



The 2025 Community Development Grant Application (CDGA) Book

Request for Proposals (RFP) for social services,
housing, and economic development programs.
Funded with U.S. Department of Housing and
Urban Development (HUD) Community
Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and more

Program Year January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026

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General Information

Purpose of this RFP

The Office of Budget and Management (“OBM”) is releasing this Request for Proposal (“RFP”), on behalf of the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS), Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), Department of Housing (DOH), and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH). The RFP’s included in this package will fund programs addressing social service, housing, and economic development for fiscal year 2026. OBM and the various departments will host a series of technical assistance (TA) sessions to provide information and guidance for applicants interested in applying for funding under the programs listed in this RFP as well as training for the City of Chicago’s (City) online grant system application, eProcurement (iSupplier).

Submittal of an application does not ensure that you will receive an award. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in submitting this application or for costs incurred in anticipation of receiving an award. If you receive an award, the award will not be final until your organization and the City have fully negotiated and signed a grant agreement. All payments of funds, as well as the terms and conditions of the grant agreement, will be subject to the appropriation and availability of funds as well as the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. The City may, in its sole discretion, reduce the compensation payable under the grant agreement. The grant agreement will terminate at the earliest to occur of (a) the last day of the fiscal period for which sufficient appropriation was made, (b) the date when funds appropriated for payment under the grant agreement are exhausted, or (c) such other date as provided under the grant agreement.

Applicants must follow the directions of the RFP and all responses must be complete, legible, and coherent. Non-responsiveness or incomplete responses to this RFP may be the cause for the proposal to be disqualified from further consideration. The City reserves the right to accept any proposal or any part or parts thereof and reject any or all proposals. In this RFP, "respondent", "applicant" and "you" mean the entity submitting a response to this RFP.

Eligibility Requirements

This is a competitive process open to not-for-profit community-based organizations (unless specifically stated otherwise in the “Program Description” section of this document). Applicants must provide their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt designation and State of Illinois articles of incorporation as verification of their not-for-profit status. Applicants are required to deliver services within the city of Chicago and to Chicago residents only.

Applicants with existing contracts with the City that are not in good standing will not be considered for new funding. In addition, applicants that have had a City contract terminated for default, are currently debarred, or have been issued a final determination by a City, State, or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, or abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices will not be considered for new funding.

Funding Sources

Funding for each contract executed under this RFP is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council of the City, State and/or Federal authorities, if applicable. No payments will be made or due to you under the terms of any contract executed under this RFP, beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under the terms of such contract. The City's obligations under such contract shall cease immediately, without penalty or further payment being required, if the City Council of the City, the Illinois General Assembly and/or federal funding source(s) fails to make an appropriation sufficient to fund terms of such contract.

The city reserves the right to use additional funding sources. For more information about the various rules and regulations that may govern the use of these funding sources, visit the specific web site referenced by each funding source.

- City of Chicago Local Funds www.cityofchicago.org/budget
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)
 - (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs)
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development: Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
 - (<https://www.illinois.gov/dceo/CommunityServices/HousingAssistance/CSBG/Pages/default.aspx>)
- Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA): Foreclosure Prevention Funds
 - (<http://www.ihda.org/>)
- Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS): Emergency and Transitional Housing Funds
 - (<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?>)

Anticipated Term of Contract and Funding

The initial contract period for 23 of the 32 RFP's are anticipated to start on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028, with up to two extensions, each not to exceed one year, at the discretion of the City based on the availability of funds, the need to extend services, and the respondent's performance. Contract anticipated term may vary depending on the needs of the program and funding source.

Programs may be funded with a combination of federal, state, or local funds with each funding source representing a separate contract. Final awards are contingent on the appropriation and availability of funds from the various sources identified above.

Compliance

Applicants must comply with all applicable federal, state, and City requirements necessary to execute and perform services under a contract funded by this application.

Highlights and Key Dates on the CDGA Calendar

CDGA RFP Release	March 17, 2025
CDGA Workshop (Kennedy King College)	March 20, 2025
CDGA Workshop (Virtual)	March 26, 2026
CDGA Workshop (Malcom X College)	April 7, 2025
2026 CDGA Application Opens	April 1, 2025, at 9:00 AM CY
2026 CDGA Application Closes	June 2, 2025, at 12:00 PM CT
Award Notifications Sent to Respondents	August-December 2026*
Program Year Begins	January 1, 2026
Sub-grantee Agreements Executed	January 1, 2026*

**Dates are tentative and based on FY2026 Budget cycle*

Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Each lead department administering the programs listed in this RFP will evaluate and score all proposals based upon the criteria identified in the Program Description. During the evaluation process, lead departments reserve the right to consult with community advisory groups or committees, external experts, other City departments, and public and private funders.

The Applicant must show to the complete satisfaction of the lead department that it has the necessary facilities, ability, staffing, and financial resources to provide the services specified in the Program Descriptions in a satisfactory manner. The lead department may make reasonable investigations deemed necessary and proper to determine the ability of the Applicant to perform the work and the Applicant shall furnish to the lead department all information that may be requested. The lead department reserves the right to reject any application if the materials or information provided by the Applicant fail to satisfy the lead department that the Applicant is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work described in the Program Description.

Evaluation of the Applicants qualifications shall include:

- The ability, capacity, skill, and the financial and other necessary resources to perform the work or provide the service required.
- The ability to perform the work or provide the service promptly or within the time specified, without delay or interference.
- The experience and efficiency of the agency.
- The quality of work and performance of previous contracts or services, as applicable.

Once submitted and RFP is closed, no proposal may be amended or substituted, unless an addendum is issued by the City. The City, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to contact an applicant if additional information or clarification is required.

The table on the following page lists the maximum score an applicant can receive, along with examples of the review criteria for each section. Lead departments may incorporate additional criteria for specific program models.

Application Review Criteria

The maximum points an application can receive is 100. There are additional requirements identified in the Program Descriptions section of this document. Some departments may adjust this criterion based on their program’s requirements and have included an amended rubric in that individual RFP.

Criteria	Points
Organizational Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant identifies qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, fiscal oversight, and evaluation and performance management methods. • The Applicant provides evidence of successful past program performance or success in initiating, maintaining, and completing a similar program, and consistently meeting program goals. 	25
Proposed Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant serves a high-need community area (defined as an area of 51% low to moderate income residents); an area with a service gap; and/or serves an under or unserved population. • The Applicant clearly demonstrates quality experience and accomplishments in providing services to target population. • The Applicant clearly defines the activities to be undertaken or the services to be provided. • The Applicant’s proposed goals and service delivery is appropriate based on agency capacity and past experience. 	30
Reasonable Costs, Budget Justification, and Leverage of Funds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. • Overall, the Applicant is fiscally sound, as evidenced by the financial history and record of the organization, as well as audited financial statements (or the equivalent) from the current fiscal year. • The Applicant proposes a reasonable cost per person or per unit and provides justification for the level of funding requested. • The Applicant leverages other non-local funds to support total program cost. 	20
Program Quality and Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant has documented collaborations or partnerships with other public and private agencies that support or enhance resources for the target population. 	20
Overall Responsiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant completed the application in an accurate manner, answered all questions with sufficient detail to demonstrate knowledge and capacity to carry out the proposed program(s), and submits all necessary information or documentation. 	5

Compliance with Laws, Statutes, Ordinances, and Executive Orders

Grant awards will not be final until the City of Chicago and the applicant have fully negotiated and executed a grant agreement. All payments under Agreements are subject to appropriation and availability of funds. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the applicant in anticipation of a grant agreement. As a condition of a grant award, applicants must comply with the following and with each provision of the grant agreement:

1. Conflict of Interest Clause: No member of the governing body of the City or other unit of government and no other officer, employee, or agent of the City or other government unit who exercises any functions or responsibilities in connection with the carrying out of the project shall have any personal interest, direct or indirect, in the grant agreement.

The applicant covenants that he/she presently has no interest, and shall not acquire any interest, direct, or indirect, in the project to which the grant agreement pertains which would conflict in any manner or degree with the performance of his/her work hereunder. The applicant further covenants that in the performance of the grant agreement no person having any such interest shall be employed.

2. Governmental Ethics Ordinance, Chapter 2-156: All applicants agree to comply with the Governmental Ethics Ordinance, Chapter 2-156 which includes the following provisions: a) a representation by the applicant that he/she has not procured the grant agreement in violation of this order; and b) a provision that any grant agreement which the applicant has negotiated, entered into, or performed in violation of any of the provisions of [Governmental Ethics Ordinance, Chapter 2-156] shall be voidable by the City.
3. Drug-free Workplace: Selected applicants shall establish procedures and policies to promote a Drug-free Workplace. The selected applicant shall notify employees of its policy for maintaining a drug-free workplace and the penalties that may be imposed for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace. The selected applicant shall notify the City if any of its employees are convicted of a criminal offense in the workplace no later than ten days after such conviction.
4. Business Relationships with Elected Officials: Pursuant to Section 2-156-030(b) of the Municipal Code of Chicago as amended (Municipal Code), it is illegal for any elected official of the City, or any person acting at the direction of such official, to contact, either orally or in writing, any other City official or employee with respect to any matter involving any person with whom the elected official has a business relationship, or to participate in any discussion in any City Council committee hearing or in any City Council meeting or to vote on any matter involving the person with whom an elected official has a business relationship. Violation of Section 2-156-030(b) by any elected official with respect to the Agreement shall be grounds for termination of the Agreement. The term business relationship is defined as set forth in Section 2-156-080 of the Municipal Code.

Section 2-156-080 defines a “business relationship” as any contractual or other private business dealing of an official, or his or her spouse or domestic partner, or of any entity in which an official or his or her spouse or domestic partner has a financial interest, with a person or entity which entitles an official to compensation or payment in the amount of \$2,500 or more in a calendar year; provided, however, a financial interest shall not include: (i) any ownership through purchase at fair market value or inheritance of less than one percent of the share of a corporation, or any corporate subsidiary, parent or affiliate thereof, regardless of the value of or dividends on such shares, if such shares are registered on a securities exchange pursuant to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended; (ii) the authorized compensation paid to an official or employee for his office or employment; (iii) any economic benefit provided equally to all residents of the City; (iv) a time or demand deposit in a financial institution; or (v) an endowment or insurance policy or annuity contract purchased from an insurance company. A “contractual or other private business dealing” shall not include any employment relationship of an official’s spouse or domestic partner with an entity when such spouse or domestic partner has no discretion concerning or input relating to the relationship between that entity and the City.

5. Legal Compliance: Compliance with Federal, State of Illinois and City of Chicago regulations, ordinances, policies, procedures, rules, executive orders and requirements, including: Disclosure of Ownership Interests Ordinance (Chapter 2-154 of the Municipal Code); the State of Illinois - Certification Affidavit Statute (Illinois Criminal Code); State Tax Delinquencies (65ILCS 5/11-42.1-1); Governmental Ethics Ordinance (Chapter 2-156 of the Municipal Code); Office of the Inspector General Ordinance (Chapter 2-56 of the Municipal Code); Child Support Arrearage Ordinance (Section 2-92-380 of the Municipal Code); and Landscape Ordinance (Chapters 32 and 194A of the Municipal Code).
6. Economic Disclosure Statement: If selected for grant award, applicants are required to (a) execute the Economic Disclosure Statement and Affidavit and (b) indemnify the City as described in the Agreement between the City and the successful applicants.
7. Prohibition on Certain Contributions, Mayoral Executive Order 2011-4: Neither you nor any person or entity who directly or indirectly has an ownership or beneficial interest in you of more than 7.5% (Owners), spouses and domestic partners of such Owners, your Subcontractors, any person or entity who directly or indirectly has an ownership or beneficial interest in any Subcontractor of more than 7.5% (Sub-owners) and spouses and domestic partners of such Sub-owners (you and all the other preceding classes of persons and entities are together, the Identified Parties), shall make a contribution of any amount to the Mayor of the City of Chicago (the Mayor) or to his political fundraising committee during (i) the bid or other solicitation process for the grant agreement or Other Contract, including while the grant agreement or Other Contract is executory, (ii) the term of the grant agreement or any Other Contract between City and you, and/or (iii) any period in which an extension of the grant agreement or Other Contract with the City is being sought or negotiated.

You represent and warrant that since the date of public advertisement of the specification, request for qualifications, RFP or request for information (or any combination of those requests) or, if not competitively procured, from the date the City approached you or the date you approached the City, as applicable, regarding the formulation of the grant agreement, no Identified Parties have made a contribution of any amount to the Mayor or to his political fundraising committee.

You shall not: (a) coerce, compel or intimidate your employees to make a contribution of any amount to the Mayor or to the Mayor’s political fundraising committee; (b) reimburse your employees for a contribution of any amount made to the Mayor or to the Mayor’s political fundraising committee; or (c) bundle or solicit others to bundle contributions to the Mayor or to his political fundraising committee.

The Identified Parties must not engage in any conduct whatsoever designed to intentionally violate this provision or Mayoral Executive Order No. 2011-4 or to entice, direct or solicit others to intentionally violate this provision or Mayoral Executive Order No. 2011-4.

Violation of, non-compliance with, misrepresentation with respect to, or breach of any covenant or warranty under this provision or violation of Mayoral Executive Order No. 2011-4 constitutes a breach and default under the grant agreement, and under any Other Contract for which no opportunity to cure will be granted. Such breach and default entitles the City to all remedies (including without limitation termination for default) under the grant agreement, under any Other Contract, at law and in equity. This provision amends any Other Contract and supersedes any inconsistent provision contained therein.

