



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

RFP Response Form

RFP for Opioid and other Substance Use Disorder Interventions that are Led, Designed and Operated within and by Highly-Impacted Communities

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Sojourner House MOMS (Motivation, Opportunity, Mentoring, Spirituality).

Authorized Representative Name & Title: De'Netta Benjamin, Executive Director

Address: 5907 Penn Avenue, Suite 220, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Website: <https://www.sojournerhousepa.org/>

Legal Status: For-Profit Nonprofit Sole Proprietor/Individual Partnership

Women Owned: Yes No

Minority Owned: Yes No

If yes, select the ethnicity:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Black or of African decent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino/a | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western Asian/Middle Eastern | <input type="checkbox"/> East Asian/Far Eastern |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Asian/Indian (Subcontinent) | <input type="checkbox"/> Southeast Asian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial |

Self-Describe: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Faith Based: Yes No

Partners included in this Proposal: None

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Received email from DHS

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

RFP for Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorder Interventions that are Led, Designed and Operated within and by Highly-Impacted Communities

1. Total dollar amount requested:\$168,000
2. Which category does your proposed intervention fall under? Select all that apply.
 - Education** – Expanding timely access to quality and comprehensive information about the spectrum of OUD/SUD interventions, including holistic approaches to prevention, treatment, de-stigmatization and recovery
 - Engagement/Outreach** – Cultivating ongoing, person-centered relationships with underserved and/or vulnerable communities and individuals
 - Linkages to Treatment** – Creating or expanding connections between affected communities, creating or expanding informal community-based peer support programs and providing information about use of MOUD (supplementary to the existing infrastructure of formal, institutional supports)
 - Other** *(please briefly explain.)*
Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Proposal summary *(please use only one sentence)*:
 Sojourner House MOMS will collaborate with local grassroots organizations in our East End service area to provide Comprehensive Intervention Services to community members who are directly and indirectly impacted by opioid and other substance use disorders..

REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	De’netta Benjamin-Miller	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Contract Processing Contact	Matt Lewis	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chief Information Officer	Jon Shiner	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Chief Financial Officer	Matt Lewis	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
MPER Contact*	Matt Lewis	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

* MPER is DHS’s provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact who will update and manage this system for your agency.

BOARD INFORMATION

* For the Board Chairperson, you must list an address, email address and phone number that are different than the organization’s.

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Dr. Staci Ford, Board Chair

Board Chairperson Address: [REDACTED]

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Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email Address [REDACTED]

Partners included in this Proposal: None.

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Email from DHS

REFERENCES

Provide the name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization. *Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human .as references.* Gary Cirricione, Member, Negley Place Neighborhood Alliance, founding board member of Sojourner House MOMS, [REDACTED]

Rosa Davis, Chief Executive Office, POWER, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Monique Jackson, Chief Operations Officer, Familylinks; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

CERTIFICATION

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

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

By submitting this Proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient’s decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Choose one:

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

OR

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My Proposal does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential and/or proprietary.

ATTACHMENTS

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

- One letter of support from a community-based organization or individual
- Partner commitment letters, if applicable
- MWDBE and VOSB documents
- W-9

REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 80 points. Your response to this section should not exceed 5 pages. (Pages 1-3 are not included in the page count).

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Approach (25 points)

1. Describe your organization's proposed intervention, including the services that will be provided and the intended outcomes. (10 points)

Our plan to expand our existing Opioid and SUD Intervention Services includes the following:

- A. Public Education Programs.** Intervention education must address the impact of addiction not only from opioids, but also polysubstances, psychostimulants, and marijuana. Warning people about the likely presence of fentanyl – and now xylazine – in street drugs is critical. Our goal is to give people accurate information, including their risks, signs of addiction, and available treatment options. Our programs generally consist of a video, panel discussion, distribution of printed material and potentially Naloxone, and a Q&A session. Examples of programs we've offered include Community Trauma, Why are Drugs so Hard to Quit, How to Address Marijuana Use with Your Teen, Relapse Prevention Education, and Basic Substance Abuse Education 101. The actual topics and number of programs offered will vary by community, based on needs and interest. Residents will help us select low-barrier sites as venues and recommend the best ways to promote programs in the community.

