



Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
**Request for Proposals**

## Winter Shelter

**RFP Posting:**

Thursday, July 11, 2024

**Office Hours:**

11:30 a.m. Eastern Time on Monday, July 22, 2024

**Questions Deadline:**

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, August 2, 2024

**Submission Deadline:**

3 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, August 15, 2024

**Estimated Award Decision/Notification:**

November 2024

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. Allegheny Link (the Link): The single access point for the Coordinated Entry system in Allegheny County, providing diversion, assessment and referral to housing programs for individuals in a housing crisis
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 RFP and Agreement
6. Continuum of Care (CoC): The network of housing options and services covering the geographic entirety of Allegheny County for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Includes shelter, housing and supportive services; outreach, engagement and assessment; and prevention strategies.
7. Coordinated Entry: A standardized method for connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to the resources available in a geographic area. The Allegheny Link and the OCS Field Unit are the Coordinated Entry entities in Allegheny County.
8. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
9. DHS Bonfire Portal: A Bonfire webpage specific to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services where Proposers can view open, past and awarded solicitations released through Bonfire
10. Harm Reduction: An evidence-based approach to engaging with people who use drugs; includes equipping them with life-saving tools and information to help create positive change in their lives
11. Homeless Advisory Board (HAB): The public-private partnership that oversees the CoC. The HAB sets the local strategy to end homelessness and reviews public policy, programs, activities, data and all other efforts to eliminate homelessness and improve the wellbeing of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
12. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS): An information technology system used to collect Client-level data on the provision of housing and supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
13. Housing First: A low-barrier approach to service delivery grounded in the knowledge that a) everyone is housing ready, b) the solution to homelessness is affordable permanent housing, and c) everyone has choice and the agency to make their own decisions
14. Motivational Interviewing: An evidence-based intervention that uses a conversational

- approach designed to help people address their ambivalence to change
15. OCS Field Unit: DHS's enhanced Coordinated Entry team that works to locate individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness within the community and engage them in services inside and outside of Shelter
  16. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
  17. Proposer: The individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
  18. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
  19. RFP: Request for Proposals
  20. RFP Opportunity Page: The Bonfire webpage where the RFP and all required supporting documents are listed and where the RFP submission documents must be uploaded for a Proposal to be considered for review
  21. Trauma-Informed: An organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of all types of trauma and its impact on human behavior
  22. Street Outreach: A program designed to identify and serve individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Street Outreach workers identify and address immediate needs and provide connections to longer-term forms of support.
  23. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services
  24. Winter Shelter: Winter Shelter provides a safe place for individuals experiencing homelessness to sleep overnight during the coldest months of the year.

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

# The RFP at a Glance

## *Purpose*

Allegheny County, through its Department of Human Services (DHS), is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to operate Winter Shelter for the 2024/2025 winter for up to 75 individuals per night, at a yet-to-be identified location(s) in Allegheny County. Pending the identification of a Successful Proposer(s) and location(s), we expect that Winter Shelter will operate 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. from November 15 through March 15. Winter Shelter will offer individuals experiencing homelessness a safe and welcoming place to access food, warm shelter and attention to minor medical needs during the coldest months of the year. The Successful Proposer(s) will be responsible for: leasing the building (with funding from DHS); employing and supervising staff; managing transportation for shelter clients to and from a central Downtown location; and delivering low-barrier<sup>1</sup>, overnight shelter accommodations. Proposers can propose to serve the full capacity (up to 75 individuals per night), or a smaller subset

We are releasing this RFP as an important foundational step to ensuring a full scope of shelter options during the winter. However, we may need to adjust Winter Shelter plans, as set forth in this RFP, depending upon the timing of the response to the fire at Second Avenue Commons (2AC) and the temporary shelter operations that are implemented during 2AC's renovations. Final Program specifications will be included in negotiations with any Successful Proposer.

In this RFP, the individuals served at the Shelter will be referred to as "Clients."

Please join us for a [virtual office hours session](#) on Monday, July 22 at 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time.

## *Award Details*

DHS intends to enter into an agreement with one or more Successful Proposers for an initial term of one year with a County option to renew. DHS will work collaboratively with the Successful Proposer(s), other DHS shelter providers and homeless system stakeholders to continue to assess the optimal distribution of shelters across Allegheny County.