If you violate this provision or Mayoral Executive Order No. 2011-4 prior to award of the Agreement resulting from this specification, the Commissioner may reject your bid.

For purposes of this provision:

- “Other Contract” means any agreement entered into between you and the City that is (i) formed under the authority of Municipal Code Ch. 2-92; (ii) for the purchase, sale or lease of real or personal property; or (iii) for materials, supplies, equipment or services which are approved and/or authorized by the City Council.
- “Contribution” means a “political contribution” as defined in Municipal Code Ch. 2-156, as amended.
- “Political fundraising committee” means a “political fundraising committee” as defined in Municipal Code Ch. 2-156, as amended.

8. Hiring Practices:

- a) The City is subject to the June 24, 2011 “City of Chicago Hiring Plan” (the “2011 City Hiring Plan”) entered in *Shakman v. Democratic Organization of Cook County*, Case No 69 C 2145 (United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois). Among other things, the 2011 City Hiring Plan prohibits the City from hiring persons as governmental employees in non-exempt positions on the basis of political reasons or factors.
- b) You are aware that City policy prohibits City employees from directing any individual to apply for a position with you, either as an employee or as a subcontractor, and from directing you to hire an individual as an employee or as a subcontractor. Accordingly, you must follow your own hiring and contracting procedures, without being influenced by City employees. Any and all personnel provided by you under the grant agreement are employees or subcontractors of you, not employees of the City of Chicago. The grant agreement is not intended to and does not constitute, create, give rise to, or otherwise recognize an employer-employee relationship of any kind between the City and any personnel provided by you.
- c) You will not condition, base, or knowingly prejudice or affect any term or aspect of the employment of any personnel provided under the grant agreement, or offer employment to any individual to provide services under the grant agreement, based upon or because

of any political reason or factor, including, without limitation, any individual's political affiliation, membership in a political organization or party, political support or activity, political financial contributions, promises of such political support, activity or financial contributions, or such individual's political sponsorship or recommendation. For purposes of the grant agreement, a political organization or party is an identifiable group or entity that has as its primary purpose the support of or opposition to candidates for elected public office. Individual political activities are the activities of individual persons in support of or in opposition to political organizations or parties or candidates for elected public office.

- d) In the event of any communication to you by a City employee or City official in violation of paragraph (b) above, or advocating a violation of paragraph (c) above, you will, as soon as is reasonably practicable, report such communication to the Hiring Oversight Section of the City's Office of the Inspector General ("IGO Hiring Oversight"), and also to the head of the Department. You will also cooperate with any inquiries by IGO Hiring Oversight related to this Agreement.

Insurance Requirements

Insurance requirements are applicable at the time of contract execution.

INSURANCE REQUIRED

You must provide and maintain at your own expense, during the term of this Agreement and during the time period following expiration if you are required to return and perform any work, services or operations, the insurance coverages and requirements specified below, insuring all work, services, or operations related to this Agreement.

1) Workers Compensation and Employers Liability (Primary and Umbrella)

Workers Compensation Insurance, as prescribed by applicable law covering all employees who are to provide a service under this Agreement and Employers Liability coverage with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 each accident; \$1,000,000 disease-policy limit and \$1,000,000 disease-each employee, or the full per occurrence limits of the policy, whichever is greater.

You may use a combination of primary and excess/umbrella policy/policies to satisfy the limits of liability required herein. The excess/umbrella policy/policies must provide the same coverages/follow form as the underlying policy/policies.

2) Commercial General Liability

Commercial General Liability Insurance or equivalent must be maintained with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate for bodily injury, personal injury, and property damage liability. Coverages must include but not be limited to, the following: All premises and operations, products/completed operations (for a minimum of two (2) years following project completion), explosion, collapse, underground, separation of insureds, defense, contractual liability (not to include endorsement CG 21 39 or equivalent), no exclusion for damage to work performed by Subcontractors, any limitation of coverage for designated premises or project is not permitted (not to include endorsement CG 21 44 or equivalent) and any endorsement modifying or deleting the exception to the Employer's Liability exclusion is not permitted. Where the general aggregate limit applies, the general aggregate must apply per project/location and once per policy period if applicable, or you may obtain separate insurance to provide the required limits which will not be subject to depletion because of claims arising out of any of your other work or activity. If a general aggregate applies to products/completed operations, the general aggregate limits must apply per project and once per policy period.

The City must be provided additional insured status with respect to liability arising out of your work, services or operations and completed operations performed on behalf of the City. Such additional insured coverage must be provided on ISO form CG 2010 10 01 and CG 2037 10 01 or on an endorsement form at least as broad for ongoing operations and completed operations. The City's additional insured status must apply to liability and defense of suits arising out of your acts or omissions, whether such liability is attributable to the Contactor or to the City. The full policy limits and scope of protection also will apply to the City as an additional insured, even if they exceed the City's minimum limits required herein. A copy of the physical "Additional Insured" endorsement must accompany the Certificate of Insurance when submitted. Your liability insurance must be primary without right of contribution by any other insurance or self-insurance maintained by or available to the City.

You may use a combination of primary and excess/umbrella policy/policies to satisfy the limits of liability required herein. The excess/umbrella policy/policies must provide the same

coverages/follow form as the underlying policy/policies.

3) Automobile Liability

When any motor vehicles (owned, non-owned and hired) are used in connection with work, services, or operations to be performed, Automobile Liability Insurance must be maintained by you with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury and property damage and covering the ownership, maintenance, or use of any auto whether owned, leased, non-owned or hired used in the performance of the work or services. The City is to be added as an additional insured on a primary, non-contributory basis. A copy of the physical "Additional Insured" endorsement must accompany the Certificate of Insurance when submitted.

You may use a combination of primary and excess/umbrella policy/policies to satisfy the limits of liability required herein. The excess/umbrella policy/policies must provide the same coverages/follow form as the underlying policy/policies.

4) Excess/Umbrella

Excess/Umbrella Liability Insurance must be maintained with limits of not less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence, or the full per occurrence limits of the policy, whichever is greater. The policy/policies must provide the same coverages/follow form as the underlying Commercial General Liability, Automobile Liability, Employers Liability and Completed Operations coverage required herein and expressly provide that the excess or umbrella policy/policies will drop down over reduced and/or exhausted aggregate limit, if any, of the underlying insurance. The Excess/Umbrella policy/policies must be primary without right of contribution by any other insurance or self-insurance maintained by or available to the City.

You may use a combination of primary and excess/umbrella policies to satisfy the limits of liability required in sections A.1, A.2, A.3 and A.4 herein.

5) Professional Liability

When any professional consultants perform work, services, or operations in connection with this Agreement, Professional Liability Insurance covering acts, errors, or omissions must be maintained with limits of not less than \$5,000,000. Coverage must include, but not be limited to, technology errors and omissions and pollution liability if environmental site assessments are conducted when applicable. When policies are renewed or replaced, the policy retroactive date must coincide with, or precede start of work on the Agreement. A claims-made policy which is not renewed or replaced must have an extended reporting period of two (2) years.

5) Professional/Pharmacists Liability

When any, pharmaceutical services or other professional services are performed in connection with this Agreement, Professional/Pharmacists Liability Insurance must be maintained covering acts, errors, or omissions relating to the dispensing of drugs or pharmacy activities with limits of not less than \$10,000,000. When policies are renewed or replaced, the policy retroactive date must coincide with, or precede start of the Services under the Agreement. A claims-made policy which is not renewed or replaced must have an extended reporting period of two (2) years.

6) Cyber Liability

If any personally identifiable information, personally identifiable credit information or protected health information is collected and maintained by Vendor; Cyber Liability must be maintained with

limits of not less than \$5,000,000 for each occurrence or claim. Coverage must be sufficiently broad to respond to the duties and obligations as is undertaken by Consultant in this Agreement and must include, but not be limited to, the following: invasion of privacy violations, information theft, release of private information, extortion and network security, breach response coverage and cost, regulatory liability including fines and penalties and credit monitoring expenses, denial or loss of service, unauthorized access to or use of computer systems, no exclusion/restriction for unencrypted portable devices/media may be on the policy and introduction, implantation, and/or spread of malicious software code and property damage liability in an amount sufficient to cover the full replacement value of damage to, alteration of, loss of, or destruction of electronic data and/or information property of the City that will be in the care, custody, or control of Consultant must also be included. The City must be named as an indemnified party or additional insured. Should the City be named as an additional insured and the policy contains an insured vs insured exclusion, the exclusion must be amended and not be applicable to the City.

7) Contractors Pollution Liability Insurance

When any remediation work or services performed involves a potential pollution risk that may arise from the operations in connection with the project that may fall under the scope and direction of the Mortgagor, the General Contractor or any Subcontractor in connection with the Project; Contractors Pollution Liability must be maintained with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence or claim and \$2,000,000 aggregate per policy period of one year. Coverage must be provided or caused to be provided, covering bodily injury, property damage and other losses caused by pollution conditions. Coverage must include but not be limited to completed operations, contractual liability, defense, excavation, environmental cleanup, remediation, and disposal and if applicable, include transportation and non-owned disposal coverage. When policies are renewed or replaced, the policy retroactive date must coincide with or precede, start of work on the Contract. A claims-made policy which is not renewed or replaced must have an extended reporting period of two (2) years.

The City must be provided with an additional insured status with respect to liability arising out of your work, services or operations performed on behalf of the City.

The City's additional insured status must apply to liability and defense of suits arising out of your acts or omissions, whether such liability is attributable to you or to the City on an additional insured endorsement form acceptable to the City. City is to be named as an additional insured on a primary, non-contributory basis. Developer/Contractor, the General Contractor and any Subcontractor shall comply with any additional insurance requirements that are stipulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission's regulations, Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation; Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Protection of the Environment and any other federal, state or local regulations concerning the removal and transportation of Hazardous Materials.

The full policy limits and scope of protection also will apply to the City as an additional insured, even if they exceed the City's minimum limits required herein. Your liability insurance must be primary without right of contribution by any other insurance or self-insurance maintained by or available to the City.

You may use a combination of primary and excess/umbrella policy/policies to satisfy the limits of liability required herein. The excess/umbrella policy/policies must provide the same coverages/follow form as the underlying policy/policies.

8) Valuable Papers

When any plans, designs, drawings, specifications, media, data, records, reports and other

documents are produced or used under this Agreement, Valuable Papers Insurance must be maintained in an amount to insure against any loss whatsoever and must have limits sufficient to pay for the re-creation and reconstruction of such records.

9) Blanket Crime

Crime Insurance or equivalent covering all persons handling funds under this Agreement, against loss by employee dishonesty, forgery or alteration, funds transfer fraud, robbery, theft, destruction or disappearance, computer fraud, credit card forgery, and other related crime risks. The policy limit shall be written to cover losses in the amount of the maximum monies collected or received and in your possession at any given time under this Agreement.

10) Garage Liability

Where the business operations entail automobile or truck garages, Commercial Garage Liability Insurance or equivalent must be maintained with limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence for Auto Liability, Other than Auto Liability and Personal Injury and a \$2,000,000 aggregate for Other than Auto Liability for bodily injury and property damage liability. Coverage must include but not be limited to the following: All premises and operations, products/completed operations, separation of insureds, defense, and contractual liability (**not to include Endorsement CG 21 39 or equivalent**) must be included. Coverage extensions must include Garage Keepers Legal Liability for limits of a minimum of \$250,000.

The City must be provided with an additional insured status with respect to liability arising out of your work, services or operations performed on behalf of the City. The City's additional insured status must apply to liability and defense of suits arising out of your acts or omissions, whether such liability is attributable to you or to the City on an additional insured endorsement form acceptable to the City. The full policy limits and scope of protection also will apply to the City as an additional insured, even if they exceed the City's minimum limits required herein. A copy of the physical "Additional Insured" endorsement must accompany the Certificate of Insurance when submitted. Your liability insurance must be primary without right of contribution by any other insurance or self-insurance maintained by or available to the City.

You may use a combination of primary and excess/umbrella policy/policies to satisfy the limits of liability required herein. The excess/umbrella policy/policies must provide the same coverages/follow form as the underlying policy/policies.

You are responsible for all loss or damage to personal property (including materials, equipment, tools and supplies) owned, rented or used by you.

11) Property

You are responsible for all loss or damage to City property at full replacement cost as a result of the Agreement.

You are responsible for all loss or damage to personal property (including materials, equipment, tools and supplies) owned or used by you.

12) Installation Floater

When you undertake any construction, where no real property construction is taking place, but installation work including improvements, betterments, and/or repairs, you must provide an All Risk Installation Floater Insurance at replacement cost for materials, supplies, equipment, machinery and fixtures that are or will be part of the project. Coverages must include but are not limited to, the following: material stored off-site and in-transit, collapse, water including leakage, overflow, sewer

backup or seepage, debris removal, landscaping and faulty workmanship or materials. The City of Chicago is to be named as an additional insured and loss payee.

You are responsible for all loss or damage to personal property (including materials, equipment, tools and supplies) owned, rented or used by you.

13) Builders Risk

When you undertake any construction, including improvements, betterments, and/or repairs, you must provide All Risk Builders Risk Insurance at replacement cost for materials, supplies, equipment, machinery and fixtures that are or will be part of the project. Coverages must include but are not limited to, the following: material stored off-site and in-transit, collapse, water including leakage, overflow, sewer backup or seepage, debris removal, landscaping and faulty workmanship or materials. The City of Chicago is to be named as an additional insured and loss payee.

