in treatment, the Act 53 Coordinator continues to support the youth and their family in all service coordination tasks and with advocacy at all subsequent hearings for the duration of the process. Our newest program, Child and Adolescent D&A Case Management will provide specialized supports to Allegheny County residents between the ages of ten and 18 years. This program is the first of its kind in Allegheny County.

HSAO recognizes the threat that drug and alcohol use has on the families we serve. Early identification and access to appropriate treatment is of the utmost importance in keeping families healthy and together. The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) has specified the ASAM criteria which is the nation's most comprehensive set of guidelines for placement determination, continued stay and discharge. HSAO D&A and SAP Liaisons are certified in this approach.

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3. Discuss your experience working in schools or with school-aged children and their families, including school-aged children and families from diverse backgrounds.

HSAO has a county wide presence in schools. HSAO staff supports every client in educational goal development and achievement. Our staff supports students in every district in Allegheny County and often beyond, especially in circumstances of residential placement. We strive to support students in every educational endeavor both formally and informally. Facilitation of 504 plans and Individual Education Plans (IEP's) is a typical activity of all HSAO staff. The frequency of our collaboration with the area's schools has resulted in an intimate knowledge of each district's culture and available in-school and community services. Knowledge of both the educational facility and the community it is located in provides a great advantage when linking students and families to appropriate supports. Furthermore, this knowledge allows for the identification of natural community supports that can remain to serve a family long after professional intervention concludes.

The School Based program at HSAO commenced in the 2012-2013 school year. The vision was to assist families and facilitate links to mental health, wellness, physical health, community supports and intellectual disability services while utilizing a cohabitation model. The program's continued success has resulted in additional district contracts. The School Based Program is currently operational in six educational facilities: Westinghouse Academy, Oliver Citywide Academy, Mon Valley School, University Prep, Wilkinsburg School District and Urban Pathways Charter K-6. Our specially trained unit of eight service coordinators are each SAP certified. Each individual staff is an existing participant in the SAP Core Team.

HSAO launched its Student Assistance Program at the start of the 2017-18 school year. Since the program's inception we have served over 3,000 students/families. Early successful relationships with both students/families and school faculty and administrators resulted in program expansion from four to seven districts and one private charter school. Our skilled liaisons and management team worked diligently with each individual school to design a personalized / beneficial SAP process. SAP liaisons worked to cultivate numerous professional development opportunities by listening to the needs of school personnel. We developed 15+ Psychoeducational Group curriculums to support student learning and success in the educational environment. When the Covid-19 Pandemic catapulted many educational facilities into the virtual world we successfully reformatted our groups to virtual platforms providing many a much needed connection to support and their peers. We continue to grow our program and extend our reach by adding new groups and professional development opportunities every year. Most recently we developed an [Introduction to SAP Video](#) for the purpose of education/re-education regarding our role and the process for both new school personnel and those who may have been removed from the process given the nature of virtual work.

Over the 20+ years that HSAO has served families across Allegheny County, we have remained actively engaged with communities and individuals who are marginalized. In an analysis of only seven of our programs we served 900+ children/adolescents who identify as racial minorities. As a result of extensive equity and diversity training HSAO has made multiple policy and practice changes to pursue improved racial equality. We developed CLAS Policy that reflects the National Standard for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services. Supervisors have created annual leadership plans to become more knowledgeable on racial equality and implement

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initiatives that impact the work of staff and the lives of clients. A Supervisors Workgroup completed a review of training materials and exploration of opportunities to engage staff around racial equity. The Supervisors Workgroup also explored potential scenarios that pose high risk for discrimination.

We recognize the positive impact clients and families have when they are able to work with staff who share their life experiences. Thirty percent of the staff hired in the last two and a half years identify as racial minority.

Children and youth who identify as being members of the LGBTQI+ community experience a unique array of stressors. HSAO has responded in meeting the needs of this community by playing an active role county-wide by participating in the Trauma Think-tank and being a trainer for the SOGIE trainings, presented to our staff, schools, and system partners. We have also developed a detailed resource guide to ensure staff are knowledgeable about resources.