We already host two Naloxone trainings per year with ACDHS. A video explaining when and how to use Naloxone is followed by a discussion with community members about the 2014 Good Samaritan Act to allay fears about administering the drug. Because Naloxone is effective in preventing deaths from overdoses, this program should be one we offer in each community. Naloxone can be distributed at any outreach or educational event. Prevention Point, ACDHS, or another provider will attend each training to distribute fentanyl and xylazine strips.

- B. Participation in recovery and community-based outreach events.** Our Community Outreach Manager ensures that we engage with our community. We staff a resource table at numerous recovery and health-related events, such as the County's annual Recovery Walk, Familylinks' annual recovery event, Za'kiyah House's Recovery on Frankstown event, and Healthy Start's annual Black Birth Expo. In addition, most of our target neighborhoods have community block parties in the summer and on holidays such as Juneteenth. These are excellent opportunities for us to reach our target population.

During these events, Certified Recovery Support Specialists can do behavioral and physical wellness screenings for persons who are high-risk and predisposed to substance use or impacted by it. Staff used evidence-based tools to assess needs, such as PHQ-9, which assesses an individual for depression/depressive episode, and the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10), which screens for possible involvement with drugs during the past year.

We also create our own recovery events. Yoga on the Street has become an annual event. Our clients participate, and we have extended an open invitation to the community, attracting 50 or so residents who stop by to find out what is going on. These events are not overtly about substance use intervention and have low barriers to participation. Having our clients participate encourages our target population to join in when they see people who look like them. Such events give us an opportunity to talk with people, assess their needs, and distribute information. This program can be replicated in our target communities if residents are interested.

During all recovery and outreach events, as well as training programs, we distribute pamphlets about recovery resources and treatment providers and "swag" such as pens and refrigerator

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magnets that list phone numbers for community resources (e.g., Resolve Crisis, Pathways to Care, Allegheny Link, and Sojourner House’s On-Call emergency number).

- C. **Host Small Peer Group Sessions.** Talking with others in recovery can be helpful, so we host small group sessions. Participants' needs and concerns drive the discussions. We also offer weekly AA/NA meetings onsite and can refer individuals to meetings in their own neighborhoods.

In collaboration with partner providers, we can also provide small group programs, such as:

- Yoga provided by a certified yoga instructor.
- Psychoeducation groups provide by therapist from Pittsburgh Action Against Rape.
- Resume building, job searching, and interview skill classes provided by various providers, such as Career Link or Goodwill of South Western Pennsylvania.
- Spiritual activities led by community-based groups.

What we offer will be guided by the needs of individuals in recovery in each community.

- D. **Warm Referrals to Care.** Our human services and health care systems are complex and often confusing to navigate, so we connect people in need to an agency where they can access the treatment, care, and/or supportive services they need. We help them complete any referral documentation required by the agency within 72 hours of contact.

For Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), we first identify treatment options that are accessible and affordable in each community. We also look for healthcare providers, clinics, and treatment centers that are culturally competent and sensitive to the needs of Black individuals seeking help. We collaborate with MAT providers that use medications such as methadone, suboxone, subutex, and vivitrol, including the UPMC NATP of Pittsburgh; Perinatal Hope Program, Addiction Recovery Services, UPMC Bloomfield- Garfield Family Health, and Tadiso.

Our referrals can also be for behavioral health, housing, financial counseling, food access, employment, wound care (for those affected by xylazine), or peer recovery groups. In each community, we look for counseling services, support groups, and harm reduction programs, as well as food pantries, churches, etc. that can help people struggling with addiction, SJH MOMS is supporting the Healthy Baby initiative by designating 4 apartments for high-risk families.

