



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Process and Outcome Evaluation of Hello Baby, a Tiered Intervention Program for New Parents and Their Babies

RFP Posting:
December 3, 2019

Deadline for Questions:
3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 17, 2020

Submission Deadline:
3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 24, 2020

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:
March 2020

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

Contents

Definitions

The RFP at a Glance

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing this RFP

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

Acronyms and Definitions

Unless the context indicates otherwise, the following capitalized words shall have the meanings for purposes of this RFP as set forth below:

1. 2-1-1: A 24/7 telephone helpline operated by the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania that connects callers to resources and services
2. Agreement: A contract negotiated between Allegheny County and the Successful Proposer to provide the Contract Services
3. Allegheny County: A home rule county and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4. Contract Services: The specific services which 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
5. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
6. Family Support Centers: Community hubs where parents with young children can attend programs, access resources, and connect with other parents
7. PRM: Predictive Risk Model
8. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
9. Proposer: An individual, non-profit organization, or for-profit organization or business submitting a Proposal in response to this RFP
10. Response Form: The Word document in which Proposers respond to requested information about this RFP
11. RFP: Request for Proposals
12. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

The RFP at a Glance

Purpose

Allegheny County, through its Department of Human Services (DHS), is soliciting Proposals for both Process and Outcome Evaluations of its Hello Baby tiered intervention program (variously referred to herein as “Hello Baby” or “the Program”). Hello Baby is a voluntary program for parents of new babies designed to strengthen families, improve children’s outcomes, and maximize child and family well-being and safety. Hello Baby will use a predictive risk model (PRM) as the predominant way to tier supports.

DHS is seeking both a Process evaluation and an Outcome evaluation of Hello Baby. Proposers may submit a Proposal to conduct the Process evaluation only, the Outcome evaluation only, or both the Process and Outcome Evaluations. Proposers must be willing and able to work closely with the group of principal researchers from Auckland University of Technology and the University of Southern California who designed the Hello Baby predictive risk model as well as DHS and community-based provider staff who are responsible for implementation and ongoing improvement of Hello Baby. In addition, Proposers must work with our funding partner, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and their evaluation team, to develop and finalize the evaluation plan.

Award Details

Allegheny County intends to award up to two contracts to perform the evaluation(s) for a total cost not to exceed \$300,000. DHS expects to work in partnership with the Successful Proposer to secure additional resources, should the evaluation require it. The Successful Proposal will include ideas and strategies for how to work together to secure additional funding for evaluation.

At the conclusion of the RFP process, DHS anticipates entering into an Agreement with up to two Successful Proposers for a term of three years with a County option to extend the Agreement for at least one additional year. The first six months of the term of the Agreement with the Successful Proposer will serve as a design and planning (i.e., pilot) phase, with the Outcome evaluation phase to begin once the pilot phase is completed and the evaluation plan is approved by ACF. The Successful Proposer is expected to begin the Process evaluation during the pilot phase in order to provide feedback to resolve actionable barriers, enhance identified levers of change and refine components of the Program. Proposers should submit a budget as described in Section 3: Budget

Who can apply?

Anyone, including, but not limited to, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, small businesses and individuals, are eligible to submit a Proposal in response to this RFP. Proposers do not need to have an existing contract with Allegheny County to apply, but Proposers must meet all of Allegheny County’s contractual requirements (see Section 6: Contract Requirements

for Successful Proposers) and have the programmatic, financial and staffing capability to provide the Contract Services. Multiple people and entities may partner together to submit a Proposal.

What's important to us?

DHS seeks a Successful Proposer that can:

- Conduct all evaluation activities, including data collection, analysis, and reporting, in a timely manner.
- Implement a methodologically rigorous evaluation
- Provide feedback about the Program's successes and challenges throughout the evaluation to inform the development/modification of the Program's design
- Maintain flexibility in the evaluation approach

The Successful Proposer MUST possess the following abilities and aspirations:

- Welcomes the opportunity to work as a thought partner with DHS, model developers, Evaluation Technical Assistance (TA) providers from ACF and providers to refine the design and implementation of the evaluation
- Is skilled at formulating an evaluation plan, including describing study design, sample size estimation, approach to sampling, use of administrative records, data collection, data collection instruments, data analysis, plan for data dissemination and use of findings for decision making
- Is willing to balance rigorous evaluation design with the County's goal of using all available resources to serve families

Timeline

Deadline for Proposers to submit questions about this RFP is 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 17, 2020. Proposals must be submitted by 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 24, 2020. We expect to notify Proposers of the County's decision to award an Agreement in March 2020.

