



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

**Implementation Partner for the Existing
ACTES Program, a Component of Allegheny
County's Community Violence Reduction
Initiative, in the South Hilltop**

RFP Posting:

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Questions Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, May 9, 2025

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, May 22, 2025

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

August 2025

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

Appendices are available through the provided links and can be found on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) and on the [Active Solicitations Webpage](#).

[Appendix A: Root Causes of Community Violence](#)

[Appendix B: The ACTES Program](#)

[Appendix C: Standards for Safe Working Spaces](#)

[Appendix D: ACTES FY25 Sample Standard Budget](#)

Acronyms and Definitions

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

1. ACTES: Achieving Change through Transitional Employment Services, Allegheny County's adaptation of the evidence-based READI Chicago model
2. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
3. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4. Bonfire: The County's online procurement software. Proposers must have a Bonfire account to submit a Response to this RFP
5. Contract Services: The specific services that the Successful Proposer agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
6. Community Quarterback: An organization selected to serve as the local backbone agency for the Community Violence Reduction Initiative (CVRI) in a specific region; responsible for supporting their region's specific approach to community violence prevention as well as building productive partnerships that support violence prevention through convening, coordination of information-sharing, and problem-solving within and beyond their specific region
7. Community Violence: Exposure to intentional acts of interpersonal violence committed in public areas by individuals who are not intimately related to the victim; community violence is distinct from other forms of violence such as intimate partner violence or domestic violence
8. Community Violence Reduction Initiative (CVRI): Allegheny County's collaborative initiative to address community violence, of which ACTES is a part
9. Countywide Convener: The Convener plans and facilitates a regular set of engagements with relevant stakeholders for the purpose of supporting highly impacted communities in Allegheny County to implement their own violence reduction plans; convenes representatives across highly impacted communities and municipal boundaries to share information and problem-solve issues related to community violence in Allegheny County.
10. Contract Services: The specific services that the Successful Proposer or their fiscal sponsor agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
11. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
12. DHS Bonfire Portal: A Bonfire webpage specific to Allegheny County Department of Human Services where Proposers can view open, past and awarded solicitations released through Bonfire

13. Evidence-Based Programs (EBP): Specific programmatic activities and processes, which—based on a review of available research and ongoing research efforts—result in positive outcomes for program Participants
14. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
15. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
16. READI Chicago: An EBP that responds to urban gun violence by connecting men at the highest risk of being involved with gun violence—as victim or perpetrator—with cognitive behavioral therapy, transitional employment and job training, and wraparound support services to foster safer communities and greater opportunities
17. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
18. RFP: Request for Proposals
19. 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
20. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services
21. Transitional Jobs (TJ): time-limited, wage-paid subsidized jobs that combine work experience with hard and soft skill development

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

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

The Department of Human Services (DHS), on behalf of Allegheny County, is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to serve as the Implementing Partner for the existing Achieving Change through Transitional Employment Services (ACTES) Program (henceforth referred to as ACTES or the Program) in the South Hilltop and to participate more broadly in Allegheny County's Community Violence Reduction Initiative (CVRI).

ACTES is an evidence-based, complex and resource-intensive program that aims to decrease violence involvement and recidivism via relentless engagement with high-risk adult men by interrupting the social and economic influences of violence perpetration and victimization. Based on the Rapid Employment and Development Initiative (READI Chicago) model, ACTES combines cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), paid transitional jobs (TJ) and wraparound support services to:

- 1) support Participants in developing skills needed to buffer between stimuli, thoughts and response, thus mitigating rash, split-second decisions that often lead to gun violence.
- 2) ensure Participants have a safe place to work and spend time during the day, reducing their risk of exposure to violence.
- 3) improve quality of life and economic opportunity throughout participation in and upon completion of the program.