We are interested in reviewing a proposed budget and budget narrative for all costs the Proposer projects to ensure successful operation of the Shelter. Proposers should provide a realistic estimate and strong justification for all costs. All proposed costs will be considered for reasonableness, and the final budget and contract terms will be negotiated with the Successful Proposer.

## *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

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<sup>1</sup> A low-barrier shelter approach is one that provides access without policies that make it difficult to enter/stay in shelter or access housing and income opportunities.

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.

**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*

We are looking for a Successful Proposer(s) with the capacity to:

- Provide temporary shelter with trauma-informed, inclusive and culturally responsive services. Winter Shelter should be prepared to welcome clients irrespective of race, gender, ability, medical or other needs.
- Embrace low-barrier approaches to service delivery and strive to provide a welcoming space where all people—particularly those who are most marginalized—can be comfortable, feel valued and easily access supports on their own terms.
- Collaborate effectively with external partners to help Clients connect with other vital resources that promote safety, stability and wellbeing.
- Ensure the safety and security of the Clients residing at the Shelter while promoting a sense of community with the surrounding neighborhood. The Shelter operator must recognize the Shelter’s place in the neighborhood and be a positive contributing member of the community.

*Timeline*

RFP Posting	Thursday, July 11, 2024
Office Hours (see section 4.1 for details)	Monday, July 22 at 11:30 a.m. Eastern
Questions Deadline	Friday, August 2 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Last Website and Q&A Update	Thursday, August 8 at 6 p.m. Eastern
Submission Deadline	Thursday, August 15 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Estimated Award Decision/Notification	November 2024

*Who we are*

DHS is the largest department of Allegheny County government and provides publicly funded services to more than 200,000 people annually, in areas including child welfare, behavioral health, aging, developmental supports, homelessness and community services.

More information about DHS is available at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/human-services/index.aspx>

## **Section 1: Why DHS Is Issuing This RFP**

For decades, Allegheny County has been operating a homelessness response system designed with the goal of making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. Consistent with best practice, the system includes targeted homelessness prevention, outreach to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, coordinated entry, emergency shelter, permanent housing programs and wraparound services. The County and its partners have continuously assessed these services, as well as needs across the community and the system’s performance, and have expanded the system’s capacity through the significant dedication of resources to respond to an increase in the number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In 2010, the Allegheny County Continuum of Care (CoC)<sup>2</sup> had 387 year-round emergency shelter beds and 1,173 permanent housing beds (Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing). By 2016, these numbers had increased to 444 and 2,345 beds, respectively; they increased further by 2023 to 827 and 2,864 beds, respectively.<sup>3</sup> This growth includes a concerted effort to increase low-barrier shelter options in the community. The most notable of these efforts is Second Avenue Commons (2AC), which opened in Downtown Pittsburgh in late 2022.

While national and local trends show increases starting in 2016, we have seen the most significant increases since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 2019 and 2023, the CoC’s annual point-in-time count<sup>4</sup> showed an increase from 774 to 1,029 individuals experiencing homelessness.

In recognition of these trends, DHS and our wide array of community partners have further intensified efforts to minimize the time people spend unhoused and/or in shelter when homelessness does occur. These efforts include expanded and enhanced housing-focused support services, access to deeply affordable housing, and a range of financial assistance supports. In general, we seek to reinforce a systemwide culture that pairs rapid exits from shelter with attainment of stable housing. We expect that these initiatives will reduce demand on the shelter system; however, the impact will take time and we need to be prepared to provide safe and warm overnight accommodations during the upcoming winter. Winter Shelter procured through this RFP will provide a welcoming environment where Clients can access food, shelter and medical services during the winter when the system’s existing shelter capacity is full.

## **Section 2: What DHS Is Looking For**

### **A. Target Population**

Winter Shelter Clients will be adults aged 18 and over who are experiencing homelessness, including couples or others in adult-only households.

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<sup>2</sup> Allegheny County CoC is the network of services and stakeholders engaged in making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring in Allegheny County.

<sup>3</sup> Emergency shelter and permanent housing bed counts are per the Allegheny County CoC’s annual Housing Inventory County (HIC) reporting to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

<sup>4</sup> Each year, Allegheny County participates in a federally required national effort to count the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. This Point-in-Time (PIT) homeless count enumerates the sheltered (residing in emergency homeless shelters or transitional housing programs) and unsheltered (residing in places not meant for human habitation) homeless population within the County.