You are responsible for all loss or damage to personal property (including materials, equipment, tools and supplies) owned, rented or used by you.

14) Miscellaneous Medical Professional Liability

Miscellaneous Medical Professional Liability Insurance must be maintained or cause to be maintained, covering acts, errors, or omissions related to the supplying of or failure to supply medical services or health care services by paramedics with limits of not less than \$5,000,000. When policies are renewed or replaced, the policy retroactive date must coincide with, or precede commencement of medical services under this Contract. A claims-made policy which is not renewed or replaced must have an extended reporting period of two (2) years.

15) Railroad Protective Liability (when applicable)

When, in connection with the Project, any work is to be done within 50 feet adjacent to or on property owned by a railroad or public transit entity, you shall procure and maintain, or cause to be procured and maintained, with respect to the operations that Developer/Contractor, the General Contractor or any Subcontractor shall perform, railroad protective liability insurance in the name of such railroad or public transit entity. The policy shall have limits of not less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence, combined single limit, and \$6,000,000 in the aggregate for losses arising out of injuries to or death of all persons, and for damage to or destruction of property, including the loss of use thereof.

B. Additional Requirements

Evidence of Insurance. You must submit certificates of insurance of the required coverages **prior** to this Agreement being fully executed and follow the instructions on the website located at www.chicago.gov/myCOIregistration or to such other website and/or email address specified by the City. You must submit certificates of insurance and additional insured endorsement, or other evidence of insurance, to be in force on the date of this Agreement, and renewal certificates of Insurance and endorsement, or such similar evidence, if the coverages have an expiration or renewal date occurring during the term of this Agreement. The receipt of any certificate does not constitute agreement by the City that the insurance requirements in the Agreement have been fully met or that the insurance policies indicated on the certificate are in compliance with all requirements of Agreement. The failure of the City to obtain, nor the City's receipt of, or failure to object to a non-complying insurance certificate, endorsement or other insurance evidence from you, its insurance broker(s) and/or insurer(s) will not be construed as a waiver by the City of any of the required insurance provisions. You must advise all insurers of the Agreement provisions regarding insurance.

The City in no way warrants that the insurance required herein is sufficient to protect you for liabilities which may arise from or relate to the Agreement. The City reserves the right to obtain complete, certified copies of any required insurance policies at any time.

Failure to Maintain Insurance. Your failure to comply with required coverage and terms and conditions outlined herein will not limit your liability or responsibility nor does it relieve you of the obligation to provide insurance as specified in this Agreement. Nonfulfillment of the insurance conditions may constitute a violation of the Agreement, and the City retains the right to suspend this Agreement until proper evidence of insurance is provided, or the Agreement may be terminated.

Notice of Material Change, Cancellation or Non-Renewal. You must provide for sixty (60) days prior written notice to be given to the City in the event coverage is substantially changed, canceled or non-renewed and ten (10) days prior written notice for non-payment of premium. Copies of the physical endorsements must be provided along with the Certificate of Insurance for General Liability, Automobile Liability and Workers Compensation in order to meet the contract insurance requirements.

Deductibles and Self-Insured Retentions. Any deductibles or self-insured retentions on referenced insurance coverages must be borne by you.

Waiver of Subrogation. You hereby waive your rights and your insurer(s)' rights of and agree to require your insurers to waive your rights of subrogation against the City under all required insurance herein for any loss arising from or relating to this Agreement. You agree to obtain any endorsement that may be necessary to affect this waiver of subrogation, but this provision applies regardless of whether the City received a waiver of subrogation endorsement for your insurer(s).

Contractors Insurance Primary. All insurance required of you under this Agreement shall be endorsed to state that your insurance policy is primary and not contributory with any insurance carrier by the City.

No Limitation as to Contractor's Liabilities. The coverages and limits furnished by you in no way limit your liabilities and responsibilities specified within the Agreement or by law.

No Contribution by City. Any insurance or self-insurance programs maintained by the City do not contribute with insurance provided by you under this Agreement.

Insurance not Limited by Indemnification. The required insurance to be carried is not limited by any limitations expressed in the indemnification language in this Agreement or any limitation placed on the indemnity in this Agreement given as a matter of law.

Insurance and Limits Maintained. If you maintain higher limits and/or broader coverage than the minimums shown herein, the City requires and shall be entitled the higher limits and/or broader coverage maintained by you. Any available insurance proceeds in excess of the specified minimum limits of insurance and coverage shall be available to the City.

Joint Venture or Limited Liability Company. If you are a joint venture or limited liability company, the insurance policies must name the joint venture or limited liability company as a named insured.

Other Insurance obtained by Contractor. If you desire additional coverages, you will be responsible for the acquisition and cost.

Insurance required of Subcontractors. You shall name the Subcontractor(s) as a named insured(s) under your

insurance or you will require each Subcontractor(s) to provide and maintain Commercial General Liability, Commercial Automobile Liability, Worker's Compensation and Employers Liability Insurance and when applicable Excess/Umbrella Liability Insurance with coverage at least as broad as in outlined in Section A, Insurance Required. The limits of coverage will be determined by you. You shall determine if Subcontractor(s) must also provide any additional coverage or other coverage outlined in Section A, Insurance Required. You are responsible for ensuring that each Subcontractor has named the City as an additional insured where required and name the City as an additional insured on an endorsement form at least as broad and acceptable to the City. You are also responsible for ensuring that each Subcontractor has complied with the required coverage and terms and conditions outlined in this Section B, Additional Requirements. When requested by the City, you must provide to the City certificates of insurance and additional insured endorsements or other evidence of insurance. The City reserves the right to obtain complete, certified copies of any required insurance policies at any time. Failure of the Subcontractor(s) to comply with required coverage and terms and conditions outlined herein will not limit your liability or responsibility.

City's Right to Modify. Notwithstanding any provisions in the Agreement to the contrary, the City, Department of Finance, Risk Management Office maintains the right to modify, delete, alter or change these requirements.

Section 3

Section 3 is a provision of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, as amended by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992, with implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 135. The legislation requires that employment, training, and contracting opportunities generated by HUD financial assistance for housing and community development must, to the greatest extent feasible, be given to low- and very low-income persons, i.e., those under 80% of area median income (Section 3 residents). Section 3 applies to those projects (Section 3 projects) financed by the City in whole or in part with HUD funds and which involve housing construction, housing rehabilitation or other publicly funded construction. There are minimum dollar thresholds for determining whether a Section 3 project is subject to Section 3 requirements. In order to demonstrate compliance with Section 3, recipients, contractors and subcontractors must meet specific hiring and contracting goals. Under these goals, there are resident and business preferences that dictate the order in which Section 3 residents and businesses are to be hired.

DOLLAR THRESHOLDS

If a project receives more than \$200,000 in HUD assistance, the developer must comply with Section 3. All of a developer's HUD-funded Section 3 projects with the City will be counted in determining whether the Section 3 threshold is met; if so, Section 3 applies to the Section 3 project causing the threshold to be exceeded and not to the earlier projects. In addition, if on the same Section 3 project there are contracts and subcontracts in excess of \$100,000, Section 3 applies to the contractor and those subcontractors. If the developer also acts as general contractor, the amount of assistance need only exceed \$100,000 for Section 3 to apply to the developer. If the dollar thresholds are met, Section 3 applies to the entire Section 3 project, regardless of whether the Section 3 project is fully or partially funded with HUD assistance.

NUMERICAL GOALS

Hiring: HUD has devised numerical standards for recipients of Section 3-covered housing and community development assistance, and for their contractors and subcontractors, to demonstrate compliance. For housing assistance, contractors and subcontractors can show compliance by committing to employ Section 3 residents as 10% of the total number of new hires needed to complete a particular project. For community development assistance, contractors and subcontractors must commit to employ Section 3 residents as 30% of the total number of new hires needed to complete the project. Recipients of the assistance have the responsibility of ensuring compliance in the operations of their contractors and subcontractors. These hiring goals also apply to entities that own or manage at least 500 units located in the Chicago metropolitan area that receive housing assistance from HUD.

Contracting: Numerical goals also exist for contracting activities. Section 3 business concerns must receive a minimum percentage (10% for building trades work; 3% for non-building trades such as architecture or engineering) or the total dollar amount of all contracts awarded in connection with Section 3 projects. A "Section 3 business concern" is defined as a business:

1. That is at least 51% owned by Section 3 residents.
2. Whose permanent, full-time employees include persons, at least 30% of whom are, or were within 3 years of the date of first employment with the business, Section 3 residents: or
3. That provides evidence of a commitment to subcontract more than 25% of the dollar amount of all subcontracts to be awarded to businesses that satisfy (1) or (2) above.

Training: Section 3 does not require recipients or contractors to create training programs. However, where training opportunities exist in connection with Section 3 projects, they must be in part directed to Section 3 residents.

PREFERENCES

Hiring: Hiring opportunities must be provided where feasible in the following order of priority:

1. Section 3 residents residing in the Section 3 project's service area;
2. Participants in HUD Youth-build programs; and
3. All other Section 3 residents

For Section 3 projects receiving assistance under the Stewart McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, homeless persons residing in the Section 3 project's service area must receive the highest priority.

Contracting: Contracting opportunities must be provided where feasible in the following order of priority:

1. Section 3 business concerns that provide economic opportunities for Section 3 residents in the Section 3 project's service areas;
2. Applicants selected to carry out HUD Youth-build programs; and
3. All other Section 3 business concerns.

Sub-Recipient Financial Accountability in Federally Funded Programs

CDBG sub-recipients/ “Delegate Agencies” are an indispensable part of the CDBG program. Delegate Agencies provide the City and HUD with assurances that the diverse communities, groups, and individuals whom the CDBG program is intended to serve are in fact reached by the program. HUD and the City count on sub-recipients to make sure that needed services are delivered in a cost-effective manner. In the past, some sub-recipients have encountered administrative problems in achieving their mission. The following are key regulations defining Federal administrative requirements for nonprofit sub-recipients:

In 2013, the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued final guidance on administrative requirements, cost principles and audit requirements for federal awards (which includes research grant awards). This final guidance supersedes and streamlines requirements from OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-110 and A-122 (which have been placed in 2 CFR Parts 220, 225, 215 and 230): Circulars A-89, A-102 and A-133; and the guidance in Circular A-50 on Single

Audit Act follow-up. Copies of the OMB Circulars that are superseded by this guidance are available on OMB’s Website at https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_circulars. The final guidance consolidates the guidance previously contained in the aforementioned citations into a streamlined format that aims to improve both the clarity and accessibility. This final guidance is located in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

The following is a more detailed explanation of audits that might be required in connection with Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200, Sections 200.500 through 200.512.

If the sub-recipient is a nonprofit corporation and is expending federal funds totaling \$750,000 or more during its fiscal year, it must submit under Subpart F section 200.501 a single audit in accordance with section 200.514 or a program-specific audit in accordance with the provisions of Subpart F section 501c and 200.507.

If the sub-recipient is a nonprofit corporation and is expending federal funds under this and other agreements totaling less than \$750,000 during its fiscal year, then the sub-recipient, under Subpart F section 200.501 is exempt from federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in section 200.503 Relation to other audit requirements. However, records must be available for review or audit by appropriate officials of the Federal agency, pass-through entity, and Government Accountability Office.

The audit must cover the time period specified by Subpart F section 200.507 for program-specific audits. In addition to the audit opinion, reports, and schedules required by, section 507 the program-specific audit shall include the following financial statements: (1) Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) (if applicable) and (2) Statement of Activities (Revenue and Expenses). The City may perform, or cause to be performed, various monitoring procedures relating to the sub-recipient’s award(s) of federal funds, including, but not limited to, “limited scope audits” of specific compliance areas. The sub-recipients must submit the audit reports within 6 months after the end of the audit period. The sub-recipient will submit the audit, within this time frame, to their lead department and to Finance’s Internal Audit Division.

If a Single audit is required, the sub-recipient will also send a copy of the audit, within the time frame indicated in Subpart F section 200.512, to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse. Further, the sub-recipient must submit, with the audit, a report that comments on the findings and recommendations in the audit, including corrective action planned or taken. If no action is planned or taken, an explanation must be included. Copies of written communications on non-material compliance findings will be submitted to the sub-recipient’s lead department and Finance’s Internal Audit Division. The City also retains its right to independently audit the sub-recipient. If the sub-recipient is found in non-compliance with these audit requirements, by either the City or any federal agency, the sub-recipient may be required to refund

financial assistance received from the City or any federal agency or agencies.

The City may in its sole discretion audit the records of sub-recipients or its subcontractors, or both, at any time during the term of the grant agreement or within 5 years after the City, and, if applicable, the federal government determines that sub-recipients have met all closeout requirements for the grant agreement in connection with the goods, work, or services provided under the grant agreement. Each calendar year or partial calendar year is considered an “audited period.” If, as a result of such an audit, it is determined that the sub-recipient or any of its subcontractors has overcharged the City in the audited period, the City will notify sub-recipient. The sub-recipient must then promptly reimburse the City for any amounts the City has paid sub-recipient due to the overcharges and also some or all of the cost of the audit.

Department of Public Health (CDPH)

Crisis Intervention: Bullying Prevention Project (RFP# 53652)

PROGRAM CONTACT:

Marlita White, Director of Administrative Services Bureau of Behavioral Health
312-747-9396
marlita.white@cityofchicago.org

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

A. Organizational background

The Chicago Department of Public Health's (CDPH) portfolio of violence prevention (VP) programs aim to reduce the likelihood of violence related injury and death and support trauma recovery and healing across Chicago communities. CDPH VP programs focus on:

Teaching: Teaching through violence prevention community education workshops and professional development training.