This Program is currently in place and in need of an Implementing Partner. The Successful Proposer will:

- Work in or be familiar with the field of community violence reduction, or, at a minimum, have mission alignment with the ACTES program.
- Have strong community orientation and relationships in the South Hilltop and across Allegheny County.
- Have the organizational capacity and experience necessary to employ and maintain a fully staffed direct services ACTES team and oversee the implementation of ACTES in the South Hilltop with fidelity to the program model.
- Ensure programmatic continuity and adhere to the established requirements of the ACTES program by, to the greatest degree feasible, utilizing existing ACTES South Hilltop resources, including trained staff, office space, a Participant van, worksites, partnerships and safety protocols.
- Contribute to Allegheny County's CVRI, strengthening the local violence reduction infrastructure through collaboration within and across geographic boundaries.

Award Details

DHS intends to enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer for one year, with a County option to renew based on performance, to operate the existing ACTES Program in the South Hilltop.

The annual budget for the Program for ACTES's direct service staff has been \$451,000 annually, as outlined in Table 3 in Section 2.4 Budget.. If proposing to utilize existing resources, Proposers **do not** need to propose costs for the resource(s) they plan to utilize, as the final costs will be determined and negotiated collaboratively between DHS, the Successful Proposer and the appropriate stakeholders.

Proposers who propose to utilize their own staff, facility or Participant van must include all costs and justification for such in their budget and budget narrative. Across all ACTES sites, we budget \$18,000-25,000 annually for rented space based on market value and—if more than one program operates at the site—proportionate to the amount of space ACTES programming uses.

All proposed costs, including costs associated with fringe benefits or administrative, operating or overhead costs, will be considered for reasonableness, and the final budget will be negotiated with the Successful Proposer.

Proposed budgets should **not** include Participant compensation for ACTES transitional work, as DHS is contracting separately with an employer of record to manage the Transitional Jobs (TJ) component of all three ACTES programs. The Successful Proposer is expected to collaborate with the employer of record to ensure payments are made in accordance with ACTES policy.

All DHS contracted providers are expected to have a cost allocation plan in place and will be reimbursed on a monthly basis for actual expenses incurred. If you anticipate requiring a cash advance in order to begin operations, please include the anticipated request in your budget.

The Successful Proposer is expected to work and coordinate with DHS CVRI program staff as well as with DHS-contracted oversight, capacity-building and technical assistance providers already in place.

The Successful Proposer must work with DHS CVRI program staff to meet reporting requirements of various funding streams, including competitively awarded federal and state grants.

Who can submit a Proposal

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

Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more organizations partner together to submit to one Proposal, are permitted. See Section 4.2.c for details. Successful Proposers may propose to work with a fiscal sponsor to support them in meeting the administrative/billing/reporting aspects of serving as an ACTES implementing partner and should provide details regarding this structure within the Proposal.

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

What's important to us

The Successful Proposer should be able to clearly demonstrate past or current work that aligns with the mission of the ACTES program and a strong connection to the South Hilltop. In order for ACTES to successfully reduce community violence, it is crucial that the Successful Proposer has the organizational capacity and experience to maintain a fully staffed direct service ACTES team that can implement the program with fidelity to the evidence-based model. The Successful Proposer will be responsible for staff who will conduct outreach in alignment with the narrowly defined target population, transition Participants through each level of the ACTES program, and coordinate with Participants' employer of record to issue compensation.

What we don't want

This RFP intends to identify one Successful Proposer to serve as an implementing partner for the **existing** ACTES program in the South Hilltop. DHS is not accepting proposals for other community violence reduction programs at this time and is not interested in proposals that deviate from the READI Chicago model.

Timeline

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| RFP Posting | Thursday, April 10, 2025 |
| Questions Deadline | Friday, May 9 at 3 p.m. Eastern |
| Last Website and Q&A Update | Thursday, May 15 at 6 p.m. Eastern |
| Submission Deadline | Thursday, May 22 at 3 p.m. Eastern |
| Estimated Award Decision/Notification | August 2025 |

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

Although data from 2023 indicate that incidents of gun violence have decreased from 2021, there is still work to be done in Allegheny County to address the racial disparities in violence victimization and the traumatic impact violence can have on communities. More information about the root causes of community violence and trends of gun violence in Allegheny County can be found in [Appendix A](#).

