



Allegheny County Department of Human Services
Request for Proposals

**Housing Mobility Services for
Families in the Housing Choice
Voucher Program**

RFP Posting:

DAY, DATE, MONTH, YEAR

Deadline for Questions:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on DAY, DATE, MONTH, YEAR

Submission Deadline:

3 p.m. Eastern Time on DAY, DATE, MONTH, YEAR

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:

MONTH, YEAR

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

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Acronyms and Definitions

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

1. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
2. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
3. ACHA: Allegheny County Housing Authority
4. Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program: A regional program that will promote geographic mobility for families in the Housing Choice Voucher Program
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. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
7. HACP: Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
8. Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program: The federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and people who are disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. The program is commonly referred to as Section 8.
9. Housing Mobility Services: The services of the Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program, which are housing search and leasing assistance, administration of financial assistance, post-move support and landlord outreach
10. HUD: [United States] Department of Housing and Urban Development
11. Opportunity Area: According to HUD, a Census tract in which the family poverty rate is less than 20%. DHS additionally considers the following metrics when defining areas of opportunity: single parenthood, unemployment, educational attainment, gun violence, and comparative outcomes for low-income children. Opportunity Areas are a result of systemic racism and classism.
12. PHFA: Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
13. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
14. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
15. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
16. RFP: Request for Proposals
17. SOGIE: sexual orientation, gender identity and expression
18. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

Allegheny County, on behalf of its Department of Human Services' (DHS), is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to implement the new Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program (henceforth referred to as the Program). The Program—a partnership between DHS, the Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA), and the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP)—aims to reduce barriers that can prevent families with housing vouchers from moving to low-poverty “Opportunity Areas” in the City of Pittsburgh and surrounding Allegheny County. Research suggests that moving to Opportunity Areas can lead to improved health and well-being for families, and greater economic outcomes for children. The Successful Proposer will work with families and landlords to deliver the following Program services: housing search and leasing assistance, administration of financial assistance, post-move support and landlord outreach.

Award Details

DHS intends to enter into one Agreement with one Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services for a term of one year. The Agreement may be renewable, dependent on availability of funds. The Agreement likely will not exceed \$360,000.

Commented [CC1]: Still considering whether to increase this; could potentially increase by 50 or 100K – will ask Abby/Chuck during review

Who can apply

Anyone is eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. This includes non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals. 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 are permitted where two or more entities partner to submit one comprehensive Proposal in which they collaborate in performing the Contract Services; however, only one of the partnering entities will enter into the Agreement. Entities may participate in more than one collaborative Proposal.

What’s important to us

It is important to us that Proposers:

- Are familiar with housing programs, especially the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, the federal government's program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and people who are disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market

- Are committed to providing high-quality services to all families regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences
- Think critically about the legacy of racism in housing policies and practices, nationally and locally
- Committed to improving long-term outcomes for families and children, and are excited about encouraging families to move to Opportunity Areas
- Have experience working with, or willingness to work with, landlords
- Have a history of being a collaborative, communicative partner to DHS and public housing authorities, or a willingness to become a good partner
- Are interested in being a part of a learning journey with DHS to evaluate the program's effectiveness in promoting geographic choice, encouraging opportunity moves, and supporting families' transitions to new neighborhoods

Timeline

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions about this RFP is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on DAY, DATE, MONTH, YEAR. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on DAY, DATE, MONTH, YEAR. We expect to notify Proposers of the County's decision to award an Agreement in MONTH, YEAR.

Who we are

On behalf of Allegheny County, DHS is the issuing office for this RFP.

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

All children, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, deserve to live in neighborhoods that are safe, low in poverty, have high quality schools, and provide access to opportunities that allow them to thrive and achieve their potential. An abundance of research supports the notion that place greatly affects childhood outcomes. Growing up in a neighborhood with high poverty is associated with stressors that influence well-being and limit economic mobility.¹ In contrast,

¹ e.g., Sharkey, P. (2016). Neighborhoods, cities, and economic mobility. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 2(2), 159-177.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2016.2.2.07#metadata_info_tab_contents

growing up in a neighborhood with low levels of poverty, access to higher performing schools, and less violence can lead to better health and well-being, and greater economic mobility.² Moving from a low- to high-opportunity neighborhood can lead to improvements in education and future earnings for children in these households, with perhaps the greatest effects for those who move prior to age 13.³ Definitions of “Opportunity Areas” vary, as does terminology. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an Opportunity Area is a Census tract in which the family poverty rate is less than 20%. In addition to poverty, DHS considers the following metrics when defining Opportunity Areas: single parenthood, unemployment, educational attainment, gun violence, and comparative outcomes for low-income children; DHS’s interactive Allegheny County opportunity map is available [here](#). Opportunity Areas are a result of systemic racism and classism.