Last winter (2023/24), a Code Blue shelter was open for 31 nights and served 372 individuals. Of these individuals, 39% used shelter for the first time in the month they were first served at the Code Blue shelter, 19% had their first CoC shelter stay at the Code Blue shelter, and 70% had only one stay at the Code Blue shelter. Additional demographics include:

Gender:

- 247 Men (66%)
- 92 Women (25%)
- 29 “Data Not Collected” (8%)
- 4 Transgender (1%)

Race/Ethnicity:

- 137 White (37%)
- 128 Black/African American (34%)
- 87 “Data Not Collected/Client Prefers not to Answer” (23%)
- 22 Other Races (6%)
  - 3 American Indian/Alaska Native
  - 14 Two or More Races
  - 4 Latin(x)
  - 1 Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian

## **B. Shelter Design**

A specific site(s) has not yet been confirmed for Winter Shelter. DHS welcomes recommendations for viable sites and is happy to participate in assessing such sites; however, Proposers do not need to include site recommendations as part of their Proposals. DHS has no specific preference for one or multiple sites. However, because Winter Shelter access will be coordinated out of a central Downtown location, we prefer that any proposed sites be approximately 20 minutes or less from Downtown. If an organization is selected as the Successful Proposer and has proposed a site, this does not guarantee DHS will utilize the proposed site. The ultimate structure of Winter Shelter will be determined by the Proposals received and the site(s) identified by DHS and/or the Successful Proposer(s). Final operating details of Winter Shelter may be adjusted from the following, but these parameters are provided as anticipated guidelines on which to build Proposals:

- Winter Shelter may be operated in a location(s) that is used for community purposes during the day. Because this would be a space that neighbors live around and that is considered a positive place for kids, families and their community, it’s important to respect the space and community. The Successful Proposer must ensure the least possible disruption to both the Clients served and the surrounding community and leave the space as clean as it is found each day.



- Clients will access the Winter Shelter by reporting to a central Downtown location each night. If space is not available within the existing shelter system, Clients will be provided with transportation to Winter Shelter in the evening and back in the morning.
- We expect Winter Shelter to operate 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. daily between November 15 and March 15.
- Winter Shelter is anticipated to provide congregate sleeping space. Proposers may plan on providing separate congregate sleeping areas for different genders. Clients should have access to congregate spaces and restroom facilities, which will include toilets and sinks.
- We expect that the majority of sleeping arrangements will be on mats (provided by DHS), with blankets to be provided by and laundered by the Successful Proposer. Cots should be made available by the Successful Proposer for any Clients whose health needs require this accommodation.

### C. Shelter Services

**Shelter Operations:** The Successful Proposer will be responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Winter Shelter, including but not limited to vacancy management, transportation to and from a central downtown location, cleaning, maintenance, and establishing and maintaining safety protocols. The Successful Proposer will actively work to create a positive and inclusive community within the Winter Shelter by establishing policies that promote harmony, safety and de-escalation. Winter Shelter policies should be aimed at preventing and mitigating conflict to avoid unnecessary terminations.

**Transportation:** The Successful Proposer must manage and coordinate daily transportation between the Winter Shelter and a central Downtown location. Transportation should be able to accommodate all shelter guests, including those with mobility supports (e.g., walkers), to get from Downtown to the Winter Shelter each evening, and return to Downtown each morning. The transportation schedule will be decided in collaboration with the Successful Proposer. We prefer a Successful Proposer who can provide transportation service directly or via subcontract. Proposers currently unable to provide transportation are still encouraged to apply but should be open to collaborating to meet this requirement. DHS would be willing to help develop transportation services with a Successful Proposer who has an otherwise strong Proposal.

**Food Access:** Winter Shelter will provide dinner and breakfast daily and have snacks available for Clients throughout operating hours. The Successful Proposer(s) may consider a partnership(s) with an outside food service to provide one or both prepared meals each day.

**Service Partnerships and Collaboration:** While the primary function of Winter Shelter is to provide a safe and warm environment during the coldest months of the year, we expect that the Successful Proposer(s) will work collaboratively with other service providers and community stakeholders to provide Clients with resources that promote safety, stability and wellbeing. In addition to collaboration with DHS on the operation and administration of Winter Shelter, the

Successful Proposal(s) should have effective partnerships with street medicine and street outreach professionals. Such cooperation will include physical access to Winter Shelter, as well as professional coordination around Clients served.