In Allegheny County, the municipalities that make up the geographic regions of Stowe-Rox, Woodland Hills and South Hilltop have some of the highest homicide rates when compared to Allegheny County's overall homicide rate (Table 1). This RFP focuses specifically on identifying a Successful Proposer to continue implementing the existing violence reduction program in the South Hilltop that includes Mount Oliver Borough, Allentown, Arlington, Arlington Heights, Beltzhoover, Carrick, Knoxville and Mount Oliver City.

| Table 1: Average Homicide Rate in Allegheny County and South Hilltop Communities per 100,000, 2021 through 2023 | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Geographic Area | Average Homicide Rate |
| Allegheny County | 9 per 100,000 people |
| Allentown | 72 per 100,000 people |
| Arlington-Arlington Heights -Mt. Oliver-St. Clair | 63 per 100,000 people |
| Beltzhoover | 21 per 100,000 people |
| Carrick | 23 per 100,000 people |

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Knoxville | 95 per 100,000 people |
| Mount Oliver Borough | 20 per 100,000 people |

To address concentrated and disparate trends of Community Violence, DHS launched the Achieving Change through Transitional Employment Services (ACTES) program, based on READI Chicago, as a key component of the County’s broader CVRI. Starting in early 2021, DHS engaged key stakeholders and identified three key principles of violence prevention: 1) a need for community-driven efforts, 2) responses to violence that consider the multi-faceted causes of violence, and 3) an emphasis on sustainability and capacity building. These principles informed a [Request for Proposals](#), published in January 2022, that sought Successful Proposers in high-priority areas to collaboratively develop a community violence prevention plan that could include existing efforts and evidence-based programs (EBP) (e.g., Cure, Becoming a Man, ACTES) and a “Community Quarterback” to serve as a convener of partners in each CVRI region.

Through that procurement process, ACTES sites were established in Stowe-Rox, Woodland Hills and South Hilltop. The South Hilltop ACTES, which has successfully onboarded one cohort of Participants according to the program model, is in need of a new operating partner to assume oversight and employment of the existing ACTES team and other resources described below. DHS seeks a Successful Proposer that 1) is mission-aligned with the County’s approach to intervening in Community Violence; 2) has the administrative capacity and program implementation experience to support this evidence-based, complex and resource-intensive program; and 3) will strongly consider retaining the existing ACTES staff members as part of the transition to assuming operations of ACTES.

While we acknowledges that it will take intensive resources and coordination to achieve a long-term solution to gun violence, we believe that it is possible to identify and engage individuals most at risk of being involved in gun violence. The ACTES program targets this population, which is generally underserved by social services and disconnected from economic opportunity yet overrepresented in the criminal legal system. ACTES offers two primary sources of support over 12-24 months of participation: 1) paid transitional jobs (TJ) that provide a stable source of income and viable lifestyle alternatives and 2) cognitive-behavioral therapy/ (CBT) that aims to help Participants reflect on and make positive changes to their own thoughts and behaviors.

The transitional jobs (TJ) component provides time-limited, wage-paid subsidized jobs that combine work experience with hard and soft skill development. TJ has been used to help a wide range of populations facing barriers to employment access work and earn income, including people returning to communities from incarceration, people experiencing homelessness, long-term recipients of public benefits, and youth who are not engaged in work or school. These are individuals who might never consider enrolling in cognitive-

behavioral group intervention but who might be more likely to buy-in to programming when combined with an offer of a job. ACTES leverages the power of paid employment to motivate Participants to enroll in the program. Although the skill development and workforce preparation functions of TJ are critical to ACTES, they are secondary to its primary function of engagement.

During the TJ level, ACTES Participants begin working in a crew with other participants supervised by the Work Crew Supervisor. Participants may face challenges with traditional workplace expectations – in these cases, implementing partners, particularly the Work Crew Supervisor and Site Supervisor should provide coaching to work through these challenges and preparing them for unsubsidized work. Implementing partners, and therefore the Successful Proposer, are responsible for identifying transitional job sites that able participants to have a safe and meaningful work experience that includes minimal risk, substantive work, and opportunities for growth.