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program seeks to alleviate the concentration of poverty, keeping low-income families stably housed and allowing them to move to Opportunity Areas. The HCV Program is the federal government’s major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and people who are disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the local housing authority on behalf of the participating family. The family then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. The HCV program is commonly referred to as Section 8.

However, HCV households are more likely to live in low-opportunity neighborhoods than high-opportunity ones.⁴ In accordance with this national trend, the majority of HCV participants in Allegheny County tend to move to areas of low opportunity. According to a recent analysis, only 17% of HCV households moved to areas of high opportunity where less than 10% of individuals lived in poverty on average.⁵ Race is the most statistically important factor affecting where households tend to move in the County. Black females with children are about twice as likely as White females with children to move to low-opportunity census tracts, which is likely a result of the unique barriers that Black renters face.

Motivated by these trends, in the fall of 2019, ACHA, HACP, and DHS formed a working group to design a regional housing mobility program for Allegheny County. The group consulted with

² Chetty, R., & Hendren, N. (2018). “The impacts of neighborhoods on intergenerational mobility I: Childhood exposure effects.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 133(3), 1107-1162. <https://academic.oup.com/qje/article/133/3/1107/4850660>

³ Chetty, R., Hendren, N., & Katz, L. F. (2016). “The effects of exposure to better neighborhoods on children: New evidence from the Moving to Opportunity experiment.” *American Economic Review*, 106(4), 855-902 <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20150572>; DeLuca, S., & Rosenblatt, P. (2017). “Walking away from the wire: Housing mobility and neighborhood opportunity in Baltimore.” *Housing Policy Debate*, 27(4), 519-546.

⁴ Mazzara, A. & Knudsen, B. (2019). “Where Families with Children Use Housing Vouchers: A Comparative Look at the 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas.” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities & Poverty and Race Research Action Council. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/where-families-with-children-use-housing-vouchers>

⁵ Cotter, N. Halfhill, H., Collins, K. & Dalton, E. (2020). “Moving to Opportunity or Disadvantage? An Analysis of Housing Choice Voucher and Rapid Rehousing Programs in Allegheny County.” Allegheny County Department of Human Services. <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2020/03/14/moving-to-opportunity-or-disadvantage-an-analysis-of-housing-choice-voucher-and-rapid-rehousing-programs-in-allegheny-county/>

national experts at Mobility Works to learn from mobility programs throughout the country and worked with Opportunity Insights at Harvard University to shape various program elements based on lessons from King County-Seattle.⁶ Through meetings and phone calls, DHS gathered input from local stakeholders—fair housing advocates, researchers, service providers, and existing voucher holders—on the mapping method and the program.

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking one Successful Proposer to implement and manage the Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program (the Program). ACHA and HACP will work closely with DHS and the Successful Proposer to execute the Program. DHS will act as the primary project manager and project coordinator, coordinating the implementation of the program and overseeing the work of the Successful Proposer. ACHA and HACP will provide vouchers and other support, including recruitment and enrollment. The Successful Proposer will:

- Deliver Housing Mobility Services, detailed below, including housing search and leasing assistance, administration of financial assistance, post-move support, and landlord outreach
- Hire or reassign staff for at least the following positions: two full-time mobility counselors, one full-time landlord liaison and a part-time program supervisor
- Participate in regular Program coordination meetings/communication with partner organizations
- Securely maintain and provide DHS and/or other evaluation partners with data, as requested
- Participate in relevant staff and supervisor trainings

Priority Population

Any family participating in the HCV program at ACHA or HACP with at least one minor child will be eligible for the Program, although the priority population is families with children 13 and under. DHS expects that the Successful Proposer will serve at least 100 families in the first year. Families served under the Program are henceforth referred to as Participants.

Referral Process

ACHA and HACP will market the mobility program to eligible Participants. Intake staff at the housing authorities will enroll families and refer them to the Successful Proposer.