Services must follow a Housing First model and serve Clients without regard to previous criminal history, time abstinent from substance use, employment, credit worthiness or other restrictive criteria. The Successful Proposer(s) must be committed to providing high-quality, inclusive and culturally responsive services to all Clients regardless of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency or life experiences.

#### **D. Referrals, Intake and Collaboration with Coordinated Entry System**

Winter Shelter access is anticipated to be coordinated out of a central Downtown location. If there is a need for Clients to stay at Winter Shelter, the Successful Proposer will transport them to Winter Shelter in the evening and back Downtown in the morning. The Successful Proposer is expected to accept any and all referrals through this process.

#### **E. Staffing & Staff Qualifications**

The Successful Proposer(s) will establish a staffing complement with sufficient full-time staff equivalents qualified to address the target population's Winter Shelter needs.

At a minimum, Shelter staff will have:

- Passion for helping individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Clear understanding of how trauma impacts behavior.
- Training and/or work experience using crisis intervention and de-escalation techniques.
- Training and/or work experience in Motivational Interviewing, Harm Reduction, Trauma-Informed Care and Mental Health First Aid.
- Strong and up-to-date knowledge of local social services, including those that offer support for individuals experiencing homelessness and additional concerns such as intimate partner violence, substance use disorder (SUD), HIV/AIDS and mental health challenges.

Additionally, the Successful Proposer(s) will ensure that all staff receive ongoing professional development and training in best practices for delivering low-barrier shelter services.

#### **F. Data Collection and Evaluation**

The Successful Proposer(s) must collect data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a database managed by DHS that tracks demographic and outcome data for Clients experiencing homelessness. The Successful Proposer(s) must input data in an accurate and timely manner (i.e., within 24 hours of Clients' entry into and exit from the Shelter.) The Successful Proposer(s) must work closely with DHS staff to continuously monitor and improve the Shelter services and operations. Additionally, the Successful Proposer(s) must participate

actively in annual Point-in-Time Count data collection and other initiatives to strengthen the CoC crisis response system.

### **G. Budget**

Proposers must submit a budget and budget narrative for Winter Shelter services, including start-up expenses. The budget may include, but is not limited to, the following categories:

- Start-up costs (e.g., furnishings, supplies)
- Staffing expenses
- Cleaning and maintenance
- Food and meal services
- Transportation services from and to Downtown
- Security services
- Administrative expenses (not to exceed 10% of total budget)

Note: Should the Winter Shelter location have leasing expenses, the Successful Proposer is expected to lease the building. However, **rent expenses should not be included in the proposed budget**; instead, DHS will add the rent amount to the Successful Proposer's approved budget once finalized.

## **Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria**

DHS will evaluate Proposals based upon the evaluation criteria listed below. Evaluators may also consider any relevant experience DHS may have with a Proposer. Proposers must address their experience and 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 a Proposal can receive is 85 points as outlined in the following sections.

### **Organizational Experience (20 points total)**

- Past success delivering high quality, low-barrier services to individuals experiencing homelessness (10 points)
- Strong organizational and management structure, including evidence of internal communication, external coordination, a strong financial accounting system, and absence of unresolved monitoring or audit findings for any grants (5 points)
- Experience and demonstrated success in meeting standards for managing data entry (5 points)

**Proposed Site (Not scored)** *If your organization is not proposing a site for Winter Shelter, you do not need to complete this section.*

- Process used to identify and acquire (if leased or rented) a location that meets all the standards and requirements for Winter Shelter and a brief description of the location. Please provide a timeline for program implementation, including the completion of any necessary renovations and the relevant experience of involved project partners

### **Program Strategy (45 points total)**

- Comprehensive plan for Winter Shelter operation based on the components outlined in Section 2 of the RFP, including the proposed scope, a plan for food access and a plan to provide Clients with resources that promote safety, stability and wellbeing (20 points)
- Plan for managing and coordinating daily transportation from a central downtown location to the Winter Shelter, including a partner commitment letter from the proposed transportation provider, if applicable (5 points)
- Approach to creating a safe and inclusive community and fostering positive relationships among Clients, staff and the local neighborhood (15 points)
- Ability and approach to successfully coordinate with key partners, including DHS, street medicine and street outreach teams, to effectively support Winter Shelter clients (5 points)