CBT has been shown to be effective in treating a wide range of conditions, such as depression, anxiety, anger, substance use disorder and eating disorders. CBT has also been shown in many studies to positively affect criminal behavior and violent behavior. ACTES Participants attend CBT groups multiples times per week as a condition of their employment. The expectation is that by engaging in CBT, Participants will gain skills and tools that will allow them to respond differently to high-stakes situations that would otherwise result in violence.

Allegheny County has invested the financial resources needed to implement the ACTES program with fidelity to the READI model and depends on community-based implementing partners to reach the geographic regions most impacted by community violence. The Successful Proposer, alongside the Stowe-Rox and Woodland Hills ACTES teams, must be deeply committed to persistently engaging individuals at highest risk of gun violence involvement in each component of the program to maximize the impact of these investments—contributing to a reduction in homicides, recidivism and poverty.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking a Successful Proposer to serve as the Implementing Partner for the existing ACTES Program in South Hilltop. The Successful Proposer must:

- Be experienced in or familiar with the community violence theory and practice, or, at a minimum, have mission alignment with the ACTES program.
- Have a strong community orientation and a positive reputation in the South Hilltop and across Allegheny County.
- Have the organizational capacity and experience necessary to operate a fully staffed direct service ACTES team. Successful Proposers must strongly consider retaining/hiring the existing ACTES South Hilltop program staff. If the decision is

made to not retain the existing ACTES South Hilltop program staff, the Successful Proposer must clearly articulate the reason(s) and an alternative approach to ensuring programmatic continuity for ACTES Participants.

ACTES requires an implementing partner that can manage a team dedicated to each of the core elements of the ACTES model:

- Identifying and enrolling individuals at the highest risk of gun violence involvement into the program
- Maintaining transitional jobs and safe worksites for Participants
- Engaging each Participant with cognitive-behavioral therapy groups.

The Successful Proposer will ensure that each of these elements is being delivered with fidelity to the model and in collaboration with the broader CVRI in Allegheny County.

Participants in ACTES must meet set requirements to advance through four different Levels of programming. The Successful Proposer is responsible for monitoring Participant progress, coaching Participants toward success and formally advancing them once they have met the requirements of their current level. At maximum capacity, the Successful Proposer will be expected to engage 20 Participants at a time in Levels 2-4 and 30-40 Participants annually in Level 1, with the understanding that Participants will move through the Levels at their own pace and not all Level 1 Participants will adhere to the program. More information about each aspect of the Program can be found in [Appendix B: The ACTES Program](#).

2.1 Outreach and Referral Pathways

To ensure the ACTES program is reaching individuals at the highest risk of gun violence involvement, Implementing Partners identify potential Participants through two referral pathways: (1) community referrals and (2) administrative referrals. Before being enrolled in Level 1, all Participants must consent to program services during the outreach period as ACTES sites are required to report and share information within ClientPath, a secure case management platform.

Community Referrals Pathway: A community referral means an individual is identified as being potentially eligible for the program by the ACTES Outreach Team, Pittsburgh's Street Outreach Team (REACH), a local Cure Violence Outreach Team, or one of the County's two Hospital-based Violence Intervention Program (HVIP) teams. All of these organizations are members of Allegheny County's CVRI. Eligibility is based on a series of risk factors such as age, history of violence, connection to peers with gun violence involvement and situational risk factors like access to a firearm and past violence victimization. Individuals referred by community referral must meet established eligibility criteria and be vetted before they are enrolled into the program

Administrative Referral Pathway: DHS will identify individuals as being potentially eligible for the program using a data-driven model which assesses the likelihood of gun violence involvement. The data-driven model also informs community referral recruitment, waitlist monitoring and high-risk fidelity. Individuals referred through this pathway are automatically eligible for the program.

Once a prospective Participant is identified, ACTES outreach professionals are trained to practice “persistent engagement” in which they maintain consistent contact with the individual, slowly building trust, until the individual is ready to commit to each of the ACTES program levels and accept a transitional job. Because this trust-building and relationship-building takes time, this outreach period can last for up to 12 months.