Service Delivery (50 points)

4. Describe your plan for providing screenings within 30 days of the SAP Team's recommendation for screening. What obstacles do you foresee in completing screenings in a timely manner and how will you overcome them?

HSAO staff and supervisors emphasize the need for persistent outreach even when clients and families are reluctant to receive services. We strive to complete all SAP Initial Screenings within two weeks of permission receipt. We continue to utilize a successful agency wide outreach approach when a new referral for screening is received. The referral will be reviewed to gather an understanding of the unique needs and strengths of the client. The Liaison will consult with the referral source to determine the best engagement techniques that reflect the family's culture and needs (i.e. additional phone numbers, which family member makes important decisions, best time to call, family's perspective of service providers, etc.). The Liaison will contact the family via phone to all available numbers at varying times of day, letter, e-mail/text (if preferred by the family), and/or attendance at school meetings and events where the caregiver might be present. Our staff is also available to meet families in their homes or in the wider community. Our knowledge gained from referral source and school records regarding student/family needs, strengths, and culture will assist in developing rapport with the family. We will explain our ability to serve as a mediator to any potential conflict with the school, and we will listen in non-judgmental manner to the family's perspective of needs and strengths. The Liaison will illustrate how the SAP program can support the family with achieving their own goals. Once permission is granted by the caregiver, the SAP Liaison will use a tailored approach (based on thorough training) to engage the student including: motivational interviewing to understand the student's interests, trauma informed care, and cultural competency. This engagement with the student can take place as preferred by the student, including after school. This approach to outreach will address multiple potential barriers including: 1) difficulty in reaching families to consent to the SAP Process, 2) lack of buy-in from family that SAP support can be beneficial, 3) student refusal, and 4) past conflict between family and the school. With an available laptop, each Liaison is flexible in gathering information from the student, family, or team member from any location and at multiple points in time. HSAO staff are characterized by

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strong interpersonal and organizational skills. They will follow the company expectation to accomplish all screenings within 30 days.

In the last year the Global Covid-19 Pandemic and statewide closures presented many barriers to engaging students and families. HSAO purchased multiple on-line platforms that allowed for virtual screenings. Liaisons worked with school staff to identify the school provided platform and utilized the school sanctioned platform to engage student/families. Given student ease with technology and access to smart phones many liaisons utilized FaceTime calls to engage students. Liaisons did not necessarily expect that a parent who may be home schooling multiple children could engage in a Parent Screening on the spot, thus they would reach out to parents/guardians and schedule a good time to talk with them. Although the Covid-19 Pandemic had the potential to thwart a successful year in SAP, quick process adjustments, improvements to technological equipment and software platforms, and flexibility -- following the schools lead for virtual or in-person -- we were able to serve our clients.

5. Describe your plan for involving diverse families in initial SAP activities, especially your approach to engaging with parents.

HSAO believes that family involvement is essential to the success of students. As noted above, this rapport building begins from the first outreach to the family. From the start, we will work to ensure that the family views us as a voice for their goals/concerns, treats us as their “go-to” resource, and feels they are treated with respect. The SAP Liaisons will actively seek out parents’ involvement in the CANS-SAP screening both by phone and in-person. Parents will be encouraged to utilize the SAP Liaison to resolve ongoing concerns. SAP Liaisons will be up-front about the type of support available from SAP, assist with linkage to community supports available, and follow-through with all commitments made to the family. SAP Liaisons will also complete scheduled and as needed follow-ups with parents in person or by phone to ensure that they feel that progress is being made towards their SAP Student Plan.

With this foundation, we plan to engage SAP Parents in several different activities – recognizing all of the stressors experienced by families. We will hold educational presentations and trainings that reflect common needs identified by families. We will encourage parent feedback through surveys conducted while open with the Liaison. At the end of the SAP process each parent receives a written letter outlining the recommendations made for their child. Each piece of correspondence has a QR code that allows parents to provide anonymous feedback regarding their experience with their SAP Liaison. We will facilitate pertinent and culturally sensitive postvention to students and caregivers.

Last year multiple schools asked us to present to parents who were experiencing stress around issues of quarantine and children’s mental health trends. We developed a virtual forum that was widely attended and subsequently requested by districts we do not serve through SAP. We strive to meet the needs of the families we serve by eliciting their feedback and working with our identified schools to recognize trends in families and their communities.