Strengthening Systems: Strengthening systems through working with national, state, city and community groups to apply violence prevention lens to the work they do.

Reaching community partners: Ensuring we reach community partners as the office believes that everyone has a role to play in violence prevention.

With these focus points CDPH collaborates with community partners and delegate agencies to provide services to victims that align with the broader CDPFH Healthy Chicago 2025 (HC 2025) policy agenda which is Chicago's five-year community health improvement plan to address racial and health fairness with the goal of reducing the Black-white life expectancy gap. HC 2025's vision is city where all people and all communities have power, are free from oppression, and are strengthened by fair access to resources, environments and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being.

CDPH Violence Prevention programs also aligns with the CDPH guiding principles:

- Deconstructing racist systems – actively working to reframe and dismantle systems that perpetuate privilege.
- Trauma prevention and trauma-informed services – ensuring services address trauma and healing.
- Cultural responsiveness – ensuring services are culturally and linguistically appropriate; and
- Health fairness in all communities – allocating resources and services to people and areas with the greatest need.

B. Program overview

This CDPH VP Request for Proposal (RFP) opportunity seeks to fund a delegate to implement the Bullying Prevention Project (BP) which aligns with several strategies calling for improved interventions, enhances access to support, and improved community, public and provider awareness of interventions that make a difference.

This program hosts the Chicago Collaborative of Bullying and Suicide Prevention (CCBSP), which is a group of professional, government, community and subject matter expert stakeholders who are routinely convened

to guide the prevention and promotion activities of the initiative.

C. Program goals

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines bullying as any “unwanted aggressive behaviors(s) by another person (youth, groups of youth, non-sibling, and non-dating partner) involving an actual or perceived power imbalance. These behaviors are repeated or thought to have the likelihood of being repeated. Bullying may occur in person or via the use of electronic media or devices.” CDC reports that “youth who report frequently bullying others and youth who report being frequently bullied are at increased risk for suicide-related behavior. Youth who report both bullying others and youth who report being bullied (bully-victims) have the highest risk for suicide-related behavior of any groups that report involvement in bullying”. National statistics rank suicide (i.e., death caused by injuring oneself) as the 10th cause of death in the United States at 14.5 deaths per 100,000. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for adolescents, 10-19, in Illinois. IDPH also reports that youth who experience bullying, feel depressed, and experience dating violence (all three) are six times as likely to attempt death by suicide. The CDC and other violence prevention data indicate a relationship between these two serious public health problems with the goal of leveraging prevention efforts to reduce shared risk factors and increase protective factors.

The BP program is primarily focused on the following goals:

- To identify and promote best practices and coordinate existing programs to increase bullying prevention and response.
- To increase proven interventions and capacity building supports to benefit vulnerable residents and communities.

D. Program activities

The delegate agency program activities include, but are not limited to:

1. To identify, convene and engage relevant Chicago-serving providers and stakeholders to ensure that the CCBSPP is a rallying point for planning, service coordination, capacity building, training and collaborations that reduce bullying and suicide risk factors.
2. To ensure involvement of youth, family and other underrepresented community voices engagement in Bullying prevention and response initiatives.
3. To maximize the use and sharing of data and research to support responsiveness to Bullying in Chicago.
4. To identify, adapt, and maximize the use of evidence informed materials and curricula for use in Chicago communities and with specific at-risk populations.
5. To expose residents (i.e., youth, family, and other vulnerable groups) and providers to relevant prevention and response strategies and intervention to reduce levels of bullying threats and occurrences.
6. To support access to mental health services and supports for those impacted by bullying incidents.

E. Performance metrics

Performance metrics for this program include, but not limited to:

1. Work with CDPH to develop and routinely convene the CCBSPP with at least 5 (or more) stakeholders and at least one person representing the community perspective from the communities with the greatest need (they have been recommended). Note: CDPH reserves the right to work with the successful applicant to ensure that the program reaches the broadest array of communities disparately impacted by the burden of bullying and suicide.

2. Adapt and/or develop evidence-informed curricula that focus on bullying prevention and interventions and the links to the prevention of other risk areas. The curricula should address risks across age groups and vulnerable groups
3. Using available data and knowledge of the risk populations, the applicant will develop an annual calendar of training, detailing the registration process, and recruitment plan for staff and community (partners and residents) to ensure engagement in communities and populations with greatest needs. The community stakeholders may assist in further refining the curriculum over the course of the contract, as needed). Note: the program should ensure that access to trainings that are also available to a citywide audience.
4. End-user training: Train (at a minimum): 250 youth, 250 adults including bullying prevention providers on evidence-based intervention strategies.
5. Speakers' Bureau: Identify a set of partners to train and coach (at a minimum): 10 youth, 10 adults, and 2 CCBSP stakeholders and go on to deliver the curricula developed by the program to a new group of residents and leaders (youth and adults) to expand bullying prevention (document the reach and impact of the second generation of training activities). Second generation trainings should collect the same demographics, zipcode/community and participant feedback information.
6. Outreach: Support public awareness events to reach 200 persons, total (beyond the training audience).
7. Demonstrate participation in a collective impact effort where data is shared and co-reported at the community level and leveraged by city partners (DPH).
8. Document the promotion of local citywide bullying and suicide prevention services as identified by the awardee and partners.

Outputs

The desired outputs for this program include, but not limited to:

1. Training
 - a. participant satisfaction
 - i. Anticipated Target: 85% satisfaction
 - b. Participant reporting prospective behavioral change, post training
 - i. Anticipated Target: 70%.
 - c. Participant who experiences knowledge gain, post training
 - i. Anticipated Target: 70%
2. Additional possible outputs:
 - a. Percent of individuals trained and coached who (as second-generation trainers) report using the designated training materials to broaden the reach of the program (new trainers ensure your ability to document demographics – race, gender, age group, income level, where possible).
 - i. Target: TBD
 - b. Percent of trainees who report improving Bullying and/or Suicide Prevention “services” (ensure ability to document demographics – race, gender identity, age group, income level, of persons impacted by improved services, where possible).
 - i. Target: TBD

Outcomes

The intended outcomes for this program include:

1. Improve social relationships among persons.
2. Improve social networks and collaborations connected to bullying and suicide prevention and response.
3. Decrease social norms that promote or encourage bullying, violence and unhealthy behaviors.
4. Increase sense of collective efficacy and willingness to assist others.
5. Increase knowledge of risk and protective factors for youth, adults, and stakeholders.

F. Program requirements

Budget and Justification

The wages of the staff who are employed by the respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the respondent must meet the City's minimum wage requirements found here [City of Chicago :: Minimum Wage](#). City of Chicago Department of Public Health strongly encourages Respondents to pay all employees a fair living wage. More information about calculating living wages can be found using the following link [Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Cook County, Illinois \(mit.edu\)](#) .

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the agency/agencies. The respondent must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, lived experience (if applicable), and their expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g. salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement). The program budget cannot exceed the available funding amount indicated in Section III. Available Funding above.

G. Contract management and data reporting requirements

The Respondent must provide monthly and quarterly reports as required and data sharing as agreed upon, including but not limited to the following metrics:

- Number of Bullying Prevention focused trainings and program presentations offered to youth, parents, community members, faith leaders, providers, and others (ensure ability to document demographics – race, gender, age group, income level as well as zip code/community area). In-person and online training should include participant details to ensure appropriate reach into vulnerable communities, citywide.
- Number of persons participating on the Bullying collaborative and the titles and sessions provided.
- Number of persons reached in prevention public awareness activities – clustered by age (youth vs. adults) and other key indicators (mentioned above).
- Number of capacity building trainings to stakeholders/community organizations held (administrative and/or governance).
- Number of CCBSP collaborative members (sectors represented).
- Number of collaborative/network meetings with community stakeholders and/or partners sharing their program data.
- Establish the CDPH webpage for the program and track the number of social media and web engagement/impressions.
- Number of referral partners identified.
- Number of persons referred to partners for clinical (or other) supports

H. Application guidance for respondents

Successful candidates must provide:

- A description of the population(s) to be served as informed by their understanding of national and Chicago facing data on bullying risk and vulnerable populations. demonstration of the communities to be prioritized.
- A detailed plan to conduct outreach and identify subject matter experts as CCBSB stakeholders and how each of the proposed communities will be strengthened by the program.
- Evidence of at least two years of successful experience convening strategic partners and two years for success providing bullying prevention education and intervention.
- Sufficient staffing to manage the program (roles must be defined); job descriptions and appropriate resumes of currently hired staff.
- Description of the plan to adequately train program staff in titles including Trauma Informed Care, CDC coursework on Bullying/Suicide Prevention or other evidence-based content, Motivational Interviewing and related coursework to prepare the program staff to be successful. Description of participation in an established collaborative or network (currently addressing bullying prevention with organizational partners who serve multiple high-risk communities to ensure competency, training, and effective training recruitment in multiple locations).
- Program design that reaches the intended audience and addresses the intended goals; work plan must be attached.
- Describe the ability to train, coach, and support community members and stakeholders in Bullying prevention to reduce risk factors, increase protective factors and promote resiliency.
- Provide four (4) letters of support that document past experience in either delivering training on Bullying prevention. The letter should reflect agency letterhead of the organization supplying the letter.
 - Two letters should come from Chicago based organizations who can discuss their experience receiving training and the type of audience(s) in attendance.
 - One letter of support should come from a Chicago-based partner agency detailing the applicant's experience and expertise in convening partnerships and achieving mutual goals.
 - One letter of support should come from a Chicago-based partner agency detailing the applicant's experience delivering BP services with victims, and/or other vulnerable groups.
- Detail a plan to promote bullying prevention in social media and at local community events including summer planning efforts by CDPH.
- Detail a commitment to establish, once funded, at least five (5) Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with agencies to participate on the CCBSB (if awarded).
- Demonstrate willingness to collaborate with Healthy Chicago planning and other CDPH and City funded initiatives and describe how your agency and/or programming aligns with the Healthy Chicago 2025 guiding principles. CDPH delegates and their sub-contractors are expected to integrate these principles into organizational policy and practice.
- Detail a plan to conduct ongoing data analysis and evaluation to ensure that the program is operating as designed via continuous quality improvement.
- Detail plans to sustain the program beyond the award period.
- Describe and attach accurate and sufficiently detailed budget that denotes how expenses will be tracked and monitored for auditing and compliance (Administrative cost will not exceed 10% of total budget).
- Ability to ensure on time monthly reporting, vouchering and scheduled budget utilization.
- Ability to ensure Monthly and Quarterly reports as required and data sharing as agreed upon and the submission of a Year End Report (to be further defined by CDPH).
- Existing capacity to track, monitor, and report on program metrics, staff time and program materials and other purchases.

I. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

Up to \$100,000 will be available through this RFP with the term of contract(s) from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026. Based on need, availability of funds and performance, CDPH may extend this term for up to three additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by CDPH through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of CDPH and the CDBG must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, CDPH reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

J. Anticipated awards for this program

One successful applicant will be awarded for this program.

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

- Respondents eligible for this funding opportunity must meet the following criteria:
- Be a not-for-profit agency with a 501(c) 3 status
- Have an office located in the City of Chicago from which the agency offers services.
- Be in good standing with the City of Chicago
- Have the administrative, organizational, programmatic, information technology and fiscal capability to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate the proposed project. Agencies with a limited capacity to administer the fiscal responsibilities associated with their programs may choose to subcontract with a fiscal and reporting agency to provide administrative services.

B. Evaluation process

An Evaluation Committee made up of representatives from the Chicago Department of Public Health, other City, County or State Departments, and/or other community members may review and evaluate the proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria. The Evaluation Committee will review the Respondent’s Proposal to determine overall responsiveness and completeness of the Proposal with respect to the components outlined as follows recommend either:

1. Phase I: Technical and Eligibility Review

CDPH will assess a Respondent’s compliance with and adherence to the stated submission requirements in the RFP. Respondents that do not meet these eligibility requirements will **NOT** have their applications evaluated; incomplete applications will **NOT** be evaluated for this funding opportunity.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience providing culturally competent services to clients in its service area, understanding of the needs and barriers to service of those specific 	30

<p>communities, and ability to provide services to non-English speaking clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the diverse people of the communities it serves 	
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates the soundness of the program plan for service delivery, including use of established best practice and its ability to augment and expand current services. • Respondent must demonstrate the ability to train, coach and support community members and stakeholders in Bullying prevention to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors. • Demonstrate a commitment to being a trauma informed organization. • Provided all necessary supplemental documents (letters of support, MOAs, ect.) 	30
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to track and report performance on program outcomes • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key participant and performance data 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Respondent prepares staff with ongoing trainings on serving the target population in an inclusive way • The Respondent’s organization reflects and engages the diverse people of the communities it serves 	15
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan 	10

Violence Prevention Initiative: Restorative Practices (VPI-RP) (RFP# 53656)

PROGRAM CONTACT:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

A. Organizational background

The Chicago Department of Public Health's (CDPH) portfolio of violence prevention (VP) programs aim to reduce the likelihood of violence related injury and death and support trauma recovery and healing across Chicago communities. CDPH VP programs focus on:

Teaching: Teaching through violence prevention community education workshops and professional development training.

Strengthening Systems: Strengthening systems through working with national, state, city and community groups to apply violence prevention lens to the work they do.

Reaching community partners: Ensuring we reach community partners as the office believes that everyone has a role to play in violence prevention.