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, intellectual disability, 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

In early 2020, Allegheny County will launch Hello Baby. Hello Baby is a voluntary program for new parents designed to strengthen families, improve children's outcomes, and maximize child and family well-being, safety and security. The Program is a tiered model with a variety of supports designed to meet families' varied needs and interests. It will build upon the robust set of services and supports that already exist for families and introduce a more deliberate and differentiated approach to outreach for new parents. Through Hello Baby, DHS will reach more families who can benefit from support, better match families and babies to the right services, and ensure that the most vulnerable families and babies have access to the best supports we can offer. More information about Hello Baby is available at: <https://www.allegenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442468129>

The tiered outreach and support strategies will be tailored to meet families' strengths and needs:

- **UNIVERSAL:** This strategy is intended to help expectant and new parents navigate the myriad of resources that the County has to offer, many of which are free and universally available. Universal resources will include a new family-friendly website with helpful content and services for parents of infants and toddlers and a 24/7 "warm line" through 2-1-1 that will offer specialized parenting support to all families in Allegheny County.
- **DIFFERENTIATED:** We know that some families have higher levels of need, and Hello Baby will employ a differentiated outreach strategy to reach and connect these families to additional supports. Community outreach workers will visit a subset of families, welcoming the new babies, delivering a diaper basket and inviting the family to be a part of the nearest Family Support Center. All families of young children are welcome to visit these centers, but we hope this differentiated outreach strategy increases participation by more vulnerable families.
- **PRIORITY:** A small group of families with the highest needs will be offered priority care and services by a two-person team consisting of an experienced peer-support specialist and a social worker. These teams will work to engage families, learn about their needs and, together with the parents, develop a plan for leveraging their strengths, clearing barriers to appropriate services and providing them with wraparound assistance for as long as they wish or until the child turns three. This assistance can take the form of concrete goods (e.g., diapers, formula, food), assistance with immediate needs such as transportation to the pediatrician and eviction prevention, and connections to community resources such as evidence-based parenting programs, mental health and/or substance use treatment, child care and emergency housing.

Hello Baby will primarily rely upon Predictive Risk Model (PRM) to identify families who are eligible for differentiated and priority services. The PRM was developed by researchers from Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and University of Southern California (USC). The team, led by Rhema Vaithianathan (AUT), proposed both the Allegheny Family Screening Tool (AFST) and this predictive risk model (PRM). The Hello Baby predictive risk model uses administrative data to identify families who are at risk of adverse outcomes such as placement of

the child. More information about the PRM can be found at Frequently Asked Question at: <https://www.allegenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442468129>

Section 2: What We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking both a Process Evaluation and an Outcome Evaluation of the Program. Proposers may submit a Proposal to conduct the Process Evaluation only, the Outcome Evaluation only, or both the Process and Outcome Evaluations. Proposers must be willing and able to work closely with DHS leadership, evaluation TA providers from ACF, community stakeholders and the providers who are implementing the Program.

These Evaluations should not be construed as Evaluations of the PRM techniques themselves, which are undergoing a separate peer review and, as such, are not the primary focus of this RFP. Proposers should assume that the modeling approaches are thoroughly vetted and of high-quality.

Collaboration with the ACF

Hello Baby received funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Children, Youth and Families' Children's Bureau through the Children's Board's Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families grant. The Successful Proposer will be expected to spend the planning period working with evaluation technical assistance providers from ACF to finalize the evaluation plan, and all evaluation parameters are subject to final approval of ACF. Additionally, per our grant agreement, the Successful Proposer will be required to comply with all elements of the grant's cooperative agreement, including participation in activities and efforts as requested by ACF such as site visits and grantee meetings, sharing data collected through the Hello Baby evaluation with the national evaluator and, collecting outcome measures according to a plan developed by ACF to ensure common measurement collection across ACF's grantees

Purpose and Focus of the Evaluations

The purpose of the Process and Outcome Evaluations is to generate findings that can be used by a broad array of Hello Baby stakeholders, including DHS leadership, Hello Baby providers and families, and the prevention field in general. The primary goals of the Evaluations are to:

1. Understand the factors that affect Program engagement, retention and attrition.
2. Document the participant experience across Hello Baby's tiered levels (i.e., Universal, Differentiated and Priority).
3. Assess implementation facilitators, barriers faced during implementation, and strategies used to overcome barriers.
4. Monitor select Hello Baby participant outcomes through a combination of administrative records and primary data collection.