6. As stated in the RFP, DHS expects that Qualified Applicants will collaborate with the existing network of human service providers in Allegheny County to find service(s) and

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assistance that best fit the needs of the student and family even if the Qualified Applicant offers the needed service(s) and assistance themselves. Qualified Applicant's only priority in making referrals should be the best interest of the student and family. Describe your plan for ensuring that students and families are connected to the kinds of services and supports that best meet their needs.

In order to ensure that students and families are connected to the services and supports that best meet their needs, a determination of those needs is essential. The CANS assessment allows for a comprehensive assessment of needs and strengths in multiple life domains. If utilized like a checklist or Likert scale, as opposed to a tool to facilitate collaboration and team consensus, the assessment will likely result in a missed opportunity to engage families, build rapport, and obtain their buy-in. The absence of consensus will likely result in mislinkage and high levels of nonparticipation. Thus it is paramount that the assessment be conducted face to face with student and hopefully families. The goal will be rapport building and not assessment completion. We realize that more than one meeting may be required in obtaining a full understanding of needs. Furthermore, the entire SAP Core Team will be pursued to elicit a deeper understanding of needs and strengths, as well as, any other involved systems or providers.

Once an understanding of a family's needs is obtained and the family supports the pursuit of services to address their identified needs, knowledge of services and supports will need to be applied. Despite the kind of supports suggested, the least restrictive options will be identified and attempted first. Consultation within the SAP Core Team and outside resources may be necessary to identify a service or support that meets a need for a less readily available options, for example: a cultural need like interpretation service. A team approach within the HSAO office provides the opportunity for case specific triage and resource identification; thus our collective knowledge of unique or more specialized services and supports is vast.

Knowledge of and the ability to link to ancillary supports should not be overlooked. A holistic approach to every case is a top priority.

We currently possess 100+ letters of agreement with county agencies. In addition to our knowledge of and collaboration with mental health and drug and alcohol services, we have longstanding system partners that we will continue to collaborate with via phone, in person, or by an appropriate means of electronic communication. We are aware that in fast paced professional environments we need to be readily accessible to clients and system partners. We have long and lucrative relationships with CYF, Juvenile Probation, and providers in the physical health arena.

HSAO's experience serving all of Allegheny County for over 20 years coupled with the fact that we do not explicitly provide any direct mental health service makes us uniquely qualified to ensure that the best possible support is obtained from the best possible place.

7. How will you incorporate student and family choice into your referral process? After you make your recommendation for treatment or other services, what is your plan for providing students and families with the information they need to make the best choice about how to proceed (e.g., which provider to use, which level of treatment to accept).

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Family choice is a best practice standard at HSAO. We are a stand-alone provider comfortable with a plethora of service provider options catering to not only to mental health needs, but physical health, occupational health, financial sustainability and ODS supports, as well as, with a multitude of natural support options, including but not limited to socially and spiritually fulfilling activities in various communities in Allegheny County. After any type of service or support is specified and agreed to by the student and/or family, it is our practice to have a discussion regarding all treatment options available starting with the least restrictive. Service options are discussed verbally and written material is disseminated as needed or requested. Families will be made aware of all potential providers. Assessment of a family's ability to access a provider dependent on specialty, location, insurance type / status, and family preference will be considered so that an informed choice can be reached. Service and support planning is family driven. A family's cultural preferences or needs are explored with the family to ensure ultimate success. For instance, preferences around a service provider's gender, race, ethnicity, theological approach or need for interpretation supports are discussed to ensure that every student's cultural preference is respected. The above process ensues via telephone or e-mail unless a face to face discussion is requested. We will utilize any form of communication that a family is comfortable with or that best meets their needs. We realize that willingness to participate and comfortability with any recommended support is a hallmark factor in successfully implemented services.

8. Describe your plan for supporting families after a referral has been made. How will you facilitate their connection to and support them while they receive treatment or other services?