2. Which focus community(ies) and population(s) does your organization plan to serve?
Explain how this community and population have been disproportionately impacted by the opioid epidemic. (15 points)

In June 2021, Allegheny County Health and Human Services released a report, Accidental Overdose Deaths in Allegheny County, January 2016 – June 2020, which indicated that neighborhoods where SJH MOMS’ clients live reported high numbers of emotional problems, stress, and depression. These were also among the same neighborhoods identified by the county as high-needs communities for substance use disorder with marijuana, heroin, opioids, and alcohol. This is not surprising, given that many studies have shown that communities experiencing high levels of emotional distress may be more at risk for substance use and other risky behaviors. In addition to neighborhoods where our clients live, we also have experience in Garfield and Lincoln-Larimer-Belmar because they are adjacent to East Liberty. Per the current RFP, our target service area includes East Hills, East Liberty, Garfield, Homewood South, and Lincoln-Larimer-Belmar.

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Within these neighborhoods, our target population are residents, primarily Black individuals, who need substance abuse disorder intervention support. We have in-depth experience with mothers and children (SJH is one of the only agencies in Allegheny County that accepts mothers with children), but we also serve men, teens, and families.

We know that discrimination and social pressures play a role in substance abuse within the Black community. A continual barrage of unfair treatment can lead to self-coping behaviors, sometimes resulting in substance abuse. According to the American Psychiatric Association, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted Black citizens both in infection and deaths and exacerbated existing conditions of health inequities, low-paying jobs, and less autonomy with work. This increased stress led to the continued increase in substance abuse.

Overdose deaths had been trending downward after 2017 after Naloxone began to be distributed, but numbers increased during the pandemic. In July 2022, data released by Allegheny County's Medical Examiner indicated that there were 719 overdose deaths in 2021, an increase of about 5% over 2020. Both this report and Allegheny County's 2021 report indicated that Black residents died from accidental overdoses at approximately double the rate of white residents, an appalling statistic. And the trend continues. 2022 data released by Allegheny County's Medical Examiner (July 2023) indicates that deaths from overdoses decreased by 5% over 2021, but deaths among Black individuals continue to increase. The overdose death rate for Black individuals in 2022 was 120.8 per 100,000 vs. 48.7 for White individuals.

SJH MOMS understands the unique challenges of Black communities. They may face specific challenges related to opioid use, such as higher rates of poverty, limited access to healthcare, historical trauma, and systemic disparities. Understanding these factors is crucial for effective intervention planning. Black individuals who are often already marginalized fear seeking assistance due to the stigma of drug use and being viewed as pathological: 88.7% of Blacks diagnosed with a substance use disorder did not seek out or receive addiction treatment. Mothers with children are even more likely to reject treatment out of fear of losing their children.

Community Designed and Operated (45 points)

3. Explain how your organization's proposed intervention will be community designed and operated, including a plan to include community members in the planning, design and/or implementation of the intervention. (15 points)

SJH MOMS will do geo-mapping in each community, as a best practice assessment of community trends in order to implement culturally-competent, effective intervention services. We will begin by reaching out to groups and individuals we know in each community to explain our goals and seek support. Through them, we will involve community leaders, grassroots organizations, faith-based entities, and individuals who have a deep understanding of the community. Working with the community and DHS, we will collect risk assessment data for geo-mapping.

Next, we will host a community meeting in each neighborhood. Information about the meeting will be disseminated within each neighborhood through community organizations, and trusted elders, youth, and other community leaders will be specifically invited. During the community meeting, we will share geo-mapping results and explain the types of services we can offer and seek their input. For instance, we know that the prevalence of specific drugs can vary from one community to the other. It is critical for us to involve community members in the planning process and **listen** to ensure that interventions are tailored to each community.

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One of the outcomes of this initial meeting will be to recruit Community Ambassadors who can advise us on what is working and what is not and help us connect with individuals in need of assistance. They will also be trusted resources for those who may be resistant to care. Once we have met with each community and understood their concerns and needs, we will draft a schedule of the frequency and locations of each educational program and outreach event, based on our staff capacity. This draft schedule will be sent to our Community Ambassadors for their further input and approval.