DHS is interested in evaluating all three tiers of the Program and expects applicants to design an evaluation plan for the Universal, Differentiated and Priority components of the Program. **The primary focus of the Evaluations should be on the priority tier.**

Process Evaluation

The Process Evaluation will be an important tool that the Program's team and leadership should be able to use during implementation of Hello Baby, to make ongoing improvements and modifications. Topics that should be addressed as part of the Process Evaluation shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

Universal

- Outreach and Consent
 - Were families informed about the availability of Hello Baby? Is there awareness of the Program?
 - What are parent perceptions of the Program?
 - Did families find the Program relevant and valuable? If not, why?
 - What are the challenges/barriers to families being adequately informed?
 - Did families express concerns about their data being used to prioritize them?
 - Was the opt-out process followed according to plan?
 - What are families' perceptions of the consent process?
 - Did families feel the consent process was sufficient?

Differentiated

- Outreach
 - What have been the successes and challenges for outreach workers in regard to connecting with families in the communities? What are the characteristics of these outreach workers?
 - What are families' perceptions of outreach workers approaching them to engage in support services?
- Engagement, retention and attrition
 - Why did some parents refuse to take part in the Program?
 - What are the characteristics of parents who took part in the Program compared with those who were contacted and offered the service but refused to take part in the Program?
- Implementation
 - What were the successes and challenges for Family Support Centers in performing their new responsibilities as part of the Program?
 - To what extent is the Program implemented to fidelity (i.e., community outreach workers visiting a subset of families, welcoming the new babies, delivering a diaper basket and inviting the family to be a part of the nearest Family Support Center)?
- Response to the Program
 - How satisfied are key stakeholders with Program components and the Program overall?

- How satisfied are parents with the Program?
 - How do parents use the information/materials delivered as part of the Program?
 - Which aspects of the Program are most useful to families? Least?
 - What does it take to engage families?
- Resources
 - What resources are used during the implementation of the program?
 - What training, guidance and information do implementers receive?
 - Are there additional resources needed by the Family Support Centers to effectively implement the Program?
- Referrals and cross-system coordination
 - How are Family Support Centers maintaining community resource and referral networks? What, if any, gaps exist in these networks?
 - What are the successes and challenges related to referrals to services and cross-system coordination?

Priority

- Outreach
 - What have been the successes and challenges of the priority team in connecting with families in the communities?
 - What are families' perceptions of the priority team approaching them to encourage them to engage in Hello Baby
 - What are families' perceptions of the consent process for participation in the program?
 - Note: this consent process is different than the opt-out consent process for using the PRM to determine eligibility for services.
- Engagement, retention and attrition
 - What are the characteristics of parents who took part in the Program?
 - What are the characteristics of families that remained involved in the Program over time and of those that formally withdrew? What were other sources of attrition (e.g., moving)?
 - What percentage of the families enrolled (received an intake assessment) in the Program?
 - What percentage received services beyond an intake assessment?
 - What level of interaction took place with cohabitating and non-cohabitating fathers and partners of the mothers? What were the barriers to engaging with fathers and mothers' partners in the Program?
 - What strategies were adopted to engage parents? How successful were these strategies?
- Implementation
 - What are the individual functions of the social worker and peer support specialist, and how do they work together to support the family?
 - How do the social worker and peer support specialist coordinate with other system partners (e.g., child welfare, early intervention, physical and behavioral health providers)?