2.2 Utilization of Existing Resources

Proposers must outline their approach to assuming responsibility for ACTES, including how they plan to ensure programmatic continuity and ongoing fidelity to the ACTES model. Specifically, Proposers must explain their proposed approach to utilizing the existing ACTES resources, which are described in more detail below and in [Appendix C: Standards for Safe Working Spaces](#).

Proposers must strongly consider and articulate an approach to:

- Staff: Retaining/hiring the existing ACTES South Hilltop program staff or hiring/proposing your own staff while ensuring Program continuity for Participants
- Facility: Retaining the facility/leasing the existing program space or identifying a new program location on the South Hilltop that meets the safety and security standards of the Program
- Transportation: Retaining/leasing the van or providing/acquiring a van to safely transport Participants to and from worksites

To ensure program continuity, DHS prefers a Successful Proposer that can utilize as many of the existing resources outlined below as feasible but strongly encourages **all** Proposals. Proposers proposing to utilize their own resources as opposed to the existing resources offered must provide strong justification for their approach.

Staff

The Successful Proposer will implement ACTES with fidelity to an evidence-informed model, including with respect to hiring, and will be responsible for employing staff in the roles outlined in Table 2 below. These staff will be responsible for operation of the ACTES site, ensuring high quality collaboration with community partners, and for participating more broadly in Allegheny County’s CVRI.

The Successful Proposer is strongly encouraged to consider retaining the existing staff. DHS, with various community-based partners, has developed and trained teams of staff members to implement ACTES in the three target regions. The ACTES South Hilltop team was selected with consideration of the hiring criteria and is well-equipped to continue this work under the leadership and organizational structure of the Successful Proposer. If the decision is made not to retain the existing staff, the Successful Proposer will nonetheless be responsible for ensuring programmatic continuity for ACTES Participants.

| Table 2: ACTES staff roles and responsibilities | | |
|---|--|--|
| Role | Description | Filled as of RFP Publication Date (Y/N) |
| Program Manager | Ensures and supports consistent, high-quality program execution through the development of effective, efficient systems and structures and creates solutions to address program modifications | Y |
| Site Staff Supervisor | Manages and executes the high-level operations of the program, assigns/reviews staff members work to ensure objectives are met; collects and maintains program data and data systems to assist with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the program | Y |
| Program Assistant | Performs a broad range of administrative tasks and assists the program in every aspect of program operations | Y |
| Behavioral Health Manager | Oversees the delivery of CBT to groups of program Participants via direct facilitation; trains, monitors and coaches frontline non-clinical staff in CBT group facilitation and trauma-informed care practices | Y |
| Outreach Workers (2) | Practices relentless engagement, reaching out to the highest-risk individuals in the community and working with them to prevent violence by modeling prosocial behaviors; engages Participants in positive activities, accompanying them through the case management process; addresses barriers to program entry to ensure Participants' meaningful participation | Y (2) |

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---------|
| Job Coach | Provides individual coaching, personal and professional development, case management and ongoing supportive services to Participants and their families; connects both staff and program Participants to resources intended to address emerging needs | Y |
| Work Crew Supervisor (2) | Supervises and supports transitional workers, managing day-to-day crew site logistics and operations | Y (1/2) |

Physical Space and Premises

The Successful Proposer will maintain a facility that meets the program’s standards for safety, security and program delivery. The South Hilltop ACTES team has been operating out of a leased building in Allentown, which is also home to CVRI’s South Hilltop Cure Violence program operated by South Pittsburgh Coalition for Peace. Currently, ACTES South Hilltop and Cure Violence share rent and utility expenses for the shared space. While co-location of these programs is not mandatory, close collaboration between ACTES and Cure is required. The existing leased space meets program requirements and has been assessed and approved for program readiness.

Should the Successful Proposer utilize a different program facility for programming, the physical space and premises must meet all safety, CBT programming and work experience criteria. If the Successful Proposer plans to utilize the existing facility, the leasing arrangement will be determined between the Successful Proposer, DHS and the appropriate stakeholders.