### **Program Staffing and Administration (10 points total)**

- Justified staffing plan including a list of all staff positions, number of staff and work hours for each position, qualifications, recruitment, training and performance management (10 points)

### **Budget and Budget Narrative (10 points total)**

- Detailed line-item budget that reflects a realistic and cost-effective estimate of the start-up and operational costs associated with the first year of Shelter services (5 points)
- Budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed budget (5 points)

## **Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal**

### **4.1 Prepare**

#### **a. Office Hours**

- DHS will hold “RFP open office hours” at 11:30 a.m. Eastern Time on Monday, July 22, 2024, via Microsoft Teams. Anyone interested in the RFP and in submitting a Proposal may drop in during this time to ask questions.
- Attendance during office hours is not required in order to submit a Proposal. Preliminary answers will be provided orally for questions asked during the office hours. Final, definitive answers will be posted in writing on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) and the [DHS Solicitations webpage](#).
- Prospective Proposers can join the office hours by:
  - Calling (267) 368-7515 and using Conference ID 420 622 981#
  - Or following this link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

- Or copying and pasting this link: [https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_Yjc0N2FmYjMtMjAwMC00NjI2LTljZTk0ODhjMGVkMDM1NWQz%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2214304098-3e8b-4bb4-b68e-65e6055b37bf%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_Yjc0N2FmYjMtMjAwMC00NjI2LTljZTk0ODhjMGVkMDM1NWQz%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%22e0273d12-e4cb-4eb1-9f70-8bba16fb968d%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2214304098-3e8b-4bb4-b68e-65e6055b37bf%22%7d)

## 4.2 Submit a Proposal

- 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. Collaborative Proposals should include:
    - i. Lead Agency: The County can enter into a contract with only one partner of a Collaborative Proposal. Therefore, a Collaborative Proposal must identify one entity as the Lead Agency that will be the contracting party with the County. The Lead Agency should be the Proposer.
    - ii. Partners: Partners must be committed to a role in carrying out the Contract Services and will be compensated for that role. Collaborative Proposals must attach a signed letter of commitment from each Partner that details and commits to their role in providing the Contract Services.
  - Entities may participate in more than one Collaborative Proposal.
- d. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal that includes the following attachments available on our Active Solicitations website:
  - Response Form
  - 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, August 15, 2024, to be considered for review. If you are having trouble making an account or uploading your documents, please**

**contact Bonfire Support. You can also reach out to the DHS Procurement Team at [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto: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](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).

#### **4.3 How to Contact DHS about this RFP and RFP Communications**

- a. If you have any questions about this RFP, please use the Vendor Discussion feature through the DHS Bonfire Portal at <https://alleghenycountydhs.bonfirehub.com> on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#), or email us at [DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).
  - a. All content-related questions must be submitted by the Questions Deadline at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, August 2, 2024.
  - b. You may submit technical or logistical questions at any time, even after the Questions Deadline.
- b. All information about the RFP, including answers to all content-related questions and any changes or amendments, will be posted on the [Bonfire RFP Opportunity Page](#) and on our Active Solicitations website at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us/>. Once you have created an account and indicated you are interested in this RFP, you will receive automatic email updates through Bonfire when any questions, changes or amendments are available.
  - a. Please check our DHS Bonfire Portal and the website regularly for answers to questions, additional information and changes to the RFP or the RFP process.
  - b. The webpage will be updated only on Thursdays, with any new information visible after 6 p.m.
  - c. The last Q&A and website update for this RFP will be on Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 6 p.m. We will make every effort not to post any new information after this time; however, we reserve the right to post new information in emergency circumstances.

#### **4.4 New Provider Requirements**

Any Successful Proposer(s) who does not have a current Allegheny County DHS contract must submit the DHS New Provider Application and its supporting documents upon Notice of Intent to Award. Proposers are not required to submit this documentation with their Proposal.

- a. The DHS New Provider Application is available at our Active Solicitations website under the “Required documents” bar at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://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 attests to the financial health

of the organization. Tax returns are the preferred alternative. Please note that providing adequate financial documentation is a requirement of contracting through Allegheny County.