Plans for supporting families through the referral process and subsequently through treatment are always individualized. Each student and family is unique, and it is important to meet them where they are. Continuous assessment of needs and progress trigger activities on behalf of the SAP Liaison that ensure an individual family's success. For instance, verbal, face to face or phone instructions on how to access services or supports after a referral is made and accepted may be all that is necessary to ensure success. In some cases, families may require hand-over-hand support or face to face meetings in the educational setting, community, or home. In other cases, a family may need to be physically accompanied to the referred support. Regardless of the circumstance, HSAO is committed to providing the level of support required. Through rapport building and respectful interaction, a family's level of initial ability and comfort, accessing services and supports will be determined and discussed to ensure linkages are utilized.

After the initial successful utilization of a linkage, continued support based on the family's level of ability and comfort will continue in person, via phone, or by mail. If at any point in time a student or family has concerns regarding their current level of support or provider, we will work with the family and provider to resolve any expressed concerns. This could include outreach to direct care staff, agency supervisor, agency director, or insurance company. Should it be determined that the level of support or provider be inappropriate, subsequent referrals/service transfer will be made to address new needs or to obtain new providers. Continued communication with the SAP Team as needed or at SAP Core Team Meetings are essential to give and receive updates on service success and to determine if ancillary needs remain or arise. In some cases, referrals to on-going service coordination may ensue to ensure that a family is successful in receiving recommended services and persisting with them. At HSAO, SAP

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referrals remain open for the entirety of the school year, thus should a new need arise during the year or a previously implemented service fail we are ready to jump right back in.

9. Scenario 1:

Mia is a 9-year-old female Latina student attending elementary school in a suburban school district in Allegheny County. Mia was referred to the SAP program by the school social worker for poor school attendance, homelessness, rapidly declining grades and withdrawn behavior in the classroom setting. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mia had never been referred to SAP.

School staff have had several meetings with Mia's mom regarding her grades, behaviors and attendance. At the most recent Student Attendance Improvement Plan meeting, the family disclosed that they were homeless and living with a family friend in a neighboring school district.

Mia displays poor social skills and anxiety in the classroom. She has trouble focusing and recently disclosed to the school counselor that she "doesn't know why she was born." In addition, during a warm-up activity in English Language Arts, Mia described feeling extremely sad, scared for her family and not being able to understand the activity.

Please describe in detail, referencing all four phases of the SAP process, how you would proceed with this referral from the SAP team. Please include possible referral recommendations based on concerns described.

Referral: The HSAO SAP Liaison will confidentially review the referral form submitted by the SAP team noting concerns for declining grades, withdrawn behaviors, homelessness, poor social skills and hopelessness. If this situation is determined to be a crisis situation the SAP Liaison would immediately provide resources to avert the crisis. If that is not the case, at this point in the process the SAP team will need to obtain the Parent Permission Form to proceed. The Liaison would enquire about any potential language barriers to determine if any form needed to be submitted in the family's native language if that is not English.

Team Planning: Assuming that permission is obtained, the HSAO SAP Liaison will gather and review records from the school including; Student Information Forms, grades, attendance, standardized testing, disciplinary records, etc. We would initiate collaboration among the SAP Coordinator, administrator, and SAP Team to review data. The assigned school building HSAO SAP liaison would reach out to the parent/guardian (in their preferred language) to educate them about the SAP process, complete additional intake paperwork, discuss parent perspective of concerns/strengths, and stress the importance of family engagement in the SAP process.

Intervention/Recommendations: Again, assuming that parental consent was obtained, the SAP Liaison would arrange to meet Mia for a face to face interview to explore the SAP CANS domains and better understand her needs / strengths. This interview could be conducted with an interpreter if necessary or requested. At the SAP Meeting, HSAO staff will present the findings. The SAP Liaison will support the team with thoroughly brainstorming potential solutions/strategies to the current concerns and identifying any existing school based

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interventions that may be appropriate. While the team will not diagnose or treat Mia the SAP team might refer for assessment. Potential action items may include:

- an evaluation to determine if there is a clinical diagnosis
- referrals to community mental health providers or potentially to School Based Outpatient,
- effective use of in-school supports including safety plans, mentoring and tutoring, or school based social skill groups
- SAP Liaison could provide resources to the family regarding housing or assist them in making contact with the schools Homeless Liaison if applicable
- in the absence of medical insurance or in the case of being underinsured the liaison could facilitate the Medical Assistance process

Support/Follow-up: HSAO staff will check in with Mia, her mother and team members to ensure that all action steps have been completed or are in progress and to report on the progress of the steps assigned to them. Revisions will be suggested for any item that has been stalled or failed. Consistent contact will be maintained with the family until all supports are in place.