With these focus points CDPH collaborates with community partners and delegate agencies to provide services to victims that align with the broader CDPH Healthy Chicago 2025 (HC 2025) policy agenda which is Chicago's five-year community health improvement plan to address racial and health equity with the goal of reducing the Black-white life expectancy gap. HC 2025's vision is city where all people and all communities have power, are free from oppression, and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being.

CDPH Violence Prevention programs also aligns with the CDPH guiding principles:

- Trauma prevention and trauma-informed services – ensuring services address trauma and healing.
- Cultural responsiveness – ensuring services are culturally and linguistically appropriate; and
- Health equity in all communities – allocating resources and services to people and areas with the greatest need.

B. Program overview

This CDPH VP Request for Proposal (RFP) opportunity seeks to fund Restorative Practices (RP) efforts that promote and make accessible prosocial restorative resolutions where positive relationships are prioritized over a winning and losing approach to conflict. Through this (RP) Community program, DPH is committed to expanding RP opportunities into clusters of community areas across the city;

WEST: serving in the East Garfield Park/West Garfield/Austin/North and South Lawndale communities or SOUTH: serving East and West Englewood/Roseland/Auburn-Gresham/Chatham communities.

By directly funding RP work in the selected communities, DPH looks to build partnerships with other DPH, other city funded efforts, and community based funded efforts to both to improve continuity of care for participants and residents; while increasing provider awareness and ability to offer restorative practice interventions. Applicants may ONLY apply to serve one cluster of community areas; WEST or SOUTH.

C. Program goals

National research indicates that 60% of American youth are exposed to violence before the age of eighteen.¹ Exposure to violent events (such as domestic violence or child abuse) are among the ten Adverse Childhood Experiences (occurring before age 18) that are potentially traumatizing and likely to have negative impacts on increase the likelihood of future psychological, social, academic, interpersonal, and even long-term physical health challenges.² Beyond the effects on individual development, unresolved trauma and exposure to violence can also have a corrosive effect on family and communal life-threatening skills and expectations for communication, trust, and positive regard. This is only one of many pathways that lead to a concentration of violence, injury and threat in communities across Chicago. Grounded in the principles of Restorative Justice, Restorative Practice (RP) build skills and develop opportunities for meaningful dialogue, effective communication, crisis de-escalation, and earnest efforts to repair offense and restore integrity between persons. RP interventions interrupt the escalation of conflicts that can lead to violent, and potentially lethal, confrontations in schools, on public transit, in homes and among strangers.

Many communities are working to prevent violence and promote community safety and find that comprehensive, multi-sector actions are yielding progress. However, communities that experience high rates of violence continue to be plagued with persistently high rates of trauma. Trauma and its associated symptoms of mental and psychological illness are more prevalent in the U.S. than in most other countries around the world. Moreover, trauma unaddressed can be a barrier to the most successful implementation of healing and well-being strategies, including those to prevent violence. The impact of trauma extends beyond the individuals who directly witness or experience violence. Trauma is produced by structural violence, which prevents people and communities from meeting their basic needs. The result is both high levels of trauma across the population and a breakdown of social networks, social relationships, and positive social norms across the community—all of which could otherwise be protective against violence and other health outcomes.

Consistent with new models that are emerging to counter the effects of trauma, promote community healing, and foster community resilience, RP is an evolving framework that supports understanding, addressing, and preventing trauma at a community or population level and is a philosophy that integrates developments from a variety of disciplines and fields — including education, psychology, social work, criminology, sociology, organizational development and leadership — in order to build healthy communities, increase social capital, decrease crime and antisocial behavior, repair harm and restore relationships.

RP has its roots in restorative justice, a way of looking at criminal justice that emphasizes repairing the harm done to people and relationships rather than only punishing offenders. RP also includes the use of informal and formal processes that precede wrongdoing to proactively build and protect relationships and foster a sense of community to prevent conflict and wrongdoing. It offers communities opportunities to resolve conflicts and disputes before they escalate into criminal and abusive behavior and is an effective approach in dealing with antisocial behavior and neighbor disputes. It also enables one to understand the impact of their behavior on others. At its core, RP delivers effective outcomes that are owned by the local community and creates stable, positive community environments.

The RP framework includes a set of emerging strategies that hold great promise for promoting community healing and setting the stage for the development of safer, healthier, more resilient communities. Community healing strategies through RP include:

- Restorative justice programs that shift the norms around conflict resolution.
- Restorative policing where officers are trained to engage community through RP.

¹ Source: National Institutes of Health:

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8635280/#:~:text=According%20to%20national%20data%2C%20youth,feature%20of%20community%20violence%20exposure.>

² *ibid*

- Healing circles that both promote healing from individual trauma and strengthen intergenerational relationships.
- Collaborations that promote community-level strategies while rebuilding community social networks.
- Efforts to change the narrative about a community to reflect its assets and strengths.

The available research conducted both within the United States and internationally has found restorative justice is effective at reducing recidivism rates while improving victim satisfaction compared with traditional, adversarial court processes. For instance, a systematic review of programs in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom found restorative models decrease the risk of reoffending, especially for violent crimes. The researchers found restorative processes also benefit victims in multiple ways, including reducing post-traumatic stress symptoms, increasing satisfaction with the resolution of their case, and lessening the desire for violent revenge (Adler, 2011).

D. Program activities

Allowable Restorative Practice activities for funding include, but are not limited to:

- RP training and capacity building.
- Restorative practice capacity building focused training for youth and adult residents and community stakeholders and agreements to expand the volume of practitioners.
- Direct provision of RP:
- Victim/offender mediation training
- Peace/Healing circle facilitation
- Family group conferencing
- Citizen panels
- Peer Juries; and
- Other experiential demonstrations of ways that restorative practices by individuals and communities can bolster resilience factors.

E. Performance metrics

Performance metrics for this initiative include, but not limited to:

9. Provide a minimum of 8 trainings to external partners and residents.
10. Train end users: 200 youth, 200 adults, and 10 stakeholders in RP practices.
11. Provide RP services to (at a minimum): 100 youth, 150 adults, and 10 stakeholders in RP practices.
12. Develop and routinely convene a 5 or more stakeholders (from each community area).
13. Demonstrate participation in a collective impact effort where data is shared and co-reported at the community level.
14. Deliver the range of RP services (detailed above).

Outputs

The desired outputs for this program include, but not limited to:

- 1) Reduction in youth violence
 - a) Anticipated Target: 10% reduction.
- 2) Reduction in community violence
 - a) Anticipated Target: 10% reduction.
- 3) Victim satisfaction rate
 - a) Anticipated Target: 75% satisfaction.
- 4) Offender satisfaction rate

- a) Anticipated Target: 75% satisfaction.
- 5) Restitution compliance
 - a) Anticipated Target: 75% compliance.
- 6) Recidivism reduction:
 - a) Anticipated Targeting: 25% recidivism reduction.

Outcomes

The intended outcomes for this program include:

- 1) Improved social relationships, particularly intergenerational relations.
- 2) Improved social networks and sustained collaborations.
- 3) Decreased social norms that promote or encourage violence and unhealthy behaviors.
- 4) Increase in the promotion community-oriented positive social norms.
- 5) Increase sense of collective.

F. Program requirements

Budget and Justification

The wages of the staff who are employed by the respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the respondent must meet the City’s minimum wage requirements found here [City of Chicago :: Minimum Wage](#). City of Chicago Department of Public Health strongly encourages Respondents to pay all employees a fair living wage. More information about calculating living wages can be found using the following link [Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Cook County, Illinois \(mit.edu\)](#) .

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the agency/agencies. The respondent must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, lived experience (if applicable), and their expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g. salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement). The program budget cannot exceed the available funding amount indicated in Section III. Available Funding above.

G. Contract management and data reporting requirements

The Respondent must provide monthly and quarterly reports as required and data sharing as agreed upon; including but not limited to the following metrics:

- Number of restorative practice trainings, workshops, and coaching sessions to community members (ensure ability to document demographics – race, gender, age group, income level).
- Number of individuals trained and coached who go on to deliver RP “services” (ensure ability to document demographics – race, gender, age group, income level, where possible).
- Number of people who, once trained, go on to deliver RP “services” (ensure ability to document demographics – race, gender, age group, income level, where possible).
- Number of persons participating in RP activities such as peace circles, peer juries, peer mediation by race, ethnicity, and income level – clustered by age (youth vs. adults).
- Number of peer juries held.
- Number of peer mediation sessions held.
- Number of capacity building trainings to stakeholders/community organizations held.
- Number of collaborative/network meetings with community stakeholders and/or partners (and related outcomes).
- Number of social media promotion events and impressions across the contract term.

- Number of on time vouchering, reporting and budget utilization.

H. Application guidance for respondents

Successful candidates must provide:

- Well detailed description of the population to be served.
- Demonstrated need for the program in each of the communities to be served and currently providing related services in proposed communities.
- The applicant proposes to expand RP opportunities into one of the two (2) community clusters across the city:
 - WEST: serving in the East Garfield Park/West Garfield/North and South Lawndale/Austin communities or
 - SOUTH: serving Roseland/Auburn-Gresham/Chatham, Englewood and West Englewood communities
- Applicant is currently providing RP services in at least one of the communities within the cluster to be served.
- Description of the plan to adequately train and maintain program staff; job descriptions and appropriate resumes of currently hired staff.
- Applicant must be able to train, coach and support community members and stakeholders in RP practices. Demonstrate 2 or more years of existing knowledge and credentials as RP practitioners, circle keepers, and RP trainers.
- Provide four (4) letters of support required that specify training experience in RP practices.
 - Two letters should come from Chicago based organizations located in that describe the applicant's experience in providing RP trainings (since 2021) within the cluster of communities to be served
 - Two letters should come from Chicago based organizations located in and knowledgeable about the applicant's recent experience (since 2021) delivering RP services within the cluster of communities to be served.
- Description of participation in an established collaborative or network (currently addressing community and/or youth violence with at least four (4) organizational partners who are serving multiple high-risk communities to ensure RP training and service recruitment in multiple locations); one MOA agreement should demonstrate collaboration and coordination with existing RP providers.
- Plan to promote RP in social media and local events.
- Commitment to develop, during the service term, no less than 4 Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) with partner agencies that demonstrate the applicant's experience and expertise.
- Detailed quality assurance/evaluation plan.
- Detailed sustainability plan and grants seeking goals to ensure viability beyond the award period.
- Detailed and accurate budget that denotes distribution of funds across the partnership and how expenses will be tracked and monitored for auditing and compliance (Administrative cost will not exceed 10% of total budget).
- Ability to ensure on time monthly reporting, vouchering and scheduled budget utilization.
- Monthly and Quarterly reports as required and data sharing as agreed upon.
- Existing capacity to track, monitor, and report on program metrics.

I. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

Up to \$400,000 will be available through this RFP for a one-year contract from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026. Based on need, availability of funds and performance, CDPH may extend this term for up to three additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by CDPH through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of CDPH and the CDBG must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, CDPH reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

J. Anticipated awards for this program

Up to two successful applicants will be awarded for this program.

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

Eligible respondents must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with a 501(c) 3 status
- Have an office located in the City of Chicago from which the agency offers services.
- Be in good standing with the City of Chicago
- Have the administrative, organizational, programmatic, information technology and fiscal capability to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate the proposed project. Agencies with a limited capacity to administer the fiscal responsibilities associated with their programs may choose to subcontract with a fiscal and reporting agency to provide administrative services.

B. Evaluation process

An Evaluation Committee made up of representatives from the Chicago Department of Public Health, other City, County or State Departments, and/or other community members may review and evaluate the proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria. The Evaluation Committee will review the Respondent’s Proposal to determine overall responsiveness and completeness of the Proposal with respect to the components outlined as follows recommend either:

1. Phase I: Technical and Eligibility Review

CDPH will assess a Respondent’s compliance with and adherence to the stated submission requirements in the RFP. Respondents that do not meet these eligibility requirements will **NOT** have their applications evaluated; incomplete applications will **NOT** be evaluated for this funding opportunity.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience providing culturally competent services to clients in its service area, understanding of the needs and barriers to service of those specific communities, and ability to provide services to non-English speaking clients. 	30

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates the soundness of the program plan for service delivery, including use of established best practice and its ability to augment and expand current services. • Respondent must demonstrate the ability to support and organize Restorative Practices in specified community area(s). • Demonstrate a commitment to being a trauma informed organization. • Provided all necessary supplemental documents (letters of support, MOAs, ect.) 	30
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to track and report performance on program outcomes • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key participant and performance data 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Respondent prepares staff with ongoing trainings on serving the target population in a culturally competent way • The Respondent’s organization reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	15
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan 	10

Mental Health Services: Childhood Sexual Assault Prevention and Mental Health Services initiative (RFP# 53657)

PROGRAM CONTACT:

Marlita White, Director of Administrative Services Bureau of Behavioral Health

312-747-9396

marlita.white@cityofchicago.org

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

A. Organizational background

The Chicago Department of Public Health's (CDPH) portfolio of violence prevention (VP) programs aim to reduce the likelihood of violence related injury and death and support trauma recovery and healing across Chicago communities. CDPH VP programs focus on:

Teaching: Teaching through violence prevention community education workshops and professional development training.

Strengthening Systems: Strengthening systems through working with national, state, city and community groups to apply violence prevention lens to the work they do.

Reaching community partners: Ensuring we reach community partners as the office believes that everyone has a role to play in violence prevention.