- How does this team implement the model from Camden Coalition¹?
- Were there planned or unplanned changes in how the Program was delivered? If yes, what were these changes?
- To what extent is the Program implemented to fidelity across peer support specialists and social workers?
- What implementation challenges arose in delivering the Program?
- What strategies were employed to engage non-cohabitating and cohabitating fathers?
- Response to the Program
 - How satisfied are key stakeholders with Program components and the Program overall?
 - How satisfied are families with the Program?
 - How do parents use the information/materials delivered as part of the Program?
 - Which aspects of the Program are most useful to families? Mothers? Fathers?
- Resources
 - What resources are used during the implementation of the program? Are there additional resources needed by the Provider to effectively implement the Program?
 - What training, guidance and information do implementers receive?
- Referrals and cross-system coordination
 - How are sites maintaining community resource and referral networks? What, if any, gaps exist in these networks?
 - What are the successes and challenges with referrals to services and cross-system coordination?

Design Options for the Process Evaluation

Design options for the Process Evaluation include primary data collection and/or analyses of secondary data from administrative records. These options can be used in combination or separately and conducted once or repeatedly during the evaluation to measure change over time. Some examples of potential data collection methods include SMS text surveys, client observations and focus groups. In addition to collecting new data for the evaluation of Hello Baby implementation, several options using available secondary data could further strengthen study findings. Potential data sources include the Allegheny County Data Warehouse, hospital data records and Hello Baby cost records. More information about the Data Warehouse can be found at <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2018/08/13/allegheny-county-data-warehouse/>

Outcome Evaluation

The purpose of the Outcome Evaluation is to determine, using a methodologically rigorous design, if participation in Hello Baby leads to expected changes in parent and child outcomes.

¹ The Program will use a case management framework developed by the [Camden Coalition](#), a national exemplar in reaching and connecting with the most vulnerable populations

We are open to research designs supported by the HomVEE Standards², including, but not limited to, randomized control trials. When selecting the design, Proposers should consider cost, feasibility and DHS's commitment to serving all individuals we have resources to support. Applicants should examine Outcomes and outputs at each tier of the Program. The Outcome Evaluation may consider some/all the following questions:

Universal

- Engagement
 - Do parents utilize the universal services offered through Hello Baby?
- Outcomes
 - Do parents of children in Allegheny County have an overall positive perception of Hello Baby?

Differentiated

- Engagement/ Enrollment
 - Do outreach workers connect with new mothers and fathers?
 - Do outreach workers successfully enroll families in Family Support Centers?
 - What percentage of the target parents enrolled (received an intake) in the Program?
 - What percentage of parents received services beyond an intake assessment?
- Retention
 - Which parents remain involved in the Program over time and which parents withdraw?
- Outcomes
 - Do outreach workers increase awareness of available resources, including the local Family Support Centers?
 - Do parents of children in Allegheny County have an overall positive perception of Hello Baby?

Priority

- Engagement/Enrollment
 - What percentage of the families enrolled (received an intake assessment) in the Program?
 - What percentage received services beyond an intake assessment?
- Retention
 - Which families remained involved in the program over time and which families formally withdrew? What are other sources of attrition (e.g., moving)?
- Outcomes
 - Does the Program reduce maltreatment?
 - The literature suggests that there are numerous challenges in measuring maltreatment, one of which is the effect of surveillance bias. We would like the Proposer to suggest ways to measure serious maltreatment.
 - Does the Program increase family stability (e.g., stable housing, regular income,) and decrease crises?
 - Family Outcomes

² <https://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/publications/methods-standards>

- Are family's essential needs addressed (e.g., access and receipt of concrete services, referrals to community services)?
- Are parents' health and well-being needs met (e.g., parenting skills, access to health care)?
- Do families utilize social support?
- Do families feel competent to safely parent?
- Child Outcomes (beyond maltreatment)
 - Are children enrolled in and attending reliable childcare (or are parents providing for safe and consistent care)?
 - Are children's health, developmental and safety needs met (e.g., immunizations, access to health care, well-child visits, developmental screenings, child safety, safe sleep)?

Design Options for the Outcome Evaluation

Design options for the Outcome Evaluation include both primary data collection and analyses of secondary data from administrative records. These options can be used in combination or separately and conducted once or repeatedly during the course of the evaluation to measure change over time. These research tasks could begin at different timeframes during the course of the evaluation. Certain administrative data may take time to access while primary data collection would require initial planning, instrument development and testing, and participant recruitment.