10. Scenario 2:

Michael is a 15-year-old student attending Brown High School. Michael's preferred pronouns are he, his and him. Michael was born female and his parents have not been accepting of his transition. They continue to use his given name, Michelle, and female pronouns, and routinely state that Michael is simply "going through a phase." Michael was referred to SAP by his school counselor due to missing several days of school and being caught on school grounds with a vape, resulting in a suspension.

Michael reports he has only used the vape once experimentally, did not like the experience and would not do it again. Michael's grades have suffered this year and his teachers report his behavior has been more withdrawn than in the past. His school counselor reports that Michael lost a few friends who were not accepting of his transition and has struggled to make new friendships. Michael has mentioned spending time with older individuals outside of school who he reports are more accepting. He becomes closed off when talking about these older friends or where he met them. Michael's parents have been in communication with the school regarding his declining grades and recent suspension. The school was able to obtain signed SAP permission from parents following the suspension.

Please describe in detail, referencing all four phases of the SAP process, how you would proceed with this referral from the SAP team. Please include possible referral recommendations based on concerns described.

Referral: The HSAO liaison will initially familiarize themselves with the concerning aspects of the referral including recent missed days of school, the incident of vaping on school property, a potential negative peer element, the loss of friends given gender identity (transgender) and parent's un-affirming or dismissive feelings regarding Michael's gender identity expression. Since permission to assess has been received the process will proceed to the next phase.

Team Planning: The referral would be added to the agenda of the next SAP Core Team Meeting. Parents will be contacted to provide information regarding their experiences with Michael, as well as, family strengths and perceived needs. Collaboration with the SAP Team, teachers and administrators would be initiated to gather information including grades, noted

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behaviors both past and present, attendance, standardized testing, current and past disciplinary actions, etc.

Intervention/Recommendations: HSAO staff will engage Michael to complete the SAP CANS Assessment. The goal will be to understand Michael's view of his current circumstances and his perception of his strengths and needs. We would work to gather information regarding his previous and current peer groups to assess appropriate supports in this area and to determine risk for exploitation and current attitudes toward drug and alcohol use. All findings would be presented at the next SAP Core Team meeting. Potential action steps might include:

- a referral to physical and mental health services specializing in supporting individuals who identify as transgender
- resources to affirming and healthy peer support groups in his identified community
- the development of school crisis plans to ensure that Michael is not being bullied or exploited at his educational facility
- identification of existing in-school supports like groups or clubs,
- explore the appropriateness of classroom presentations or the school's desire for a psychoeducational group should there be enough identified interest may be beneficial items to explore
- offer supports to the Michael's parents, for example PFLAG resources, that may assist them in managing their thoughts and feelings about Michael's gender identity. We know that family acceptance is a cornerstone of positive outcomes for individuals who identify as LGBTQI.

Support/Follow-up: HSAO will check in with Michael, his parents and team members who have action steps to complete. Revisions to stalled or unsuccessful action steps will be made. Updates will be provided at subsequent team meetings and to parents as revisions or progress is made towards set goals.

11. Describe why the SAP program is important and your vision for an SAP liaison's relationship and work with school staff, students and families.

HSAO's mission is to empower individuals, families, and community by improving their quality of life through specialized, personalized, enhanced, and effective service coordination. We bring this same commitment to our work with our existing SAP Teams. We maintain the belief that administrators, teachers, counselors and staff strive for excellence at educating and fostering the development of the students of Allegheny County. Some students present unique behavioral and emotional challenges that complicate the classroom dynamic and impact their learning process. HSAO's vision is that those students need a bridge to supports that will enable them to be successful academically, socially, and behaviorally. We are committed to providing that bridge and empowering those students to receive needed treatment so that they can be maintained in the least restrictive academic placement. We are committed to offering as much time as necessary to achieve an understanding of the barriers from the perspective of the school, student, and parent. HSAO works tirelessly to address any and all existing barriers (trauma, bullying, suicidal ideation, grief/loss, access to treatment, transportation, financial constraints, family follow-through, etc.) to student success. We maintain open lines of communication with administrators, teachers, and families with aims to monitor the success of interventions and provide timely adjustments to changing needs. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that each student has what they need to move on to the next grade, graduate, and become active members of their communities.