Transportation/Participant Van

The Successful Proposer must maintain a van for ACTES staff members to transport Participants to and from transitional job sites. The van must have enough space to fit Participants, their individual belongings and any work-related equipment. The Successful Proposer is required to keep the van clean, insured and serviced (addressing any maintenance needs) and must ensure that the van is used for legitimate purposes only. Each ACTES site must adopt a Safe Driving Policy to promote a safe driving culture and to prevent and reduce vehicle incidents and injuries for all employees and Participants. Vans may only be driven by staff members who have successfully completed certified safe/defensive driving training.

If the Successful Proposer plans to utilize the existing Participant van, the leasing arrangement will be determined between the Successful Proposer, DHS and the appropriate stakeholders.

Transitional Job (TJ) Worksite

DHS is contracting separately with an employer of record to manage the Transitional Jobs (TJ) component of all three ACTES programs. However, moving forward, the Successful Proposer may be responsible for identifying host work sites in collaboration with community-based organizations and other stakeholders. Each employer partner and TJ worksite should be vetted based on capacity to host a crew of transitional employees, ease on onboarding, physical and emotional safety, learning and growth opportunities, and mission and value alignment. For any employer partner identified, the Successful Proposer must stay in regular contact in order to get feedback on participant performance, actively maintain a positive relationship, share feedback in both directions, and resolve any challenges that arise.

Whether or not you plan to utilize the existing resources, the Successful Proposer must have strong experience and/or an approach to navigating change in management and be able to provide/facilitate a safe physical and social environment for staff wellness and to ensure program continuity, smooth transition for Participants and overall successful implementation.

2.3 Program Implementation

Safety

The Successful Proposer must maintain a program facility that is secure and promotes the safety of Participants and staff. The existing ACTES South Hilltop facility meets the required safety criteria:

- It has automatic locking exterior doors and a dedicated entrance equipped for a walk-through metal detector.
- It has staff positioned to maintain visibility over Participant areas during arrivals and departures, ensuring safety and guidance.
- The main entrance is discreetly located away from high-traffic areas.
- It has a well-stocked and readily available first aid kit, with staff trained in its use, including Naloxone administration.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Programming

The Successful Proposer must maintain a sufficiently private and comfortable room within the program facility for CBT programming. The room should meet the following standards:

- Can comfortably accommodate Participants with circular seating
- The room's temperature can be adjusted.
- There is moderate, warm lighting to enhance comfort and avoid negative associations.
- Room acoustics ensure Participants can hear well and allow the facilitator to manage discussions effectively.
- The facility is arranged to help maintain confidentiality and a clean environment free from clutter and pests.

- The room is dedicated solely to group use during sessions, minimizing outside noise to maintain a focused atmosphere.

Transitional Jobs (TJ) & Transportation

A key feature of ACTES' approach to transitional jobs programs is the ability to provide access to paid employment with fewer barriers to entry than typical unsubsidized jobs. The program lowers barriers even further, by not requiring any pre-employment training or preparation. Instead, the Successful Proposer will collaborate with the employer of record already established to engage Participants directly in work crews that clean up vacant lots, sidewalks and alleys in impacted neighborhoods as a relatively low-stakes, controlled environment to practice new skills and understand employer expectations.

The employer of record will handle all the responsibilities of a typical employer. In collaboration, the Successful Proper will be responsible for:

- Transportation to and from the TJ worksite
- Employee supervision in collaboration with the employer of record
- Collaboration with the employer of record to ensure accurate and timely payments

The Successful Proposer must have a van/vehicle to transport Participants to their TJ worksite and must maintain safety for Participants and staff when traveling to and from the TJ worksite and during TJ worksite hours. The program is also required to provide a safe, clean program facility and TJ worksite that prohibit drugs and weapons. The existing ACTES South Hilltop facility/program meets the required working experience criteria in that:

- A Participant van is kept in a discreet loading area that is not easily visible to passers-by.
- Participants are screened with a security wand metal detector before they get on the van.
- Work-related equipment and uniforms are stored in a secure area.
- Participants have access to clean drinking water, comfortable and confidential spaces for meetings, a distraction-free workspace and accessible bathrooms.

