



Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Request for Proposals

Production Partner for a Local Criminal Justice Reform Podcast

RFP Posting: Monday, March 30, 2026

Questions Deadline:
3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday April 10th, 2026

Submission Deadline:
3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday April 24th, 2026

Estimated Award Decision/Notification:
May 2026

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

Contents

Acronyms and Definitions..... 2

The RFP at a Glance 3

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing This RFP 6

Section 2: What We Are Looking For 7

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria 9

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal..... 11

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal 15

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers 17

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. Bonfire: The County's online procurement software. Proposers must have a Bonfire account to submit a Response to this RFP.
4. CAC: [Safety and Justice] Community Advisory Committee
5. Contract Services: The specific services that the Successful Proposer agrees to provide to the County in response to this RFP, as more particularly described in the Scope of Services in the Agreement
6. DHS: [Allegheny County] Department of Human Services
7. DHS Bonfire Portal: A Bonfire webpage specific to Allegheny County Department of Human Services where Proposers can view open, past and awarded solicitations released through Bonfire
8. Proposal: A completed Response Form, with specified attachments, submitted in response to this RFP
9. Proposer: The 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. RFP Opportunity Page: The Bonfire webpage where the RFP and all supporting documents are listed and where the RFP submission documents must be uploaded for a Proposal to be considered for review
13. SJC: Safety + Justice Challenge
14. Successful Proposer: The Proposer(s) selected by the County to provide the Contract Services

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) and in partnership with its Safety and Justice Community Advisory Committee (CAC), is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to partner with the CAC to design, produce and implement a podcast series about local criminal justice reform efforts. The podcast series will serve as a public-facing educational tool, featuring conversations with individuals impacted by the criminal justice system, legal system partners and community leaders. Specifically, the podcast series should elevate community voices, highlight system and community-led reform efforts that are currently underway, engage in discussions about remaining needs and gaps, and communicate the importance of advancing racial equity throughout our criminal justice system.

The podcast aligns with the County's broader goals of safely reducing the population of the Allegheny County Jail, increasing transparency, engaging community stakeholders, and supporting informed recommendations for improving the criminal justice system. Episodes will explore topics such as racial disparities, identity intersections, system navigation challenges, existing reform strategies (e.g., crisis response, deflection and diversion, indigent defense, jail programming, reentry, violence reduction, policing, matters pertaining to people under community supervision) and other community driven solutions.

Award Details

DHS seeks to enter into an Agreement with one Successful Proposer for one year to design, produce and implement the podcast series. We anticipate that total funding for the Contract Services will not exceed \$105,000 for the podcast series.

Proposers should provide a budget and budget narrative that justifies all cost estimates and assumptions behind their proposed budget. All proposed budgets will be considered for reasonableness, and DHS will negotiate the final budget and contract terms with the Successful Proposer before a final award is made.

Allegheny County typically pays contracted-Providers for services via a monthly reimbursement model for costs incurred. If you anticipate that your organization would benefit from an advance of funds to begin the contracted work prior to incurring costs, please detail the requested amount in your budget and budget narrative, including a proposed schedule for total repayment of the advance, via the monthly cost reimbursement process, by June 30, 2026.

If selected, Proposers should understand that requesting an advance does not guarantee that one will be approved; any potential advance will be at DHS's discretion. DHS will review all requests for reasonableness and negotiate any potential advances, total funding and final contract terms 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 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.

Contract Award and Use of Subcontractors

The contract will be awarded to one Successful Proposer. The Successful Proposer may engage subcontractors or partners at their discretion; however:

- All subcontracting arrangements must be managed solely by the Successful Proposer.
- DHS will not enter into agreements directly with any subcontractor.
- All costs associated with subcontractors must be included in the Successful Proposer's proposed budget and will not be reimbursed separately by DHS.
- The Successful Proposer will remain fully responsible for all deliverables, timelines and compliance requirements under this contract.