Service Description

The package of services provided for each household will not be “one size fits all,” but instead will be tailored to the unique needs of each Participant. In all circumstances, Participants will choose where they want to live, even if it is not within an identified Opportunity Area. The Successful Proposer must provide the following Housing Mobility Services:

- **Housing Search and Leasing Assistance.** The Successful Proposer must work with Participants on housing search plans, including work to understand Participants’

⁶ <https://www.housingmobility.org/>; <https://opportunityinsights.org/policy/cmt/>

neighborhood and unit preferences, as well as to understand any barriers they may experience in leasing-up in the private rental market. The Successful Proposer must provide Participants with information about Opportunity Areas in the region and the potential benefits to families and children of moving to those areas. Services must include corresponding planning and activities to increase Participants' housing search activities and skills as well as to maximize the competitiveness of their housing application. DHS expects that this work also will entail taking Participants on tours of Opportunity Areas and providing additional information about neighborhood schools, transit, resources and amenities so that Participants can make an informed choice. Leasing assistance may include the completion/facilitation of contract paperwork and/or inspections in accordance with HCV Program regulations to expedite the process. The Successful Proposer must assist in landlord negotiations and in assuring that Participants and landlords understand information related to payment standards and the inspection process, including commonly required repairs. Housing search and leasing assistance likely will be conducted virtually (in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions) and/or in office and community settings as the Successful Proposer's staff accompany Participants to landlord meetings, unit inspections, etc.

- **Administration of Financial Assistance.** The Successful Proposer must administer short-term financial assistance to Participants to cover move-in expenses incurred by leasing-up in Opportunity Areas. Assistance may cover such expenses as application fees, mover costs, renters' insurance, and/or security deposits. DHS estimates that 60% of Participants will move to Opportunity Areas and have allotted \$90,000 (\$1,500 per Participant on average) for this assistance. Some Participants will require more or less than average. The Successful Proposer must monitor Participants' eligibility for these funds and track fund allocations. Additionally, the Successful Proposer must administer financial incentives and possible assurances to landlords and property owners as part of landlord outreach activities, including money for small repairs to pass inspection, sign on bonus payments or vacancy holds. DHS has allotted \$26,460 for landlord assistance. The Successful Proposer must monitor Participants' and landlords' eligibility for these funds and track fund allocations.
- **Post-Move Support.** The Successful Proposer must offer post-move services to all Participants who have made a move to an Opportunity Area. Those services may include: helping Participants locate neighborhood resources and amenities; navigate enrolling their children in the local school; conducting regular check-ins and supporting the adjustment to a new neighborhood; and working with Participants on meeting landlord expectations or liaising with the landlord as needed.
- **Landlord Outreach.** The Successful Proposer must establish, grow and maintain a network of landlords and property owners in designated Opportunity Areas of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County that are currently working with, or willing to work with, the HCV Program. This network will ideally include a broad portfolio of landlord and property types to accommodate varied needs and preferences, including geography, housing stock, unit size, unit and building amenities, owner eligibility criteria, and other parameters. Growing this network will involve identification of new landlords and units, marketing

and outreach to landlords/owners to explain Housing Choice Vouchers and the benefits of participating in the Program, and possible coordination with a landlord liaison at HACP. Maintaining relationships with landlords may include outreach to existing participant landlords to gauge satisfaction, troubleshoot concerns, and find out when new units may be coming online.

Staffing & Staff Qualifications

The Successful Proposer must staff the following positions in the first year:

- Two full-time mobility counselors who will provide housing search and leasing assistance, administration of financial assistance, and post-move support, as described above
- One full-time landlord liaison who will conduct landlord outreach and administer financial assistance, as described above
- A part-time supervisor who will manage staff and oversee services and be a direct point of contact for Program partners

Training

DHS will coordinate and cover the cost of mobility services training for all existing and newly hired Program staff through partner Mobility Works.⁷ DHS also will coordinate fair housing training for all existing and newly hired Program staff through the Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh, at no cost to the Successful Proposer.⁸

Expected Outcomes

The following is a preliminary list of anticipated outcomes in the first year of the Agreement with the Successful Proposer. DHS, Program partners, and the Successful Proposer will work together to determine actual outcomes and the monitoring process:

- Increase Participants' familiarity with, access to, and utilization of housing options in Opportunity Areas
- Increase the number of landlords/owners (and corresponding rental units) located in high-Opportunity Areas that are willing to participate in the HCV Program
- Increase lease-up rates for Participants
- Reduce barriers to geographic choice

Evaluation & Assessment

DHS intends to evaluate the Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program to assess its effectiveness in promoting geographic choice and encouraging HCV participants to move to Opportunity Areas. Additionally, DHS seeks to learn from the experiences of Participants. An evaluation can inform how the local public housing authorities administer the HCV program and program partners' efforts to ensure that families receive the support they need to remain in Opportunity Areas long-term, allowing them to benefit from their move. DHS will work with various partners to design an evaluation approach and to fundraise for the evaluation if necessary.