#### **4.5 Other Information**

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

#### **4.6 Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law**

Proposers should be aware that all documents and materials submitted in response to this RFP may be subject to requests for access to public records made pursuant to Pennsylvania's Right-To-Know Law (RTKL). Under the RTKL, records in the possession of a public agency like the County are presumed to be public records and the County may have to make documents and materials submitted by the Proposer available to a requestor after an award of an Agreement is made.

If the Proposer includes any information within its Proposal that the Proposer asserts is either a "trade secret" or "confidential proprietary information," as those terms are defined under the RTKL, the Proposer must include with its Proposal a written statement signed by an authorized representative of the Proposer identifying those portions or parts of its Proposal that the Proposer believes constitute a "trade secret" or "confidential proprietary information" and provide contact information to enable DHS to contact the Proposer in the event that the County receives a Right-To-Know request for the Proposal. The Proposer shall have five (5) business days from date of receipt of any notification from the County to provide a written statement signed by an authorized representative of the Proposer explaining why the Proposal or any portion thereof is exempt from disclosure as a trade secret, confidential proprietary information or other legal reason. The County shall consider this statement in either granting or denying a request for public access to the Proposal or any portion thereof. The County will notify the Proposer of its decision whether to grant or deny the request either in whole or in part.

## **Section 5: How DHS 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](mailto:DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us).

## 5.2 Other Requirements

For a Proposal to be eligible for evaluation, it must be:

- a. Received by the due date/time.
- b. Properly formatted and include responses to all requested information.
- c. Complete with all required forms and attachments.

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

## Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, Successful Proposers must comply with all contract requirements listed below and all standard terms and conditions contained in a County contract for provision of services to DHS and its offices. In addition, Successful Proposers must be able to meet the insurance requirements necessary to provide the Contract

Services. Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County and the insurance requirements are available in the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#) and the [Insurance Requirements Overview](#).

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

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

- a. All Proposals must include a completed Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form and supporting documents. The Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form should be completed as follows:
  - All Proposers must complete Section 1 – Contact Information and attach their MWDBE Diversity Plan (see Section 4 – Sample Diversity Policy).
  - If the Proposer can meet the MWDBE contract goals, the Proposer should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement. Proposers also must attach the MWDBE certifications of the firms cited in the Participation Statement.
  - If the Proposer would like to request a waiver from participating in the MWDBE contract goals, the Proposer should complete Section 2 – MWDBE Participation Statement and Section 3 – MWDBE Participation Waiver Request Form.
- b. MWDBE forms and resources can be found on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) and through the links provided below:
  - [Allegheny County DHS Combined MWDBE Form](#)
  - MWDBE Resources
    - [MWDBE Contract Specifications Manual](#)
    - [MWDBE Guide for DHS Proposers](#)
- c. For more information about MWDBEs, visit the [Allegheny County Department of Equity and Inclusion website](#).
- d. A listing of certified DBE vendors can be found at <https://paucp.dbesystem.com/>.

## **6.2 Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) Requirement**

Allegheny County also has a goal of 5% participation for veteran-owned small businesses (VOSB) in all contracts. The County, therefore, expects that Successful Proposers will make a “good faith effort” to help the County meet this goal.

- a. A veteran-owned small business is defined by the County as a business having 100 or fewer full-time employees and not less than 51% of which is owned by one or more veterans, or in the case of any publicly owned business, not less than 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more veterans, and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by one or more veterans. The VOSB vendor **MUST**

provide proof of veteran ownership including percentage and name and address of business.

- For contracts under \$100,000, VOSB vendors are from all bonding requirements.
- b. All Proposals must include either of the following:
  - If the Proposer can meet the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement is required. You must also attach a copy of the VOSB vendor(s) DD 214 discharge form(s) cited in the Participation Statement.
  - If the Proposer requests a waiver from participating in the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement and VOSB Waiver Request are required.
- e. VOSB forms and resources can be found on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) and through the links provided below:
  - [VOSB Participation Statement](#)
  - [VOSB Waiver Request](#)
- c. A listing of Small Businesses, Small Diverse Businesses, and Veteran Business Enterprises (SB, SDB, and VBE) can be found at [www.dgs.internet.state.pa.us/suppliersearch](http://www.dgs.internet.state.pa.us/suppliersearch).

### **6.3 HIPAA Compliance**

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

### **6.4 Cyber Security**

- a. Successful Proposers must meet the minimum computer specifications that begin on page 14 of the [DHS Contract Specifications Manual](#), available at [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations](http://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).