With these focus points CDPH collaborates with community partners and delegate agencies to provide services to victims that align with the broader CDPH Healthy Chicago 2025 (HC 2025) policy agenda which is Chicago's five-year community health improvement plan to address racial and health equity with the goal of reducing the Black-white life expectancy gap. HC 2025's vision is city where all people and all communities have power, are free from oppression, and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being.

CDPH Violence Prevention programs also aligns with the CDPH guiding principles:

- Deconstructing racist systems – actively working to reframe and dismantle systems that perpetuate privilege.
- Trauma prevention and trauma-informed services – ensuring services address trauma and healing.
- Cultural responsiveness – ensuring services are culturally and linguistically appropriate; and
- Health equity in all communities – allocating resources and services to people and areas with the greatest need.

B. Program Overview

This CDPH VP Request for Proposal (RFP) opportunity seeks to partner with a delegate agency to promote efforts to reduce sexual assault and strategize in the expanding of community and professional development on child abuse and neglect and child sexual assault prevention through the Childhood Sexual Assault (CSA) Prevention and Mental Health Services initiative.

This initiative will identify one mental health agency to serve children and adolescents that are victims of sexual assault and their families. The mental health services should include brief interventions (6 months or less) across individuals, family, and group therapeutic modalities; case management; and other supportive

services that promote engagement in care. Mental health therapies proposed as part of this program should be currently practiced with demonstrated success within the respondent agency and include best practices and empirically validated practices whenever possible.

C. Program Goals

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), “national statistics reveal that child sexual abuse is a significant but preventable public health problem. Although estimates vary across studies, the data shows about 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys experience child sexual abuse at some point in childhood.³ The total lifetime economic burden of child sexual abuse in the United States was estimated to be at least \$9.3 billion”.⁴ Furthermore, in 2015, 64% of child sexual abuse cases in the state of Illinois involved children between the ages of 10-17 years old.⁵ The provision of specialized mental health services that use evidence-based intervention has proven to help families recover more successfully when children are victims of sexual assault. The need for these services in Chicago outweighs what is currently provided across the City. This means many victims of sexual assault must wait far too long to receive any services, increasing the likelihood that they do not end up engaging in care. In addition, many children and families face barriers such as language, proximity to services, inability to pay, stigma and others in accessing these vital services. To ensure maximum access to treatment, OVP resources will support youth and families deemed to be in the highest need for clinical intervention while also experiencing significant challenges to accessing and maintaining involvement in trauma informed, evidence based clinical care.

Given the tendency for victims to often experience delays in CSA⁶ being reported and services being sought, this program will also include capacity building activities to encourage prevention and early reporting, when needed. The respondent will demonstrate having a proven track record of offering training in this subject area and be able to deliver child sexual assault prevention capacity building activities (including but not limited to training) in communities and with populations that are at highest risk for CSA. Respondents will introduce a training partnership (must be documented via a memorandum of understanding in this application). Whether directly or via contract, training will reach providers, from systems that often miss indicators of CSA, and people across multiple communities - in small groups (versus single large conference settings). Respondent organizations will describe the evidence that supports the use of the preferred curricula, their approach to ensure cultural and linguistic receptivity, and their plan to build in program sustainability and community commitment to expand the use of their training materials. The program will utilize social media to promote prevention messages and advertise training opportunities.

The goals of the CSA Prevention and Mental Health Services Initiative are to:

- Expand clinical services for child and adolescent victims of sexual assault for youth across the City.
- Reduce service delays for non-English speaking families
- Expand CSA prevention education in high need communities.

D. Program Activities

The delegate agency program activities include, but are not limited to:

1. **Clinical Support:** Provide the following clinical support:

³ Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/child-abuse-neglect/about/about-child-sexual-abuse.html>

⁴ ibid

⁵ Source: Illinois criminal Justice Information Authority: <https://icja.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/child-and-youth-exposure-to-violence-in-illinois>

⁶ Noémie Allard-Gaudreau, Sebastien Poirier, Mireille Cyr, Factors associated with delayed disclosure of child sexual abuse: A focus on the victim's having been led to perform sexual acts on the perpetrator, Child Abuse & Neglect, Volume 147, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106537>.

- a. Evidence/best practices and, whenever possible, empirically supported mental health/clinical therapies for children and adolescents of CSA. Program staffing should reflect Spanish language competent therapist (2 of 3 therapists).
 - b. Tandem services to family members and siblings of child victims of sexual abuse (ensure demographics, zip codes, and other characteristics are able to be documented).
 - c. Ongoing relevant case management services (detail referrals and secure connections).
 - d. Access to health services for other forms of trauma for victims of sexual assault, such as children or adolescents who have experienced multiple traumas and those who are experiencing complex psychological conditions.
 - e. Culturally competent (Spanish-speaking) and trauma informed services to clients in its service area, understanding of the needs of those specific communities, and familiarity with any barriers faced by the communities when seeking services for child victims of sexual assault.
 - f. Expanded service coverage hours that align with the expected demand for services (including evening, holiday, and weekends).
2. **Training:** Create and implement training focusing on expanding effective, action-oriented CSA prevention training and capacity building in communities and populations with the highest needs. The training component should include:
- a. Number of sessions within the training program and an overview of each session
 - b. Expected learning outcomes for each session
 - c. Evidence-based curriculum creation review
3. **Processes:** The delegate agency should be able to successfully demonstrate and/or show the following:
- a. Detailed quality assurance/evaluation plan.
 - b. Detailed sustainability plans showing grants seeking goals to ensure viability beyond the award period.
 - c. Detailed and accurate budget that denotes distribution of funds across the partnership and how expenses will be tracked and monitored for auditing and compliance (Administrative costs will not exceed 10% of the total budget).
 - d. Monthly and Quarterly reports as required and data sharing as agreed upon; existing capacity to track, monitor and report on program metrics.
 - e. Detailed on-going commitment of being a trauma-informed organization and steps to train new staff to become a trauma informed provider.
 - f. Ability to provide services and trainings in a timely manner

E. Performance Metrics

Performance metrics for this initiative include, but not limited to:

1. Deliver CSA services: Serve (no less than) 100 unique child/adolescent victims and 90 of their caregivers in individual and family therapy; additional group and case management services are also reported.
2. Provide a minimum of eight (8) trainings to external partners and residents over the course of the contract.
3. Train (at a minimum) of 150 participants (youth and adults) and 10 stakeholders in child sexual assault risk factors and prevention/intervention.

4. Develop and routinely convene five (5) or more stakeholders for collaborative meetings (and related outcomes).
5. Establish 5 memorandums of agreement from referral partners.
6. Maintain appropriated licensed/supervised clinical team; ensure some clinical staff are fluent in Spanish; ensure staff receive training on administrative and trauma informed clinical practice.

Outputs

The desired outputs for this initiative include, but not limited to:

1. Treatment
 - a. Participant satisfaction
 - i. Anticipated Target: 60%.
 - b. Participant – reduction in clinical symptoms
 - i. Anticipated Target: 30%.
 - c. Parent knowledge gain, parenting knowledge
 - i. Anticipated Target: 50%.
2. Training
 - a. Participant prospective behavioral change, post training
 - i. Anticipated Target: 60%.
 - b. Participant knowledge gain, post training
 - i. Anticipated Targeting: 70%.
3. Process
 - a. Reduction in wait-time until the next available appointment for a new client when compared to the previous year.
 - i. Anticipated target: A minimum of 20%

Outcomes

The intended outcomes for this initiative include:

1. Improve familial relationships in households that have been impacted by CSA.
2. Improve social networks and sustain collaborations across providers working to address this issue.
3. Decrease social norms that reinforce CSA risk factors and encourage unhealthy behaviors; increase protective factors.
4. Promote community-oriented positive social norms.
5. Increase sense of collective and social efficacy for survivor families, training participants and providers.

F. Program requirements

Budget and Justification

The wages of the staff who are employed by the respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the respondent must meet the City’s minimum wage requirements found here [City of Chicago :: Minimum Wage](#). City of Chicago Department of Public Health strongly encourages Respondents to pay all employees a fair living wage. More information about calculating living wages can be found using the following link [Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Cook County, Illinois \(mit.edu\)](#).

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the

agency/agencies. The respondent must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, lived experience (if applicable), and their expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g. salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement). The program budget cannot exceed the available funding amount indicated in Section III. Available Funding above.

G. Contract management and data reporting requirements

The Respondent must provide monthly and quarterly reports as required and data sharing as agreed upon; including but not limited to the following metrics:

- Number of referrals received for specialized mental health treatment and ongoing services.
- Length of time from referral to engagement in services (ex. waitlist and other time).
- Number of referrals made to other necessary mental health, social services, or other treatment or other treatment provided.
- Number of persons served (unduplicated) to children/adolescents - up to age 17 (categorized by age, primary language, race, ethnicity, income, insurance status level, and service type) and their families.
- Document treatment modalities should include individual and family, and group therapies where appropriate.
- Number of unduplicated family members and/or siblings of child/adolescent clients served; categorized by age, primary language, race, ethnicity, income, insurance status, and service type.
- Total number of service units and hours provided to children/adolescents.
- Total number of services units and hours provided to family members.
- Number of clients/families reporting reductions in clinical symptoms.
- Number of clients/families discharged from services and reason for discharge (demonstrate attempts to reengage clients who leave before meeting treatment goals).
- Number of children/adolescents (and families) currently on a waitlist for mental health services; include a count of persons waiting due to needing a Spanish language therapist.
- Number of on time vouchering, reporting and percentage of budget utilization.
- Number of trainings held and participant count per event (with key demographics for participants).
- Ensure event locations reach multiple high need communities (track by zip code, community area and ward).
- Process to analyze participant and trainee survey measurements and how it will be applied for program improvement(s) and related outcomes.
- Number of collaborative/network meetings with community stakeholders /community organizations (and related outcomes).
- Number of social media promotion and impressions for CSA prevention across the contract term.

H. Application guidance for respondents

Respondents of the RFP should provide insight on activities that include, but not limited to:

- Be able to serve (and ensure access to services for) children that are most affected by this concern (citywide reach).
- Current or future plans to plan to bill private or public insurance (or demonstrate efforts to build the capacity to do so) for services provided to children, adolescents, or family members.
- Ability to address the needs of bilingual or other language families.
- Demonstrate the use of relevant evidence-based and/or trauma informed intervention approaches.
- Demonstrate a history of success, no less than 3 years of training experience, and the capacity to provide CSA prevention training and capacity building in communities with the highest need.

- Demonstrate the use of evidence-based training and capacity building materials to support CSA prevention and early response.
- Demonstrate a commitment to being a trauma informed organization.
- Well detailed description of the population to be serviced.
- Demonstrate the need for the program in each of the communities to be served.
- Description of the plan to adequately train program staff (annual training calendar); job descriptions and appropriate resumes of currently hired staff.
- Experience and appropriate licensure/training for providing mental health treatment and ongoing services to child and adolescent victims of sexual abuse and their families.
- Soundness of the program plan for service delivery, including use of established best practice therapies, and its ability to augment and expand current services.
- Have five or more years of experience providing mental health services (individual, family, and group) to children and adolescents who are victims of sexual assault and their families.
- Experience providing culturally competent services to clients in its service area, understanding of the needs and barriers to service of those specific communities, and ability to provide services to non-English speaking clients.
- Ability to effectively engage a culturally diverse audience base in action-oriented training.
- Soundness of ability and plan to address various service barriers.
- Capacity to provide service hours coverage to meet the demand for support.
- Established referral network of mental health providers, hospital trauma centers, and other social services providers.
- Description of collaborative efforts that promote community-level strategies for education and content that highlights child sexual assault risk and prevention, as well as resources for victims of child sexual assault.
- Respondent must be able to train, coach and support community members and stakeholders in CSA prevention to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors.
- Provide four (4) letters of support from partner agencies that can speak to the respondent's experience and expertise in training and building partnerships to address CSA prevention.
- Two letters should come from Chicago-based organizations who describe the respondent's experience providing training and convening on CSA prevention and response.
- Two letters should come from Chicago based organizations who have partnered with and can endorse the respondent's success in providing mental health care to child victims of CSA and their parents.
- Description of participation in an established collaborative or network (currently addressing high risk CSA individuals/families/communities to ensure CSA training and service recruitment in multiple locations.
- Commitment to develop no less than five (5) Memoranda of agreement (MOA) with partner agencies that demonstrate the respondents experience and expertise; one MOA agreement should demonstrate collaboration and coordination with existing CSA providers.
- Detailed quality assurance/evaluation plan.
- Detailed sustainability plans showing grants seeking goals to ensure viability beyond the award period.

- Detailed and accurate budget that denotes distribution of funds across the partnership and how expenses will be tracked and monitored for auditing and compliance (Administrative costs will not exceed 10% of the total budget).
- Willingness to participate in Healthy Chicago 2025 convening and data requests.
- Ability to ensure monthly reporting, vouchering and scheduled budget utilization on time.
- Monthly and Quarterly reports as required and data sharing as agreed upon; existing capacity to track, monitor and report on program metrics.
- Detail on-going commitment of being a trauma-informed organization and steps to train new staff to become a trauma informed provider.

I. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

Up to \$300,000 will be available through this RFP for a one-year contract from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2026. Based on need, availability of funds and performance, CDPH may extend this term for up to three additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by CDPH through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of CDPH and the CDBG must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, CDPH reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

J. Anticipated awards for this program

Up to two successful applicants will be awarded for this program.