⁷ <https://www.housingmobility.org/>

⁸ <https://fhp.org/>

Data Collection & Reporting

The Successful Proposer must record data on service interactions, receipt of financial assistance, and address and demographic data. DHS will work with the Successful Proposer to provide oversight and data analysis, reporting, visualization and tools, as needed.

Budget

DHS has secured funds from Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) and the Pittsburgh Foundation to support the Program for one year. DHS has applied to PHFA for a second year of Program funding; PHFA will announce funding awards after July 2021. DHS will work with the Successful Proposer on sustaining the Program beyond one year, regardless of the PHFA decision.

DHS intends to enter into one Agreement with one Successful Proposer to the Contract Services for a term of one year likely not to exceed a total of \$360,000. Total funding is separated into two categories: Program services and financial assistance. The amount of \$243,540 is designated for Program services, including personnel, indirect costs and fringe benefits. When securing funds, DHS assumed fringe benefits at 35% of salaries and indirect costs at 10% of salaries plus fringe. The amount of \$116,460 is reserved for short-term financial assistance, with \$90,000 for Participants and \$26,460 for landlords.

Potential as a HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration Site

Proposers should know that the Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program currently is under consideration by HUD to be a part of the HCV Mobility Demonstration as the Pittsburgh-Allegheny County demonstration site.⁹ HUD expects to announce selected sites in Spring 2021. Proposers should know that if HUD selects Pittsburgh-Allegheny County, Program funding (amount to be determined) and funding for evaluation of the Program would be secured for six years and the Program scope would be significantly larger, both in terms of number of families served and participation in a national demonstration project with five to nine other sites.

If HUD selects Pittsburgh-Allegheny County as an HCV Mobility Demonstration site, the Successful Proposer will serve only families with children 13 and under and will serve a larger number of families (with additional funding and staffing). At each demonstration site, HUD anticipates serving approximately 130 families annually in the first two years of the program and approximately 350 annually in the last three years. The first year would serve as a planning and pilot year.

If Pittsburgh-Allegheny County is selected, HUD and a research partner will evaluate the Program using a randomized controlled trial study design in which a treatment group (those receiving services) is compared to a control group (a similar group that does not receive services).

Proposers should develop their Proposals based on the Program as initially described in the RFP, not as it would be as a HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration site. DHS will work with the

⁹ https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/mobilitydemo

Successful Proposer to scale up the proposed Program if HUD selects Pittsburgh-Allegheny County.

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 www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations. The maximum score that a Proposal can receive is 100 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Organizational Experience (35 points possible)

- Clear and concise statement why the Proposer feels that it is the best candidate for this opportunity and how the Housing Mobility Program fits well within the Proposer's mission (10 points)
- Experience partnering with other organizations to implement programs, especially partners in government and/or research sectors (10 points)
- Evidence of client satisfaction and mechanisms to learn from clients to improve services (5 points)
- Evidence of staff retention, satisfaction and opportunities for professional development (5 points)
- Experience maintaining databases/using software for reporting/analysis, tracking service interactions, and/or staff management (5 points)

Housing Experience (20 points possible)

- Experience providing housing-related services to families and familiarity with the unique housing challenges faced by low-income families (10 points)
- Experience working with landlords, property owners, real estate firms and other stakeholders involved in local housing markets (10 points)

Implementation Plan (35 points possible)

- A plan for recruiting/reassigning and supervising qualified staff to fill the positions named in Section 2, and how the process incorporates equity principles (5 points)
- A plan to implement the Program from an anti-racist framework that combats systemic racism in housing (5 points)
- A plan to provide the housing search and leasing assistance services identified in Section 2, and to overcome anticipated implementation challenges (5 points)
- A plan to administer the financial assistance identified in Section 2, and to overcome anticipated implementation challenges (5 points)
- A plan to provide the post-move support identified in Section 2, and to overcome anticipated implementation challenges (5 points)

- A plan to provide the landlord outreach identified in Section 2, and to overcome anticipated implementation challenges (5 points)
- Anticipation of additional needs/new challenges if Pittsburgh-Allegheny County is selected to be part of the HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration (5 points)

Budget (10 points possible)

- A detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Program (5 points)
- A budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed line-item budget (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submission Process