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The SAP Program is vital in the early identification of student needs. The more expediently these needs are identified and addressed directly correlates to positive outcomes. The relationship between the SAP Core Team and the liaison provides a unique opportunity to increase the knowledge base of all involved, build tolerance for students experiencing adverse circumstances and grow the resources available to ensure that students get what they need.

Our SAP liaisons approach our work with both the families and assigned SAP Teams with open mindedness and respect. Each team and family has their own unique culture, attitudes and beliefs. Our liaisons become part of that culture to provide solutions that make sense within the framework of those systems. There can be no positive change without trust. We ensure that our liaisons attend every SAP Core Team meeting to ensure a continuous professional presence, offer “doable” solutions and provide appropriate insight.

12. Describe your plan for providing postvention services. How would you respond if a school district requested a postvention in the summer months?

Postvention services are provided in the school, community, virtually and via phone to students, SAP Core Team members, faculty and parents as warranted or requested. In the case of postvention a school’s needs are prioritized and typically at least two SAP Liaisons are dispatched for a duration determined by need. We have found that events requiring postvention are not typically foreseeable and thus flexibility is required to ensure that everyone’s needs are met in these often tragic circumstances. Postvention services are often requested over weekends and thus we are available to coordinate those supports and ensure that support is available first thing upon a schools reopening.

Although we are not a clinical support, we strive to provide competent and empathetic postvention services. We continuously evaluate and add to our postvention resources/toolkits to ensure that students are supported at an appropriate level regardless of their age or ethnicity. We know that the nature of the event requiring postvention often determines the resources or type of support material the liaison will need to be equipped with. Our reputation for effective postvention support precedes us, and thus we have been asked to provide support to schools outside of those explicitly assigned to us. Most recently we entered into agreement with seven additional Pittsburgh Public schools for postvention only support. We are committed to making appropriate linkages to community agencies specializing in supports around traumatic events as needed upon the discontinuation of a postvention.

Given that HSAO SAP staff are employed full time the need for postvention in the summer months does not present a hardship. To date, we have provided postvention support to multiple districts during the summer months. The team follows the same postvention plan agreement as during the school year.

13. How will you maintain a strong relationship with the school you serve and be dynamic, flexible and responsive to their needs?

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HSAO recognizes that the responsibility for forming strong relationship with partner schools is paramount to ensuring the success of SAP students. However, this professional relationship does not happen simply by walking in the door of the school. We recognize the need to develop trust, open lines of communication, interdependence, and buy-in from all parts of the school community. In working to establish an initial rapport, we will: 1) attend existing meetings/trainings to introduce staff, 2) provide literature to help school personnel understand our role, 3) make staff available to join meetings with potential SAP students/parents, 4) respond to the unique opportunity to engage with school staff, and 5) work with the school to establish an effective conflict resolution process that reflects the needs and perspective of the school and HSAO.

Beyond initial relationship building, we will: 1) attend every SAP Core Team meeting utilizing our three-tier support system to ensure an individual known to the school is always available, 2) openly and respectfully provide guidance on how to navigate the mental health and substance abuse service systems, 3) follow-through on commitments, 4) encourage staff to attend community events being held by the school, 5) maintain an open door policy to encourage school staff with concerns to reach out to a SAP Liaison and 6) provide easy access to a direct supervisor of the SAP Liaison who can address any concerns. We strive to serve as the “go-to” resource for administrators, teachers, counselors, and staff.

We have found that every school in every district has its own unique culture. It is with consistency and the diligent delivery of support that we become part of that culture. We do not drive the process but become a part of it. This approach and inherent respect for individual school’s processes affords us the opportunity to build trust and “prove” that we can be of benefit. For example, HSAO management and liaisons routinely attend back-to-school events, Parent Nights and school resource fairs. Attendance at these events affords us the opportunity to interact with school personnel, students and families in a nonthreatening way. We are not just there when something goes wrong or support is needed but also to celebrate victories like the entrance of preschoolers into Kindergarten or promotion to the next grade. We gather feedback from each individual school throughout the year and at year end to ensure that we are meeting the school’s expectations and to identify areas needing improvement.