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

Eligible respondents must:

- Be a not-for-profit agency with a 501(c) 3 status
- Have an office located in the City of Chicago from which the agency offers services.
- Be in good standing with the City of Chicago
- Have the administrative, organizational, programmatic, information technology and fiscal capability to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate the proposed project. Agencies with a limited capacity to administer the fiscal responsibilities associated with their programs may choose to subcontract with a fiscal and reporting agency to provide administrative services.

B. Evaluation process

An Evaluation Committee made up of representatives from the Chicago Department of Public Health, other City, County or State Departments, and/or other community members may review and evaluate the proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria. The Evaluation Committee will review the Respondent's Proposal to determine overall responsiveness and completeness of the Proposal with respect to the components outlined as follows recommend either:

1. Phase I: Technical and Eligibility Review

CDPH will assess a Respondent's compliance with and adherence to the stated submission requirements in the RFP. Respondents that do not meet these eligibility requirements will NOT have their applications evaluated; incomplete applications will NOT be evaluated for this funding opportunity.

c. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience providing culturally competent services to clients in its service area, understanding of the needs and barriers to service of those specific communities, and ability to provide services to non-English speaking clients. • The Respondent demonstrates a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the diverse people of the communities it serves 	30
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates the soundness of the program plan for service delivery, including use of established best practice therapies, and its ability to augment and expand current services. Program should ensure that two of the three clinical therapists are competent in Spanish language. • Respondent must demonstrate the ability to train, coach and support community members and stakeholders in CSA prevention to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors. • Demonstrate a commitment to being a trauma informed organization. • Provided all necessary supplemental documents (letters of support, MOAs, etc.) 	30
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to track and report performance on program outcomes • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key participant and performance data 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Respondent prepares staff with ongoing trainings on serving the target population in an inclusive way • The Respondent’s organization reflects and engages the diverse people of the communities it serves 	15

<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program• The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations)• The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan	<p>10</p>
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Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD)

MOPD Program: Personal Assistance (RFP# 53649)

PROGRAM CONTACTS:

Pamela Palmentera, Program Director, DRU
Pamela.palmentera@cityofchicago.org
312.746.5707

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

On behalf of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), OBM is releasing this request for proposal (RFP) to fund MOPD's Personal Assistance Program January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028.

Submission of an application does not ensure that you receive an award. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in submitting this application or for expenses incurred in anticipation of receiving an award. If you receive an award, the award will not be final until your organization and the city have fully negotiated and signed a grant agreement. All payments of funds, terms, and conditions of the grant agreement will be subject to the annual appropriation and availability of funds as well as the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. The City may, in its sole discretion, reduce the compensation payable under the grant agreement. The grant agreement will terminate on whichever date comes earlier, the last day of the fiscal period for which enough appropriation occurs or when funds appropriated for payment under the grant agreement are exhausted, OR as otherwise provided under the grant agreement.

Respondents must follow the directions of this RFP, and all responses must be complete, legible, and coherent. Respondents' conformity with the RFP instructions will facilitate the evaluation of all proposals. Non-responsiveness or incomplete responses to this RFP may be cause for the proposal to be disqualified from further consideration. The City reserves the right to accept any proposal, any part or parts thereof, and reject any or all proposals.

Organizational Background

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) strives to ensure full participation and equal opportunities in all aspects of life for people with disabilities. We advocate for and directly support programs that improve quality of life and open pathways for innovation and partnership. With a goal of inspiring positive change in Chicago, we work to ensure the rights of the disability community are equitably represented across City services, initiatives, and policies.

MOPD collaborates with City of Chicago departments and sister agencies to guarantee that all programs and services are accessible and available to our City's disability community. We are committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities can remain in their homes, maintain independence, and thrive within their communities. As part of this program, we provide critical support, including assistive devices, assistive technology, personal assistance services, and home-delivered meals, which results in empowering individuals to lead self-sufficient and fulfilling lives. Through this RFP, MOPD aims to partner with an organization that demonstrates strong commitment to disability rights, service quality, and program sustainability.

Program Description

The City of Chicago is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify qualified organizations to administer a Personal Assistance Program that provides essential support services to individuals with disabilities. This program is designed to help residents who require assistance with daily living activities and lack sufficient

personal assistance support to maintain their independence and remain in their homes and communities. The selected provider will be responsible for coordinating and delivering personalized support tailored to the unique needs of each participant.

The Personal Assistance Program will offer a range of services, including, but not limited to personal care, mobility assistance, household tasks, and support accessing a wide range of accessibility and community resources. The selected provider will have to incorporate person-centered care and maintain an in-depth level of understanding of the disability community. The selected provider will be expected to recruit, train, and manage a network of qualified personal assistants who can deliver high-quality, reliable support, while upholding the dignity and autonomy of people with disabilities.

Client Eligibility: Eligible clients for this program are Chicago residents with a permanent disability who have been referred to by MOPD’s delegate agency under its Independent Living Program. Only individuals referred through MOPD’s designated delegate agency will qualify for services under this program. A permanent disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person’s **Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs), necessitating external support to maintain independent living.**

To qualify, individuals must meet the following additional criteria

1. Be 59 years old or younger
2. Be a resident of the City of Chicago
3. Live without adequate support to meet their daily living needs

Clientele: This program is funded by CDBG and as such, must adhere to the National Objective of Low Mod Limited Clientele (LMC), which states that 51 percent of the beneficiaries of an activity must be LMI people. As a standard, clients are to have an income limit less than 80% of the Area Median income according to the most recent IL HUD Metro FMR Area report.

Goals of this RFP Program

The Personal Assistance Program is designed to enhance autonomy, foster self-sufficiency, and improve quality of life by promoting:

- **Personal Empowerment & Self-Determination** – Encouraging individuals to make informed choices, advocate for themselves, and develop confidence in decision-making in own self-care.
- **Skills Development for Daily Living** – Aid in navigating assistive devices and/or assistive technology to improve and enhance personal care, household management, budgeting, meal preparation, and other essential life skills.
- **Transportation & Mobility Training** – Teaching navigation to public transportation via, accessible routes to enhance independent mobility skills.
- **Community Integration & Social Engagement** – Encourage individuals toward active participation in community activities, social events, and recreational opportunities to build connections and reduce isolation.

Program Requirements

The Personal Assistance program aims to promote independence in Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) and help people remain living independently.

Personal Assistants (PAs) under this program are required to conduct in-home visits or aid at city-designated shelters or temporary housing for individuals experiencing homelessness as needed. For in-home visits, providers will be responsible for delivering essential support services, including bathing, dressing, grocery shopping, meal preparation, light housekeeping, laundry, and other household chores to ensure participants

can manage their daily living activities. For city-designated shelter or temporary housing visits, providers must be able to coordinate with shelter or temporary housing management to ensure access and carryout care, such as assisting them with scheduling appointments, resource coordination, helping with daily life management, and other services noted for in-home visits, modified to adhere to shelter or temporary housing policies and available equipment and facilities.

Given the needs of the population served, the selected provider must ensure they have staff that are flexible and available during off-peak hours, including evenings and weekends. Each participant may receive up to six hours of assistance per week. The PA must keep accurate, up to date records of service hours, client assistance, tasks completed, and date of visits.

Outputs

The selected Respondent will be expected to provide in-home personal assistant services to 140 individuals with an average of 950 PA hours per month that occurs in all 50 Wards of Chicago. Data tracked includes, but is not limited to:

1. Number of individuals served
2. Hours of services provider
3. Client addresses
4. Types of services rendered
5. Ward Location
6. Shelter-Based or Temporary Housing Assistance provided
7. Participant satisfaction and quality of services
8. Additional Resources
9. Emergency Interventions, if applicable

Outcomes

The selected Respondent will be evaluated based on quantitative and qualitative data. For the Program Assistance Program, this includes but is not limited to the average caseload, hours of assistance, and types of assistance provided, with goals set annually. The selected Respondents are expected to track and report programmatic performance monthly. This includes monitoring client PA hours, preferred worker projects (application, background checks, and training), client intake, and termination-Quarterly reporting on income and reporting on outcomes in accordance with criteria set by the City. Data submitted to the city must be reviewed for accuracy to the best of the DA's ability before report submission.

Qualitative data the provider is expected to provide includes:

1. Increased independence
2. Improved quality of life/ greater stability
3. Reduction of unmet program needs
4. Enhanced participation satisfaction and service accessibility
5. Reduced hospitalization and institutionalization
6. Improved coordination with community service providers

The selected respondent will be provided a Statement of Work, outlining all key performance requirements, expectations, and indicators for this program. Furthermore, the selected respondent must be able to provide a program budget not exceeding the available funding.

Budget Justification

All staff employed by the respondent and any subcontracting agencies must be paid at least the City of Chicago's minimum wage, as outlined here: [City of Chicago: Minimum Wage](#). The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities strongly encourages Respondents to pay all employees a living wage. More information on calculating living wages can be found at [Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Cook County](#).

[Illinois \(mit.edu\)](http://Illinois.mit.edu) .

Staff supported by this grant **are not City of Chicago employees**; they are employed by the agency/agencies and must not misrepresent themselves as city employees when working with clients. The respondent is required list the salary and/or hourly wage of all staff assigned to this grant. Volunteering under this grant is strictly prohibited.

Additionally, Respondents must submit a comprehensive program budget detailing all expenses associated with this proposal, including, but not limited to salaries, fringe, operating cost, materials and supplies, and travel reimbursement. The total budget cannot exceed the available funding amount indicated in Section III.

Performance Measures

The selected Respondent must provide requested data using a city-approved platform or alternate approved method to submit delegate agency reports. Required reports include sharing qualitative and quantitative data and information about the city leverages to assess program impact every quarter. At the beginning of every program year, the selected Respondent will meet with their assigned Program Managers to set performance goals and discuss expectations for the year. The delegate agency will be informed of the required reporting structure and must be able to provide data in a dynamic file type or online platform. Dynamic file types typically include Excel, Word, Adobe, and PowerPoint.

Requested data will include, but is not limited to:

- # Of workshops, events, or classes
- # Of attendees at workshops, events, or classes
- # Of individuals or households receiving counseling services
- # Of Staff working on the program
- Client Outcomes
- Thorough responses to narrative questions
- Performance Summary
- Program and client files

In addition to the data outlined above, the selected Respondent must also be following all local, state, and federal requirements governed by the funding source leveraged for the program. MOPD reserves the right to determine the appropriate funding source or funding sources for each program.

Service Delivery

- Provide Personal Assistance services to Chicago residents with disabilities, including but not limited to personal hygiene, bathing, toileting, grooming, and dressing; housekeeping; shopping; food preparation; guide and money management.
- Provide services as outlined in the client's Service Plan (SP) submitted by MOPD's Independent Living Program (ILP), designated Delegate Agency (DA) or authorized MOPD staff.
- Receive referrals only from MOPD's ILP designated Delegate Agency and/or authorized MOPD staff.
- Maintain a staff-to-client ratio of one full-time Personal Assistant (PA) or Homemaker (HM) for every ten clients, based on an average of four hours of service per client per week
- Maintain and promote a preferred worker program allowing individuals to select their personal assistant. The Responded will conduct all on-boarding for these individuals to ensure compliance with the city, state regulations and necessary training. There is no staff-to-client ratio for preferred workers.
- Ensure that PAs can serve clients citywide (all 50 wards), including individuals with all types of disabilities and those who may speak a language other than English.
- Actively involves the client, to the greatest extent possible, in performing housekeeping and personal care tasks assigned to the personal assistant/homemaker.
- In case of an emergency, the PAs will provide services at a shelter or temporary housing for an

individual who cannot live independently

Staffing Requirements

- Provide MOPD in writing, the principal professional staff members assigned to serve MOPD's clients. The staff listing will include the employees' names, titles, and credentials.
- Ensure that the staff is qualified, bound, and experienced in providing personal assistance program services
- Identify and provide staff support as instructed by MOPD during a City "State of Emergency", which may include well-being calls, referrals for well-being checks, home visits, and coordinating referrals and resources as needed.

Client Files and Data Management

- Maintain client files of all MOPD clients receiving services.
- Must use the City's Enterprise Case Management (ECM) database system or another City-approved database to track client demographics and services via this program.
- Must have high-speed internet capabilities. ECM requires high-speed internet for users to be able to fully access the database without issues such as the system timing out.

Program and Reporting Management

- Communicate with MOPD regarding service delivery complications, in the manner prescribed by MOPD staff.
- Present a budget for the proposed program that is reasonable and accurate, with minimal revisions.
- Ensure all data and reports submitted to MOPD are reviewed and accurate to the best of the agency's ability prior to submission
- Ensuring that the identified program lead disseminates information communicated by MOPD to all pertinent parties within their organization
- Maintain a formal incident reporting system to document and address any service disruptions, client complaints, or staff misconduct. All incidents must be reported to MOPD within 24 hours of occurrence, along with the corrective action steps taken.

Performance Goals

- 100% of the services provided must align with the client's identified need as stated in the Service Plan.
- 100% of the monthly client billing for service will be on time and accurate.
- Vendors will submit correct voucher reimbursement requests to MOPD by the 8th of each month 100% of the time.
- Vendors will submit an accurate monthly report using the Monthly Reporting Tool provided by MOPD.
- 100% of assigned staff must be available to serve residents citywide (all 50 wards), including people with all types of disabilities, and people who may speak other languages such as American Sign Language or languages other than English.
- Assigned staff must effectively communicate with individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired and DeafBlind through appropriate accommodation or assistive technology.
- The vendor must maintain PA attendance reliability at 95% or higher, ensuring that unscheduled absences and "no shows" do not exceed 5% of total service hours. All client records must meet MOPD's compliance and documentation standards as determined by the Statement of Work.
- 100% of all client complaints must be resolved within the timeframe described in the Statement of Work.