What's important to us:

DHS is seeking a Successful Proposer who will:

- Navigate complex and sensitive conversations with individuals impacted by the criminal legal system and those perceived as contributing to systemic harm, ensuring that those discussions are respectful, trauma informed and inclusive.
- Provide culturally responsive engagement strategies to meet the needs of diverse communities, leveraging networks, resources and approaches that allow various voices to be heard equitably.
- Comprehend how the intersections of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, immigration status and language can compound to shape narratives and experience related to local criminal justice reform efforts.
- Embrace approaches that foster trust and openness—for community members, government actors and impacted people alike—creating a welcoming environment for dialogue and storytelling.

- Collaborate effectively with community members, advocacy groups and other external partners to amplify lived experiences and connect audiences to resources that promote equity and systemic change.
- Ensure the integrity and quality of podcast content while promoting accessibility and engagement with the broader community.
- Have a clear plan and strong project management skills for managing all aspects of podcast production, including scoping, scheduling, coordination and technical execution.

What we don't want

Proposers must not:

- Recommend or advocate for policy or programmatic reforms to DHS or other government agencies or attempt to influence policy and programmatic decisions.
- Act as a spokesperson for DHS or publish content related to the podcast without DHS review and approval.
- Sensationalize trauma or misrepresent lived experiences. All storytelling must be respectful and trauma informed.
- Monetize episodes, cross-promote related projects without DHS approval, or create conflicts of interest.
- Neglect accessibility requirements, including transcription and language access.
- Fail to deliver high quality audio production, narration and editing as part of the agreed scope.

What we want:

We are interested in Proposers who will work with the CAC to develop and produce a podcast series that brings together individuals impacted by the criminal legal system and those within it in a storytelling format; Proposers will also manage narration, audio production and editing for this one-year, non-renewable engagement. Proposers may subcontract or partner to meet these requirements, but all subcontracting costs must be included in the proposed budget and managed by the Proposer.

Timeline

RFP Posting	Monday, March 30, 2026
Questions Deadline	Friday April 10 th , 2026 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Last Website and Q&A Update	Thursday April 16 th , 2026
Submission Deadline	Friday April 24 th , 2026 at 3 p.m. Eastern
Estimated Award Decision/Notification	May 2026

Who we are

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

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

Section 1: Why We Are Issuing This RFP

Since 2018, Allegheny County has participated in the Safety + Justice Challenge (SJC),¹ a national initiative funded by the MacArthur Foundation. Through this initiative, the County has advanced strategies to safely reduce the population of the Allegheny County Jail and address racial disparities in the criminal justice system. These efforts have included improving court processes, expanding safe alternatives to arrest and incarceration, increasing access to representation at first court appearance, and strengthening the role of community voice in reform efforts.

A key component of this work has been the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), established by DHS in 2021 to ensure that those most impacted by the criminal legal system help inform and guide local reform strategies.

While these efforts have led to meaningful progress, a persistent challenge remains. Conversations about criminal justice reform in Allegheny County can still be fragmented and difficult to access, and they do not consistently center the voices of those most impacted—people who have experienced incarceration, supervision or reentry as well as communities disproportionately affected by criminalization.

As the SJC initiative winds down, Allegheny County is committed to sustaining both reform momentum and authentic community engagement. In October 2025, DHS relaunched and expanded the CAC as an ongoing structure for community partnership in justice-related work.

In collaboration with the CAC, DHS now seeks to create a podcast as a complementary engagement strategy—creating a platform for dialogue that brings together community members, system stakeholders and advocates in an engaging, transparent, trauma-informed and solutions-oriented way. We intend to use remaining SJC funding to engage a Successful Proposer to design, produce and implement this podcast series as a tool to:

- Extend and sustain community engagement beyond the SJC initiative.

¹ For information on the Safety and Justice Challenge, please visit: <https://safetyandjusticechallenge.org/>.

- Amplify diverse voices and lived experiences.
- Highlight progress and ongoing reform efforts.
- Elevate the people and communities leading and experiencing change.
- Foster shared understanding and continued momentum for criminal justice reform in Allegheny County.