Although all Participants begin their TJ experience on a work crew, the Successful Proposer will work with DHS to maintain opportunities for them to advance to other subsidized work and training experiences in the course of their time in the program. The purpose of in-program advancement is to offer Participants a sense of momentum within the TJ experience, set them up for some early success, offer exposure to different jobs and sectors, and relieve some of the pressure to prematurely move into unsubsidized work before receiving enough CBTI to support behavior change.

Standard Operating Procedures & Safety Protocol

DHS has worked with partners to develop policies and procedures for implementing ACTES in each region. The Successful Proposer should consider their capacity to adhere to policies and programmatic best practices related to:

- Weapons screening and crisis response
- Community safety assessment (for outreach workers)
- Employee assistance programs
- Formal policies including equal opportunity, grievance procedure and whistleblower protections

The Successful Proposer must have a clear and legitimate process for employees to safely elevate concerns within the organization and, as necessary and if applicable, to the Board of Directors.

Additional detail about guidelines and standards can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Partnerships and Technical Assistance

DHS contracts and works with various oversight, training and technical assistance (TTA), and capacity building partners in support of the CVRI. The Successful Proposer is expected to work and coordinate with DHS CVRI program staff, Social Contract (DHS-contracted oversight and capacity building provider) and CVI Solutions (DHS-contracted TTA provider). The Successful Proposer is also expected to coordinate with DHS's contracted Employer of Record for ACTES Participants to ensure wages are paid appropriately.

2.4 Budget

Proposed budgets should build upon the following core ACTES team budget for direct staff (Table 3).

In addition, a standard sample budget has been provided for review in [Appendix D: ACTES FY25 Sample Standard Budget](#). Proposers must propose their own budget and budget narrative, however, this sample budget should provide Proposers with a baseline to work from.

The annual budget for the Program for ACTES direct service staff has been determined to be \$451,000 a year as outlined in Table 3 in Section 2.4. Proposers proposing to utilize existing resources **do not** need to propose costs for the resource(s) they plan to utilize as the final costs will be determined and negotiated collaboratively between DHS, the Successful Proposer and the appropriate stakeholders.

Proposers proposing to utilize their own resources for staff, facility or Participant van must include all costs and justification for such in their budget and budget narrative. Across all ACTES sites, we budget \$18,000-\$25,000 annually for rented space based on market value and proportionate to the amount of space ACTES programming uses if more than one program operates at the site.

All proposed costs, including costs associated with fringe benefits or administrative, operating or overhead costs, will be considered for reasonableness, and the final budget will be negotiated with the Successful Proposer.

Proposers may propose reasonable expenses associated with operation and administration of the program, including, but not limited to:

- Technology and security equipment
- Fringe benefits
- Professional development
- Staff Travel (mileage reimbursement at a rate of \$0.70/mile or bus passes)
- Occasional Participant meals as a means of community-building and light refreshments (snacks and bottled water) for work sites
- Rent and utilities, or any costs related to meeting the safety standards of the Program
- Work crew equipment, including Participant uniforms and staff uniforms
- Mobile phone stipends for direct ACTES staff
- Client supports
- An owned/leased van

Proposed budgets should **not** include Participant compensation for transitional work as DHS is contracting separately with an employer of record for Participants of all three ACTES programs.

All DHS contracted providers are expected to have a cost allocation plan in place and will be reimbursed on a monthly basis for actual expenses incurred. If you anticipate requiring a cash advance in order to begin operations, please include the anticipated request in your budget.

| Table 3: ACTES Team Budget for Direct Staff | |
|---|---------------|
| Line Item | Amount |
| (1) Program Manager Salary | \$66,000 |
| (1) Site Staff Supervisor Salary | \$55,000 |
| (2) Outreach Worker Salaries | \$44,000 each |
| BH Manager Salary | \$66,000 |
| (1) Program Assistant Salary | \$44,000 |
| (1) Coach Salary | \$44,000 |
| (2) Work Crew Supervisor Salary | \$44,000 each |

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 95 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Organizational Experience (10 pts)