One option for an Outcome study requiring primary data collection is a longitudinal, follow-up survey of Hello Baby clients. Such a survey could be executed in several ways, and the proposer will be asked to develop a strategy for the design, recruitment and implementation of follow-up surveys. Additionally, multiple secondary data sources are available that can be utilized to examine the characteristics, experiences and outcomes of Hello Baby clients. Potential design options include an analysis of data from the Allegheny County Data Warehouse, analysis of data from hospitals, and analysis of national survey data to draw comparisons to Hello Baby clients on related measures.

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the evaluation criteria described in detail below. Proposers must address their qualifications in their Proposal by responding to the specifically 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 135 points per Evaluation (Process and Outcome), as outlined in the following sections. Each Evaluation will be evaluated and scored separately. Please refer to the RFP Response Form for further detail on scoring.

Mission and Commitment (15 points)

Clear and concise statement why the Proposer feels that it is the best candidate for this opportunity and how the Hello Baby initiative fits well within the Proposer's mission (15 points)

Organizational Experience and Funding Strategy (40 points)

- Experience conducting large scale implementation studies (5 points)
- Experience collecting data (5 points)
- Experience conducting action research (5 points)
- Experience analyzing large, complex quantitative data sets (5 points)
- Experience analyzing administrative data sets for evaluation purposes (5 points)
- Experience utilizing qualitative research methods (5 points)
- Experience developing or adapting existing measures, preferably in the home visiting, maltreatment or early childhood fields (5 points)
- Experience securing funding for evaluations as well as ideas and strategies for working with DHS and other partners to secure additional evaluation funding (5 points)

Understanding of the Scope of Work (30 points)

- Approach to the project tasks, including explanations and rationales for any suggested modifications (5 points)
- Demonstrated understanding of the Hello Baby target populations and risk factors (5 points)
- Demonstrated understanding of the general field of primary prevention of maltreatment, as well as issues specific to Hello Baby (5 points)
- Demonstrated understanding of the existing evidence base in terms of key features of effective implementation and outcomes for primary prevention programs (5 points)
- Identification of anticipated logistical challenges and a sufficiently detailed description of how challenges will be addressed or minimized (5 points)
- Demonstrated ability to partner with other researchers and stakeholders (5 points)

Technical Approach (30 points)

- A logical and clear conceptual framework that addresses the components of the process and/or Outcome evaluation (5 points)
- A useful design and approach to sampling families as part of the Evaluations (5 points)
- An approach to data collection and measurement (5 points)
- An analytic approach for primary qualitative and quantitative data and proposed use of the Data Warehouse (5 points)
- An approach to data dissemination and use of findings (5 points)
- Identification of potential contextual and methodological challenges and approach to addressing or minimizing them (5 points)

Project Management (10 points)

- A logical timeline that demonstrates how the evaluation (with all associated

- deliverables) will be completed within the specified time period (5 points)
- Procedures for maintaining quality control and timeliness and conducting regular reviews of the quality of data collected (5 points)

Budget (10 points)

- A budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with the evaluation (5 points)
- A budget narrative that: clearly explains and justifies all line items in the proposed budget; describes any assumptions about engagement rate, caseload, etc.; and demonstrates fiscal and management capacity to manage funds in a fiscally responsible manner (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submission Process

- a. 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)
- 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 at our Active Solicitations website with the RFP announcement at www.allegenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations.
- c. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal, which includes the following attachments that are available on our Active Solicitations website:
 - Response Form
 - MWDBE documents
 - Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
 - Audited financial reports for the last three years
 - W-9
- d. Proposers should not send any attachments other than those listed above and on the Response Form.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.
- g. **Proposals must be submitted electronically to DHSProposals@allegenycounty.us no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, January 24, 2020 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 enter into an Agreement with any Proposers. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**
- b. Any Agreement originating from this RFP is subject to all of 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 based on the evaluation criteria in Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria using the scale listed in Section 5.1 b.

5.1 Evaluation Model

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. DHS will form an Evaluation Committee
- 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 according to their 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 Proposers' 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 Proposers' 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 MWBDE 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.allegenycounty.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 MWDBE website](#).

6.2 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.

6.3 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.allegenycounty.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).

6.4 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.

6.5 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](#), available at <http://www.allegenycounty.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.