- Proposers should take time to review and understand the RFP in its entirety including:
 - The background (see Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP)
 - The narrative (see Section 2: What We Are Looking For)
 - The requirements (see Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)
 - The evaluation process (see Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal)
- Proposers must use the Response Form to develop your Proposal. Type your responses to each requested item directly into the Response Form. It is available at our Active Solicitations website with the RFP announcement at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- Proposers must submit a complete Proposal, which includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
 - Response Form
 - MWDDBE and VOSB documents
 - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
 - Audited financial reports for the last three years
 - W-9
 - Budget attachment, if desired
- Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed above and on the Response Form.
- 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 Proposer's financial health of your organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing adequate financial documentation is a requirement of contracting through Allegheny County.
- Make sure to complete each section of the Response Form and to stay within any word counts or page limits that may be specified in the Response Form.
- Proposals must be submitted electronically to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on DAY, MONTH, DATE, YEAR to be considered for review.**

- h. Please make sure to get your Proposal in before the deadline! If your Proposal is late, it will be rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee for review and scoring, as described in Section 5 below.
- i. You will receive an email when your Proposal is received. If you do not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting your Proposal, please contact: DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

4.2 How to Contact DHS about this RFP

- a. All inquiries and questions must be submitted via email to DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.
- b. All information about the RFP, including answers to questions, changes and clarifications will be posted at our Active Solicitations website at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- c. Please be sure to check this website regularly for answers to questions, additional information or changes to the RFP or the RFP process.

4.3 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 not to 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).

4.4 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

Proposals will be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee convened by DHS. The Evaluation Committee will assign scores to each Proposal by award points based on the evaluation criteria in Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria 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 may consist of DHS employees and subject matter representatives from external organizations.
- 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. 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 the discretion to proceed as follows: (i) to recommend to the Director of DHS that a reduced number of Proposals be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation to the Committee; or (ii) to recommend to the Director of DHS that DHS request authorization for the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Proposer(s).
- d. As described in c 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 proposed program effectively (5 points)
 - Proposer's answers to Evaluation Committee's questions (5 points)
 - Proposer's presentation is thoughtful and professional (5 points)
- e. DHS will tally the average scores 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 on which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP.
 - f. The Committee will submit its recommendation for award of an Agreement or Agreements to the Director of DHS for approval. The Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement or Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
 - g. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
 - h. As part of determining a Proposer's eligibility to enter into 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.
 - i. **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.**
 - j. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
 - k. Proposers not awarded an Agreement 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, Proposers must be willing to 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. Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County are provided in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.

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” in assisting the County in meeting these goals.

- a. All Proposals must include either of the following:
 - If the Proposer is able to meet the MWDBE contract goals, a completed MWDBE Participation Statement and MWDBE Contact Information form is required. You must also attach the MWDBE certifications of the firms you intend to use with the Participation Statement.
 - If the Proposer requests a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, a completed MWDBE Participation Statement, MWDBE Contact Information form and MWDBE Waiver Request are required.
- b. MWDBE forms and resources can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations:
 - MWDBE Forms
 - [MWDBE Participation Statement](#)
 - [MWDBE Waiver Request](#)
 - [MWDBE Contact Information form](#)
 - MWDBE Resources
 - [MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)
 - [MWDBE Response Checklist](#)
 - [Guide for completing the MWDBE Participation Statement](#)
 - [Sample Diversity Policy](#)
 - [MWDBE Presentation for Proposers](#)
- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion website](#).

6.2 Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) Requirement

Allegheny County has a VOSB goal of 5% participation for veteran-owned small businesses in all contracts. The County, therefore, expects that Successful Proposers will make a “good faith effort” in assisting the County in meeting 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 shall be exempt from all bonding requirements.
- b. All Proposals must include either of the following:
 - If the Proposer is able to 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) that you intend to use with 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.
- c. VOSB forms can be found at www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations:
 - [VOSB Participation Statement](#)
 - [VSOB Waiver Request](#)

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

6.5 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Requirements

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

6.6 Language Diversity Requirements

Successful Proposer(s) must assure resources are secured and/or made available for participants/consumers/clients with limited English proficiency or other communication barriers. Such actions shall include but not be limited to assessing the need for interpreters, evaluating the need for alternate language materials, identifying internal and external resources to meet

identified needs, and accessing services contracted by DHS through their assigned contract monitor(s).

6.7 New Provider Requirements

If awarded an Agreement, Successful Proposers who do not have current Allegheny County contracts will be required to complete the [DHS New Provider Application](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Prospective-Providers.aspx), available at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Doing-Business/Prospective-Providers.aspx>. While not required as part of your Proposal, Proposers may wish to review the requirements of this application.