- Experience implementing complex violence prevention and/or workforce development programs with fidelity, including administrative and programmatic experience. (5 points)
- Description of how this opportunity aligns with the mission of your organization, including examples of projects/programs that demonstrate your experience with data- and community-driven efforts and/or responding to the multi-faceted causes of violence in a way that emphasizes sustainability and capacity building. (5)

Program Implementation and Performance Management (40 pts)

- Description of your approach to program implementation that meets all programmatic requirements, including the existing resources you plan to use of those outlined in *Section 2.1 Utilization of Existing Resources* (staff, facility, Participant van) and how you'll navigate a change in management/staff/facility for programmatic continuity, smooth transition for program Participants and overall successful program implementation (15 pts)
- Description of how ACTES will fit within your organizational structure, including how existing roles and functions will support or interact with the ACTES program and team. *If you are applying with a fiscal sponsor, or you are a fiscal sponsor applying on behalf of an implementing partner, please include an MOU or letter of commitment from that partner describing how this partnership will be structured and operationalized.* (10 pts)
- Description of anticipated implementation challenges and a plan to mitigate them (5 pts)
- Approach to ensuring ACTES is implemented with fidelity to the model, including the following elements:
 - a. Internal oversight and supervision
 - b. Data collection and sharing
 - c. Capacity building

Include how your approach may differ in the various phases of program implementation (Participant outreach and recruitment, at TJ sites, etc.) (10 pts)

Partnership and Collaboration (5 pts)

- Description of the strengths, resources and/or insights you anticipate contributing to Allegheny County's broader Community Violence Reduction Initiative (5 pts)

Staff Management and Wellness (20 pts)

- Plan to retain and/or recruit qualified individuals with lived experiences of gun violence and/or criminal legal systems involvement (10 pts)
- Plan for onboarding and continuous training of staff regarding program implementation, organizational culture and policies (5 points)
- Approach to supporting a safe physical and emotional space for employees to address employee mental health and foster team wellness. Include a clear process for employees to safely elevate concerns within the organization/to the Board of Directors (if applicable). (5 pts)

Leadership Support (10 points)

- A Letter of Support from your Board of Directors (or Executive Leadership if you do not have a Board) demonstrating that your organization has leadership buy-in to implement a program aimed at serving individuals at highest risk of violence involvement and support for employing staff with lived experience of violence involvement or incarceration. Include a brief description of your organization's governance structure and the process used for decision making.

Budget (10 points)

- A detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining ACTES (referencing Section 2.4 Budget) (5 points)
- A budget narrative that explains and justifies the projected costs associated with each proposed line (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submit a Proposal

- a. 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)

- b. 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/>.
- c. Collaborative Proposals
- Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more entities partner to apply together, are permitted. **This includes fiscal sponsorship.** 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.
 1. **In the case of fiscal sponsorship, the fiscal sponsor will be the Lead Agency that Holds the contract with the County/DHS and is considered the “contracted provider” or CONTRACTOR, even if the sponsored partner will be substantively leading or implementing the Contract Service.**
 - a. **A fiscal sponsor has ultimate discretion and control over the activities of the sponsored partner. The control must be real.**
 - b. **A fiscal sponsor has the ability to require certain actions and accountings by the sponsored partner and to redirect the funds if the sponsored partner does not comply.**
 - c. **A fiscal sponsor has the appropriate resources and expertise to oversee and control the activities of the sponsored partner.**
 2. **Please contact your fiscal sponsor if you have questions on these points.**
 - 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 or MOU from each Partner that details and agrees to their role in the Contract Services.
 1. **In the case of a fiscal sponsorship, the MOU between the fiscal sponsor and the partner must not be inconsistent with the fiscal sponsor’s duties as a CONTRACTOR with DHS.**
 - 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 (MWDBE) 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, May 22, 2025, 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.

4.2 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, May 9, 2025.
 - 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, May 15, 2025, 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.

4.3 New Provider Requirements

Any Successful Proposer(s) who does not have 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.

4.4 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).

4.5 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 General Requirements/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 General Requirements/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).