Staffing (10 points)

14. Describe your plan for recruiting and retaining qualified and diverse staff, including your plan for filling staff vacancies in a timely way.

HSAO sees hiring quality, diverse staff as paramount to providing quality care to our clients. HSAO employs several recruitment resources to enlist diverse, qualified applicants to fill open positions. We advertise job postings on Jazz HR, which cross posts to 50+ platforms, including: Indeed, Glassdoor, ZipRecruiter, Jooble, Jobrapido, FaceBook, etc. This platform also has an option to increase traffic to postings as well as expand job postings to niche job boards. HSAO is an active participant in several area Job Fairs as well as college requirement events. HSAO will separately post positions within our three sister companies, which will reach over 400 staff, who

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work closely with DHS, schools, court, mental health, D&A, healthcare, etc. HSAO has instituted an incentive payment for current staff to recommend job applicants.

We believe that retention starts with effective training. New HSAO staff complete a comprehensive training protocol. They work with a team of seasoned staff to learn the daily responsibilities of the position. This team includes the co-workers, Team Leaders, Mentors, Supervisor, and Manager. New hires shadow tenured staff in the field to learn soft skills. The Mentor and Supervisor provide an intensive six-week long training that covers the day to day responsibility of a coordinator. This includes the review of more than 200+ unique learning criteria. Beyond initial training HSAO SAP liaisons are trained well in excess of the required 12 hours of continued education.

We continue to look for opportunities to improve. We have taken several recent steps to enhance our on-boarding process. We currently have our supervisory team meeting monthly to examine onboarding process. This included input from new staff / mentors on best practices. This workgroup is dedicated to streamlining the new hire training process in an engaging way.

HSAO recognizes that work / life balance is critical to ensure a stable, committed workforce. We recently completed a retention survey with all staff. We gather anonymous feedback direct from staff. The survey showed that 80% of staff reported remaining with the company because of the flexibility offered by HSAO. Staff also reported that Impact on Clients - 76%, Financial Benefits - 72%, and Company Reputation - 68% all contributed to their decision to maintain employment with HSAO. We have been using this data to inform decisions made by leadership. Staff feedback over the years has led to our comprehensive benefits package, including: Competitive salary, Healthcare Insurance (Physical, Dental, Vision), Health Reimbursement Account to offset healthcare costs, Short/Long Term Disability coverage, Bonus Eligibility, 401(k) / ROTH Retirement savings with company contribution, 529 Savings Plans, Benefit Options Fund for tax deferred savings on education/ childcare/ long-term care expenses, Training Reimbursement, Graduated increases in Paid Time Off based on years of service, 10 Paid Holidays, Travel / Parking reimbursement, top of the line equipment as well as consistent individual and group supervision,

15. Describe your expectations for SAP staff.

All SAP staff are expected to have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree and two years of experience in the human services/educational field. All HSAO new hires receive New Hire Training. All SAP staff would be provided with and expected to complete all HSAO staff trainings and any additionally required trainings or recommended SAP suggested ancillary trainings. Beyond the completion of required or recommended training, SAP staff are expected to attend individual and group supervision bi-weekly and monthly, as well as, utilize our "open door" supervision policy to seek support to solve pressing problems quickly. They are expected to utilize and support their peers within the agency to identify established and new supports in communities. Our SAP liaisons are expected to integrate into their assigned schools and attend every SAP Core Team Meeting and complete SAP Screens within two weeks. We realize that life happens and that both scheduled and unscheduled events could prevent an assigned liaison from attending a meeting or completing a screen. Thus we have developed a three tier system

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that ensures an individual known to the school will be in attendance at meetings or to screen a student. SAP liaisons are expected to be flexible and available for postventions, to facilitate Psychoeducational groups and provide team maintenance and professional development as requested. Given that SAP liaisons are employed all year they are expected to participate in activities that enrich our SAP program during the summer months when schools are not typically in session. For example, the development of new group curriculums, process improvements, form modifications and the development of resource toolkits to be provided to schools and families.