Section 2: We Are Looking For

DHS is seeking Proposals from qualified Proposers to work in partnership with the CAC to design, produce and implement a podcast series about criminal justice reform efforts in Allegheny County. The podcast series will serve as a public-facing educational tool, featuring conversations with individuals impacted by the local criminal justice system, community and government leaders, legal system partners, advocates and researchers. The goals of the podcast series include:

- Educate and inform community members and system partners about the local criminal justice system
- Amplify the voices of those impacted by the local criminal justice system
- Foster conversations with and among key stakeholders to support and improve the local criminal justice system
- Others that may be identified during podcast development

Podcast episodes will explore topics such as racial disparities, identity intersections, system navigation challenges, existing reform strategies (e.g., crisis response, deflection and diversion, indigent defense, jail programming, reentry, violence reduction, policing, matters pertaining to people under community supervision) and other community-driven solutions.

Responsibilities of the Successful Proposer:

At a minimum, DHS expects that the Successful Proposer will deliver a comprehensive, high quality podcast series through management of all creative, technical and strategic components, ensuring culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices throughout the podcast series. Some examples of specific responsibilities include the following:

- Strategic Planning & Content Development
- Planning, scripting and creating audio content, including recording, editing and publishing episodes
- Providing strategic direction for the podcast series
- Supporting refinement of episode topics, scripts and guest selection
- Translating DHS and CAC guidance into a cohesive podcast plan
- Informing DHS's podcast engagement plan by sharing recommendations and insights; DHS will lead direct outreach

Production & Technical Support

- Record, edit, mix and produce high-quality audio content that sounds clear and professional
- Provide narration support and ensure that episodes meet agreed-upon branding and tone
- Use reliable podcast equipment and ensure that episodes meet accessibility and quality standards
- Provide or arrange all necessary recording equipment and remote recording support
- Incorporate trauma-informed practices during interviews and ensure compliance with privacy and consent protocols. While DHS does not require specific certifications or training, proposers should describe any relevant experience and explain their approach to creating a safe, respectful environment for guests before, during and after recording.
- Propose a studio location for recording, if applicable, and include all related costs in the proposed budget
- Proposers who intend to outsource core elements of the requested scope of work to additional consultants should include information about these proposed partners.

Budget Considerations

- Budgets may include costs associated with retaining additional expertise to satisfy the requested scope or work, renting recording space or equipment, and compensating any guest narrator(s).
- If you are proposing to change or add any elements of the requested scope of work or deliverables outlined in Section 2, your budget narrative should include an explanation of why the change or addition is proposed and whether it is critical versus preferred.

Project & Guest Management

- Develop production timelines and manage each episode lifecycle
- Coordinate outreach to and communications with guests alongside DHS Project Manager/CAC Coordinator
- Prepare materials such as interview guides and briefings
- Manage scheduling and production logistics
- Engage in and navigate sensitive conversations with guests and stakeholders with care and professionalism
- The Successful Proposer will be experienced in producing podcasts; preference will be given to those with demonstrated experience with community engagement or storytelling that centers community voice and that navigates complex, equity focused conversations, especially as related to the criminal legal system.

Branding & Distribution

- Develop a podcast identity (name, tone, visuals if needed)
- Produce intro/outro segments and consistent audio branding
- Advise on hosting platforms, distribution channels and release schedules
- Develop a promotion strategy to reach intended audiences, in consultation with DHS's Public Information Officer and Equity & Engagement staff, and provide basic outcome analytics about engagement

Deliverables

- A finalized production plan
- A pilot episode (for feedback and refinement)
- 10 full episodes (while total number of episodes will be determined collaboratively with the Successful Proposer, proposers should prepare budgets based on the expectation of a 10-episode series)
 - For this RFP, a "full" episode means:
 - Approximately 30-45 minutes of edited audio
 - A clear narrative or theme featuring at least one guest with lived experience and/or relevant stakeholders
- A brief final report summarizing reach, engagement and lessons learned

Community Advisory Committee's (CAC) Role

The Successful Proposer will collaborate closely with DHS and the CAC to ensure that content reflects community priorities, justice reform goals and trauma-informed practices. The CAC, consisting of a diverse group of community members including people with lived experience of the criminal justice system, will support the podcast's strategic direction. Its responsibilities will include:

- Identifying and prioritizing potential episode topics based on local data, system gaps, and community needs and strengths.
- Recommending potential guests (e.g., individuals with lived experience, system actors, advocates).
- Reviewing storyboarding outlines or draft scripts for accuracy and relevance.
- Suggesting opportunities for alignment with ongoing justice reform efforts in Allegheny County.

Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

DHS will evaluate Proposals based upon the evaluation criteria listed below. Proposers must address their qualifications in their Proposal by responding to the requested items or questions in the Response Form. Proposers should download and type their responses directly into the Response Form available on the Active Solicitations webpage at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us/>. The maximum score that a Proposal can receive is 155 points, as outlined in the following sections.

Podcast Experience (40 points)

- Experience producing podcasts and developing episode narratives, including those potentially involving sensitive topics (e.g., storytelling and interview-based formats) (15 points)
- Strategies for collaborating with a committee to incorporate its feedback in productions without losing the flow of the narrative (10 points)
- Experience with audio editing and engineering skills or the ability to outsource and connect to necessary audio engineers, and approach for ensuring high-quality audio while maintaining a conversational, community centered tone (5 points)
- Experience managing scheduling and logistics for guests who may have limited availability or unique needs, including flexibility to accommodate evenings, weekends and non-traditional hours to ensure participation of community members (5 points)
- Approach and examples of your commitment to collaborating with all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), intellectual or physical ability, English language proficiency and/or life experiences (5 points)

Podcast Design (40 points)

- Approach to recruiting and preparing guests, including individuals with lived experience and system stakeholders, to ensure that participation feels safe and supported, including strategies for preparing guests for interviews who may have lived experience with the legal system (10 points)
- Strategies for ensuring participant safety and autonomy, including pre- and post-interview support protocols, a clear informed consent process, and an option for participants to review or withdraw their content before release. (10 points)
- Strategies for creating a welcoming and trauma-informed environment during interviews and recordings (10 points)
- Experience with racial equity, criminal justice, community engagement and/or social impact storytelling in addition to experience collaborating with diverse partners and stakeholders (e.g. community members, governments partners etc.) (5 points)
- Approach to preparing interview guides that reflect both community priorities and system realities (5 points)

Proposed Location (15 points)

- Process used to identify (and your plan to acquire, if leased or rented), a studio location that meets all the standards and requirements for the podcast and a brief description of the location. Please provide a timeline for podcast implementation, including the completion of any necessary renovations and the relevant experience of project partners involved. (15 points)

Podcast & Implementation Challenges (30 points)

- Strategies for ensuring that conversations remain respectful and balanced, especially when guests have experienced harm or represent systems that caused harm (10 points)
- Approach for balancing editorial integrity and protecting guests from harm or misrepresentation. (10 points)
- Approach to incorporating anti-racism practices into facilitation and production (10 points)

Examples of Work (20 points)

- 1-2 examples of previous podcast(s) and/or audio work that demonstrates culturally grounded storytelling, if applicable (10 points)
- 1-2 examples of previous production plans, storyboarding outlines, scripts, and other requested or proposed deliverables (10 points)

Budget and Budget Narrative (10 points)

- A comprehensive line-item budget that has a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing the podcast series (5 points)
- A comprehensive budget narrative that clearly explains all assumptions and justifies all line-items in the proposed budget (5 points)

Section 4: How to Submit a Proposal

4.1 Submit a Proposal

- a. Proposers should take time to review and understand the RFP in its entirety including:
 - The background (see Section 1: Why DHS Is Issuing This RFP)
 - The narrative (see Section 2: What DHS Is Looking For)
 - The requirements (see Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria)