4. Explain why your organization is the appropriate provider to implement the proposed intervention, including a description of your organization's experience providing support or services to, with, or within communities that have been disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic. (15 points)

We know that people need pathways to recovery that fit their personality, interests, and cultural background. East Liberty and Pittsburgh's East End are at the core of Sojourner House/Sojourner House MOMS mission. The parent organization of Sojourner House MOMS, Sojourner House, was founded in East Liberty in 1991 by local faith-based organizations to serve the urgent need of drug- and alcohol-addicted mothers who did not seek treatment for fear of losing their children. For decades, East Liberty was a predominantly Black neighborhood; even with a recent infusion of new development, the neighborhood is still 41% Black. Including sites used for the MOMS Supportive Housing Program, we have 21 sites in East Liberty, Homewood, Highland Park, and East Hills. We have over 30 years of experience with providing substance use supportive services to these and neighboring communities.

Clients who live in these neighborhoods and the staff who work there give us on-the-ground insight to each community's assets and challenges. We have held community meetings in the past and worked with neighborhood stakeholders to understand their specific needs. As an example of community involvement, in partnership with the Homeless Children's Education Fund, we transformed two vacant lots into a safe play yard called "MOMS Green." This play yard is used by our families as well as neighbors, encouraging interaction between program participants and the community. At another site, residents can participate in the neighborhood's sustainable community gardening program, as well as a block watch.

By virtue of being a Black, woman-led organization, SJH MOMS is highly attuned to the need for cultural competence in services. As evidence of this, in 2021, executive leadership participated in a year-long Allegheny County Health Choices anti-racism cohort, and all staff are required to attend various cultural competency trainings. All SJH MOMS program staff have extensive experience working with adults and adolescents in need of intervention services. About 80% of our client-facing staff are Black; the Program Manager is a person in recovery, and one of our Certified Recovery Support Staff is also in recovery.

Staff use Motivational Interviewing/ Stages of Change as the modality of care when providing intervention screening, referrals, and support services. This harm reduction model recognizes substance abuse as a disease and meets the program participant where they are in their lives in terms of the level and type of substance abuse, but also other elements of their lives such as family situation, housing, and finances. This is a nonjudgmental approach that helps participants feel empowered when they are leading the change in their own lives.

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5. Describe your organization's plan for staffing, including roles, role descriptions and any training requirements. Proposers should demonstrate how the staffing plan reflects their commitment to prioritizing interventions led/staffed by Black individuals and individuals in recovery. (10 points)

SJH MOMS is committed to hiring staff who reflect the population we are serving in high-need communities. While it's been long known that racism exists and that systemic racism creates disparities across all life domains for people of color, the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor heightened our awareness about the need to act within our own organization. When this occurred several months into the pandemic, those of us in the behavioral health field already dealing with a drug epidemic saw the emotional toll this state of affairs was having on staff and clients. In addition to taking a stand at the time with all people of color against police brutality and other forms of racism, we also began to look at how we could identify inequities and racism within our organization. Since then, we have worked to identify, prioritize, and focus our efforts with a goal of increasing diversity and inclusion and reducing inequities in our agency and more broadly—an outcome we want for both staff and clients.

If awarded this grant, we currently have a Black Program Director who will manage the program with the support of our Black Executive Director. Our plan is to hire the equivalent of 2 FTE to staff this program. We can use existing, experienced intervention staff during the hiring process, so we can begin program implementation as soon as the grant is awarded. Staff to work on the project:

- Program Director (0.05 FTE): Provides program supervision and can provide support to participants if needed.
- 2 Full time Intervention Specialists (2 FTE): Provide outreach support, educational seminars, distribution of naloxone and other harm reduction resources, and warm referrals. (to be hired)
- Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) (0.5 FTE): Provides services to individuals, leads 1 to 2 groups per week, conducts 1 community outreach per month, (This staff member has lived experience of those we will serve.)

All new staff complete an annual training plan as part of the onboarding process. The training plan includes a requirement for all staff to take the following trainings: All mandated DDAP training, LGBTQ+ 101, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Harm Reduction and Trauma-informed Care, Addiction 101, and Confidentiality/HIPAA. All staff are required to attend scheduled supervision at a minimum of two times per month, including monthly staff meetings. All staff have access to our EAP provider and are strongly encouraged to reach out if experiencing any burnout or form of trauma.

The onboarding process for staff hired for this program will be one week. By the second week they will shadow other staff to begin engaging with our clients with the intent to build relationships of trust.