Data Collection and Delivery (10 points)

16. Describe your plan for tracking, entering and reporting data in a timely way.

We will enter, track, and report data from our electronic health record, EVOLV. We have built specific program assessments in Evolv that allows for the continuous individual tracking of data points including CANS assessment completions, applicable school information, mental health linkages, and drug and alcohol linkages. It is our practice to enter information as it is received. All SAP CANS Assessments are reviewed and approved by individual program supervisors / managers to ensure that best practice guidelines are followed. Individual SAP Liaisons are trained in and enter billing information into WITS. The fidelity of this information is checked monthly to determine accuracy by Administrative Support Staff. Multiple data points are compiled and reported to the state quarterly JQRS system.

17. Describe your plan for quality assurance, including which data elements you will look at to monitor quality.

Monitoring the collection of data and its input into the electronic health record are primary components to ensuring quality work. The SAP Liaison supervisor, manager, and Executive Director review the collection of data and provide analysis to ensure that quality services are being provided and captured. Reporting is done monthly and analysis is preformed no less than every quarter.

Data elements that are indicative of quality include: summary of SAP Services provided, numbers and demographics of students served, and aggregate data on the primary issues identified via screenings. In addition, we look at number of CANS assessments completed, time-frame for completion, billed units and the number of ancillary and educational contacts made monthly and per case.

Satisfaction surveys for both school and community stakeholders, as well as families, are utilized to discern both qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Specific data points may include:

- Students referred for assessment/students referred who did not receive an assessment
- Historical data on students referred by year
- Race/Ethnicity of Students referred for assessment
- Student age and gender

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- Primary Problem Categories- D&A, Mental Health, Co-Occurrence, None
- Secondary data: Trauma, gender, tobacco, grief loss etc.
- Referral to services- specific/differentiate between D&A and MH
- Referrals and admittance to services- accepted versus not accepted
- Number of Core Team meetings, *average number of staff attending*

Our most recent school satisfaction results indicate that 100% of school staff said:

- They felt a great deal or a lot of support from the liaison
- The liaison was efficient in follow-up with the SAP Core Team
- Timely linkages were provided to families and students
- There was consistent attendance at SAP Core Team Meetings

The above is continually elicited in the form of surveys sent to schools, the inclusion of QR codes provided in all written SAP result letters to families and through verbal real time feedback. In order to successfully measure quality - diligence in data collection, reporting, and analysis is required. Plans for quality assurance must be adjusted as indicated by the data and resulting analysis.

Budget (10 points possible) is not included in page count. You may submit the budget as an attachment [e.g., Excel file] or in the space below.

18. Provide a detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining your organization's SAP at the ideal capacity you listed in the beginning of the Application.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

19. Provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed line-item budget.

Direct Salaries – 4 FTE liaisons, 1 supervisor, manager and director percentage of time

Fringe Benefits – HSAO current rate for benefits is 34% of salaries, which is reflected in the worksheet. While we have kept our benefit package competitive for our employees, we have been creative and this has resulted in our benefit percentage to be stable and cost effective.

Training/Travel/Staff Development – HSAO employees average approximately \$500/year in travel and \$500/year staff development

Occupancy – HSAO rent is based upon the rate of 375 sq. ft./employee/month or \$4,500 per year per employee

Office Supplies - We are requesting \$3000/year for supplies - \$750 per employee

Printing/Copier – printer and copier costs \$500 per month

Software Licenses/Maintenance contracts - Microsoft exchange/Windows/Watchguard; Software Licenses (Evolve, HR software, VISTA); Barracuda/VPN. All in total \$950 per employee for all licenses and contracts

Telecommunications - MiFi, cell phone, share of internet and cable and office phone (\$300/employee per year)

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Insurance - \$450 per employee/year (6 employees); This is for all insurances (Works Comp, General Liability, Renters Insurance, Professional Liability, etc.)

Administration (Accounting, HR, IT, CAD) - 8% of budget

Audit Fees - Portion of all audit fees to allocate to this program for all audits performed throughout year