- The evaluation process (see Section 5: How DHS Will Evaluate Your Proposal)
- b. Proposers must use the Response Form to develop your Proposal. Type your responses to each requested item directly into the Response Form. It is available on the RFP Opportunity Page on our DHS Bonfire Portal and on our Active Solicitations webpage with the RFP announcement at <https://solicitations.alleghenycounty.us/>.
- c. Collaborative Proposals
 - Collaborative Proposals, in which two or more entities partner to apply together, are permitted. Collaborative Proposals can include:
 - i. Lead Agency: The County can enter a contract with only one partner of a Collaborative Proposal. Therefore, a Collaborative Proposal must identify one entity as the Lead Agency that will be the contracting party with the County. The Lead Agency should be the Proposer.
 - 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 agrees to their role in the Contract Services.
 - Entities may participate in more than one Collaborative Proposal.
- d. Proposers must submit a complete Proposal that includes the following attachments:
 - Response Form (available on the RFP Opportunity Page and the Active Solicitation Webpage)
 - Partner commitment letters, if applicable
 - W-9
 - Minority, Women or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDDBE) and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) documents (see sections 6.1 and 6.2)
- 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 [RFP Opportunity Page](#) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, April 24th, 2026, to be considered for review. If you are having trouble making an account or uploading your documents, please contact Bonfire Support. You can also reach out to the DHS Procurement Team at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us or (412) 350-6352.**
- h. All Proposals must be submitted before the deadline! Once the deadline has passed, the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) will no longer accept Proposals. If a Proposal is

late, it will be rejected and will not be presented to the Evaluation Committee (as described in Section 5 below) for review and scoring.

- i. Proposers will receive an email acknowledging receipt of their Proposal. If a Proposer does not receive this notification within 48 hours of submitting their Proposal, please contact: DHSProposals@allegHENYcounty.us.

4.2 How to Contact DHS about this RFP and RFP Communications

- a. If you have any questions about this RFP, please use the Vendor Discussion feature through the DHS Bonfire Portal at <https://allegHENYcountydhs.bonfirehub.com> on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#), or email us at DHSProposals@allegHENYcounty.us.
 - a. All content-related questions must be submitted by the Questions Deadline at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday April 10th, 2026.
 - 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, April 16th, 2026. We will make every effort not to post any new information after this time; however, we reserve the right to post new information in emergency circumstances.

4.3 New Provider Requirements

- a. Any Successful Proposer who does not have a current Allegheny County DHS contract will be required to submit audited financial reports for the last two years. If a Successful Proposer does not have audited financial reports for the last three years, then they 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.

4.4 Other Information

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

4.5 Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law

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

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

Section 5: How We Will Evaluate Your Proposal

DHS will convene an Evaluation Committee to evaluate Proposals. The Evaluation Committee will assign scores to each Proposal by awarding points based on the evaluation criteria in Section 3: Proposal Requirements and Evaluation Criteria, by using the point scale listed in Section 5.1 b.

5.1 Evaluation of Proposals

The evaluation process will consist of the following steps:

- a. DHS will form an Evaluation Committee. The Evaluation Committee, which will be comprised of evaluators with expertise in the subject matter of this RFP, may include community members with lived experience, external subject matter experts, provider representative(s), representative(s) from key partners or funders, and DHS staff.
- b. All Evaluation Committee members will individually review and score each Proposal. Each Evaluation Committee member will award points for each response on a Proposer's Response Form, utilizing their personal expertise and best judgment of how the Proposal submitted by that Proposer meets the evaluation criteria in Section 3 using the following scale:
 - 0 – Not addressed in Proposal
 - 1 – Poor
 - 2 – Below expectations
 - 3 – Meets expectations
 - 4 – Exceeds expectations
 - 5 – Outstanding
- c. Each 0-5 score will be multiplied by the appropriate weight for the number of possible points noted after each evaluation criterion in Section 3. For example, for a criterion worth 15 points, the 0-5 score would be multiplied by three. An "Outstanding" response would receive 15 points, while one that "Meets Expectations" would receive nine points.
- d. DHS will tally the average scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the average scores, and arrive at a consensus on which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP. The Committee will have discretion to either: (1) recommend to the DHS Director that a reduced number of Proposals be shortlisted for more extensive review through a formal oral presentation to the Committee, interview or a site visit or (2) recommend to the DHS Director that DHS request authorization for the County to enter into an Agreement(s) with the Successful Proposer(s).
- e. As described in d above, DHS, on behalf of the County, shall have the exclusive discretion to shortlist a reduced number of Proposals for more extensive review. In

this case, DHS may request that shortlisted Proposers make a formal oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee. Each Committee member will individually score the oral presentation of the shortlisted Proposers using the following criteria and the scale outlined in 5.1b. The maximum score that a shortlisted Proposer's oral presentation can receive is 15 points:

- Presentation demonstrates Proposer's ability to implement the Contract Services effectively (5 points)
 - Proposer's answers to Evaluation Committee's questions demonstrate Proposer's ability to implement the Contract Services (5 points)
 - Proposer's presentation is thoughtful and well prepared (5 points)
- f. DHS will tally the scores of the members of the Evaluation Committee and report a list of average scores to the entire Committee. The Committee will meet, consider the scores and arrive at a consensus as to which Proposer(s) can best provide the Contract Services in response to the RFP.
 - g. The Committee will submit its recommendation for award of an Agreement or Agreements to the DHS Director for approval. The Director will, in turn, submit a request to the County Manager for approval for the County to enter into an Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s).
 - h. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer to discuss any areas of the Proposal needing clarification or further explanation.
 - i. At any time during the evaluation process, DHS may contact a Proposer's references.
 - j. As part of determining a Proposer's eligibility to enter a contract with Allegheny County, all Proposers' financial audits or other documentation will be reviewed by DHS fiscal analysts to ensure a Proposer's financial stability.
 - k. The County is under no obligation to award or enter into an Agreement with a Proposer as a result of this RFP. The County reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals.**
 - l. All Proposers will be notified of the County's final decision of which Proposer(s) will be awarded an Agreement.
 - m. Proposers that are not awarded an Agreement but who are interested in receiving feedback regarding their submission may request a phone call at DHSProposals@alleghenycounty.us.

5.2 Other Requirements

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

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

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

Section 6: Contract Requirements for Successful Proposers

In order to enter into an Agreement with the County, Successful Proposers must comply with all contract requirements listed below and all standard terms and conditions contained in a County contract for provision of services to DHS and its offices. In addition, Successful Proposers must be able to meet the insurance requirements necessary to provide the Contract Services. Additional details about contracting with Allegheny County and the insurance requirements are available in the [DHS General Requirements/Contract Specifications Manual](#) and the [Insurance Requirements Overview](#).

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

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

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

- d. A listing of certified DBE vendors can be found at <https://paucp.dbesystem.com>.

6.2 Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB) Requirement

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

- a. A veteran-owned small business is defined by the County as a business having 100 or fewer full-time employees and not less than 51% of which is owned by one or more veterans, or in the case of any publicly owned business, not less than 51% of the stock of which is owned by one or more veterans, and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by one or more veterans. The VOSB vendor **MUST** provide proof of veteran ownership including percentage and name and address of business.
 - For contracts under \$100,000, VOSB vendors are from all bonding requirements.
- b. All Proposals must include either of the following:
 - If the Proposer can meet the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement is required. You must also attach a copy of the VOSB vendor(s) DD 214 discharge form(s) cited in the Participation Statement.
 - If the Proposer requests a waiver from participating in the VOSB contract goal, a completed VOSB Participation Statement and VOSB Waiver Request are required.
- e. VOSB forms and resources can be found on the [RFP Opportunity Page](#) and through the links provided below:
 - [VOSB Participation Statement](#)
 - [VOSB Waiver Request](#)
- c. A listing of Small Businesses, Small Diverse Businesses, and Veteran Business Enterprises (SB, SDB, and VBE) can be found at www.dgs.internet.state.pa.us/suppliersearch.

6.3 HIPAA Compliance

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

6.4 Cyber Security

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

- b. All electronic devices must have sufficient security software and settings to minimize the risk of an information breach.
- c. Successful Proposers must also have policies in place to ensure that electronic devices are physically secure when not in use (e.g., locked in a vehicle trunk, password protected).

6.5 Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Requirements

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

6.6 Language Diversity Requirements

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