In addition to our commitment to hire Black and Brown staff, the leadership team and board are committed to ensure that all staff salaries are fair. All of our program staff earn \$16.00/hour or more. We also request feedback from staff on how to improve agency culture and address their concerns by using an Employee Culture Needs Survey to assess the agency's culture. This feedback loop helps to mitigate turnover and enhances staff commitment to our consumers.

Sojourner House MOMS
 AC DHS Opioid Intervention Budget
 8.1.23

	<u>SHP</u>	<u>Notes/Explanations</u>
<u>Revenue:</u>		
D&A Program Funded Contract	168,800.00	
Total Revenue:	168,800.00	
<u>Program Operating Expenses:</u>		
Travel	2,000.00	mileage, parking
Info dissemination	2,000.00	Printing & outreach materials
Language Services	5,000.00	
IT	2,000.00	2 laptops, hotspots
Total Program Operating Expense:	11,000.00	Total program operating expenses
<u>Personnel Expenses:</u>		
Intervention Specialists	104,000.00	2 FTE
Certified Recovery Specialist	26,000.00	0.5 FTE
Program Director and ED	12,800.00	both 0.05 FTE
Admin & Indirect Personnel	15,000.00	
Total Personnel Expense:	157,800.00	
Total Expenses:	168,800.00	Total budgeted expenses
	-	Total Gain/(Loss) for program

Community-Led OUD-SUD Interventions Budget Narrative

The total funding request is \$168,800. Non-personnel program operating costs include \$2,000 for mileage, parking, and other transportation costs, information dissemination costs of \$2,000, 2 laptops, 2 hotspots, and other IT related costs of \$2,000, and language services of \$5,000.

The breakdown of the total personnel related costs by position are the following:

- 2 Intervention specialists at \$52,000 per position = \$104,000
- 0.5 FTE for a Certified Recovery Specialist (CRS) = \$52,000
- Executive Director and Clinical Director 0.05 FTE each = \$12,800
- Admin and Indirect Personnel (HR, Finance, Admin) and other admin costs = \$15,000

The two Intervention Specialist positions will need to be hired, and all other positions are currently staffed at Sojourner House.



Healthy Start, Inc.
Pittsburgh/Allegheny County
Lexington Technology Park
400 N. Lexington Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
Phone: [REDACTED]

August 8, 2023

De'netta Benjamin Miller
Sojourner House MOMS
5907 Penn Avenue, Suite 220
Pittsburgh, PA 15206-3805

Dear De'netta,

I am writing in support of Sojourner House MOMS' RFP Response application for "Opioid and Other Substance Use Disorder Interventions that are Led, Designed and Operated within and by Highly Impacted Communities." Sojourner House and Sojourner House MOMS have a 30-year history as leaders in substance abuse treatment, including education in high-need communities.

Healthy Start, Inc. (HSI) works to ensure all families—especially Black families—have access to affordable, quality care that improves maternal and child health outcomes and quality of life. We provide community-based programs like one-on-one prenatal care, education, basic needs support and mental health support to new parents in their homes. HSI centers on the lived experiences of Black babies, birthing people, and families to achieve our mission to improve maternal and child health and reduce poor birth outcomes and infant mortality.

Sojourner House and Sojourner House MOMS have over 20 years of experience providing SUD treatment and intervention services in high-need communities. As part of our commitment to support the continuum of care, we have appreciated our existing referral agreement with Sojourner House since June 2021. Sojourner House MOMS has built trust with local Pittsburgh communities – especially in high-need neighborhoods and African American families. They provide residential, inpatient treatment to mothers in Medication Assisted Therapy; this helps mothers recovering from opioid use disorder and other substance use disorders heal while keeping their children in their care. When HSI staff provide warm referrals to Sojourner House, we know they're in good hands.

We applaud and fully support the efforts of Sojourner House in reducing health disparities for the Black population in Allegheny County. I hope that you will give Sojourner House MOMS' application serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Angela Gresse
Healthy Start Inc.
Director Of Hello Baby Priority

Reducing Infant Mortality One Baby at a Time!