Contract Management and Data Reporting Requirements

The selected Respondent must employ qualified staff with expertise to provide for the execution of the contract including program manager, fiscal accountability, and grant management. The selected Respondents are expected to track and report programmatic performance monthly. This includes monitoring client PA hours, preferred worker projects (application, background checks, and training), client intake, and termination-Quarterly reporting on income and outcomes in accordance with criteria set by the City.. Data submitted to the city must be reviewed for accuracy to the best of the selected Respondent ability before report submission.

The selected Respondent is expected to submit monthly vouchers for reimbursement by the 8th of the following month, contract execution permitting. Signed timesheets must be maintained for daily activities, which account for the time spent providing services under this federally funded contract.

- 100% of the monthly client billing submissions must be accurate and on time.
- 100% voucher reimbursement must be submitted to MOPD via iSupplier or the city's designated system by the 8th of each month
- Vendors will submit an accurate monthly report using the Monthly Reporting Tool provided by MOPD.

The selected Respondent is subject to an annual program audit, which includes monitoring program service delivery and processing documents. This includes, but is not limited to, providing the following to MOPD:

- Agency or Program Process Manual for Service Delivery
- Client Data collection procedures
- Policy on serving clients who may use other languages such as American Sign Language or languages other than English
- Policy on serving People with Disabilities including reasonable accommodation process.
- Agency process for determining client satisfaction and program effectiveness.
- Program quality control and program oversight procedures
- Agency's referral and resource list
- List of all Board Members with phone number or email address
- Agency Personnel, Record Retention, and Information Security Policy
- Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Procurement Procedure
- Signed contract agreement with subcontractors and/or consultants providing services.
- List of program staff up to date resumes
- Program staff timesheets
- Program files and/or case files
- Subcontractor agreements, if applicable
- Marketing, training, or program materials for client use

Any selected Respondent that is not performing in accordance with MOPD's goals and expectations is subject to corrective measures including, but not limited to:

- Recurring check-ins with Program Manager
- Twice a month reporting in lieu of monthly or quarterly reporting
- Written plan of action by the agency outlining steps for improvement

- Meeting between MOPD and agency Senior Leadership
- Award decrease or elimination
- Cure notice (failed to meet the terms of their contract)

Application Guidance for Respondents

The following guidelines are provided to ensure clarity in the application process and to facilitate the submission of well-prepared proposals that align with the objectives of this solicitation.

Submission Requirements

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this RFP. Respondents are required to adhere to the following:

- Proposals must be submitted by the designated deadline specified in the RFP.
- Submissions should be in the format specified (e.g., PDF, Word document) and follow the prescribed structure.
- Each proposal must include all required sections, including Program Summary and Work, Organizational Capacity, Reasonable Costs, Budget Justification, and Leverage of Funds, Service Provision, Program Quality and Impact.
- Ensure the Respondent is complete, accurate, timely, and answers the questions with enough detail to demonstrate knowledge and capacity to carry out the proposed program(s); and submit all necessary information or documentation.
- Incomplete or late submissions will not be considered.

Anticipated term of contract and funding source

Funding for each contract executed under this RFP is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council of the City, State and/or Federal authorities, if applicable. No payments will be made or due to you under the terms of any contract executed under this RFP, beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under the terms of such contract. The City's obligations under such contract shall cease immediately, without penalty or further payment being required, if the City Council of the City, the Illinois General Assembly and/or federal funding source(s) fail to make an appropriation sufficient to fund terms of such contract.

The city reserves the right to use additional funding sources. For more information about the various rules and regulations that may govern the use of these funding sources, visit the specific web site referenced by each funding source.

- City of Chicago Local Funds
 - chicago.gov/budget
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning

For FY26, the anticipated award range is \$250,000.00 through \$370,000.00 and final awards are contingent on the appropriation and availability of funds from the various sources identified above. Also, the contract period is anticipated to start on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028, with two one-year contract

extensions possible at the discretion of the awarding department.

Funding Statistics: The following table contains statistics for the previous RFP cycle, and most recent funding year, FY25, January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Applications Received (FY22)	1
Agencies Funded (FY22)	1
Range of Funding (FY25)	\$370,000
Total Funding (FY25)	\$370,000

Anticipated awards for this program

The total program budget is up to \$370,000.00. The Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) aims to select at least one qualified respondent for the program, with the potential to select up to two. If two respondents are chosen, the budget will be divided based on the number of clients each serve.

The reimbursement rate for 2025 is set at \$25.00 per hour.

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

Eligible Respondents

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is a competitive process open to:

1. Not-for-profit community-based organizations
2. Home Care and Personal Assistance Agencies
3. Health Care Agencies

Qualified respondents must be licensed and bonded and have over three (3) years of experience in personal assistance and independent living services. Respondents must also have a proven track record of serving a culturally diverse disability population, including assisting people who speak languages other than English. The respondent must have the capacity to meet the compliance standards, including record-keeping, and case and financial reporting. Furthermore, the respondent must have the ability to hire, train, and manage a qualified pool of Personal Assistants, and meticulously track all services completed by them. Respondents are required to deliver services within the City of Chicago and to Chicago residents only. **This is not a Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement program.**

Respondents with existing contracts with the City that are not in good standing will not receive consideration for new funding. Also, respondents that have had a city contract and were terminated for default or currently debarred or issued a final determination by a City, State, or Federal agency for the performance of a criminal act, or abridgment of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices will not receive new funding.

Evaluation process

The evaluation process for a Request for Proposal (RFP) is a structured approach used to assess and select the best proposal submitted by vendors or service providers. The process may include but is not limited to:

- Proposal Receipt and Compliance Check
 - Confirm that the proposal was submitted before the deadline

- Verifying, the proposal meets the basic RFP requirements (e.g. format required documents, legal compliance).
- Initial Screening (pass/fail criteria)
 - Evaluate mandator requirements (e.g. certifications, licenses, experience, financial stability).
 - Proposals that fail to meet critical requirements are eliminated
- Technical Evaluation
 - Assess the technical approach, methodology, and feasibility of the proposed work program
 - Review project timelines, deliverables, and compliance with specifications.
- Score proposals based on the predefined evaluation criteria
 - Assign scores based on a predefined rubric or evaluation matrix
 - Weigh criteria based on importance
- Qualifications and Experience Review
 - Evaluate the Respondent’s expertise, past performance and relevant experience.
 - Review references or prior work samples.

Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Strength of Proposed Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Respondent describes the population to be served and the agency’s ability to provide personal assistance services to individuals with a range of disabilities throughout Chicago, (all 50 wards). ● The Respondent defines the activities, services, service locations, intake process, and client retention strategies that align with the intent of the program. ● The Respondent details existing staff positions, qualifications, caseload capacity, and what functions each role is responsible for in this program. ● The Respondent provides an overview of the agency’s ability to implement all components of this program, including its service delivery approach and how they ensure compliance. 	40
<p><u>Organizational Capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery ● The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to monitor program expenditures and maintain fiscal controls ● The Respondent has the Human Resources capacity to recruit, hire and manage staff, including having sufficient staffing levels to operate all components of this program. ● The Respondent has demonstrated experience working with individuals with disabilities and their required capabilities and infrastructure. ● The Respondent provides ongoing training for staff in disability etiquette, effective communication, and inclusive delivery of services. Training schedules and on-boarding for new staff must be clearly defined. ● The Respondent ensures staff are proficient in serving clients with disabilities, 	35

<p>including Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, or those who may use other languages such as American Sign Language or languages other than English.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent demonstrates past program success and actively engages with the communities it serves. 	
<p><u>Reasonable Costs, Budget Justification and Leverage of Funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent must demonstrate the use of secured funding sources for this program, including the funding sources, amounts, and their intended use to support service delivery. The Respondent must propose a reasonable cost per person or per unit, ensuring that all costs align with the scope of work and available resources. The respondent must have a financially sound history, audited financial statements, and a 90-to-120-day cash reserve. The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support the total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) 	15
<p><u>Performance Management and Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent must have the capacity to track, monitor and report on program metrics, while ensuring timely monthly reporting, vouchering, and budget utilization The Respondent has the relevant systems and software needed to track, collect, report, and store performance on program outcomes, in various dynamic file types, including Excel, Word, Adobe and PowerPoint. The Respondent has experience using data to inform and improve their services or practices. The Applicant completed the application in an accurate manner, answering all questions with sufficient detail to demonstrate knowledge and capacity to carry out the proposed program(s) and submits all necessary information or documentation. 	10

MOPD Program: Independent Living Program (ILP) (RFP# 53650)

PROGRAM CONTACTS:

Pamela Palmentera, Program Director, DRU

Pamela.palmentera@cityofchicago.org

312.746.5707

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

On behalf of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), OBM is releasing this request for proposal (RFP) to fund MOPD's Personal Assistance Program January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028.

Submittal of an application does not ensure that you receive an award. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in submitting this application or for expenses incurred in anticipation of receiving an award. If you receive an award, the award will not be final until your organization and the city have fully negotiated and signed a grant agreement. All payments of funds, terms, and conditions of the grant agreement will be subject to the annual appropriation and availability of funds as well as the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. The City may, in its sole discretion, reduce the compensation payable under the grant agreement. The grant agreement will terminate on whichever date comes earlier, the last day of the fiscal period for which enough appropriation occurs or when funds appropriated for payment under the grant agreement are exhausted, OR as otherwise provided under the grant agreement.

Respondents must follow the directions of this RFP, and all responses must be complete, legible, and coherent. Respondents' conformity with the RFP instructions will facilitate the evaluation of all proposals. Non-responsiveness or incomplete responses to this RFP may be cause for the proposal to be disqualified from further consideration. The City reserves the right to accept any proposal, any part or parts thereof, and reject any or all proposals.

Organizational background

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) strives to ensure full participation and equal opportunities in all aspects of life for people with disabilities. We advocate for and directly support programs that improve quality of life and open pathways for innovation and partnership. With a goal of inspiring positive change in Chicago, we work to ensure the rights of the disability community are equitably represented across City services, initiatives, and policies.

MOPD collaborates with City of Chicago departments and sister agencies to guarantee that all programs and services are accessible and available to our City's disability community. We are committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities can remain in their homes, maintain independence, and thrive within their communities. As part of this program, we provide critical support, including assistive devices, assistive technology, personal assistance services, and home-delivered meals, which results in empowering individuals to lead self-sufficient and fulfilling lives. Through this RFP, MOPD aims to partner with an organization that demonstrates strong commitment to disability rights, service quality, and program sustainability.

Program description

The City of Chicago is issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify qualified organizations to administer an Independent Living Program (ILP) that empowers individuals with disabilities to continue living in their own homes. The selected respondent will be responsible for coordinating and delivering personalized in-home assessments designed to enhance independence, accessibility, and safety for people with disabilities within their own residence. The respondent will be responsible for all aspects of the program, including screening

for eligibility of services, intake, assessments, case management, coordinating purchase of assistive devices, and providing other resources and information as identified through the process.

Target Population: Eligible clients of this program are Chicago residents with a permanent disability. A permanent disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person's Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs), necessitating external support to maintain independent living. Individuals must be 59 years of age or younger and reside within the City of Chicago.

HUD Requirements: This program is funded by CDBG and as such must adhere to the National Objective of Low Mod Limited Clientele (LMC), which states that 51 percent of the beneficiaries of an activity must meet this federal definition. As a standard, clients who receive services meet income guidelines that are limited to less than 80% of the Area Median income according to the most recent IL HUD Metro FMR Area report requirements.

Goals of this RFP

Our Independent Living Program (ILP) is designed to enhance autonomy, foster self-sufficiency, and improve quality of life for people with disabilities by providing comprehensive support, information and resources. This program is critical to promote dignity, independence, and quality of life. Many people with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and serious aging-related limitations struggle with essential tasks. Without this support needed, they can experience increased health risks, social isolation, and institutionalization. This program includes case management, daily living skills training, assistive devices and technology, and coordination for any additional resources, such as enrolling in home-delivered meals or obtaining additional assistive technology, to promote inclusion and independence.

Program requirements

The Independent Living Program (ILP) focuses on two core objectives: promoting independence and enabling individuals to continue living safely in their own homes. The program accomplishes this by providing individuals with disabilities access to vital resources, conducting in-home assessments, and supplying assistive technology and devices tailored to their specific needs. ILP Assessments are conducted to evaluate an individual's needs in the following areas:

- **Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)** - Daily tasks include, but are not limited to, cooking, housekeeping, grocery shopping, cleaning, laundry, personal care, and financial management. The ILP provides hands-on, step-by-step skills training to empower individuals to perform these tasks independently.
- **Assistive Devices and Technology** –Evaluating and providing non-medical assistive devices that help individuals perform daily living activities more effectively. Clients also receive personalized training to ensure they can use their assistive technology.
- **Home-Delivered Meals** – Providing nutritious meals to eligible homebound individuals who lack a support system and are unable to prepare or access meals due to their disability.
- **Case Management** – Connecting individuals with a wide range of social services. Case managers assess, coordinate, monitor, and advocate for the client, ensuring they receive the necessary support to maintain independence and improve their quality of life.

Assistive Devices and Technology

Assistive devices provide ILP participants help them navigate daily activities with greater ease. Examples of available devices include, but are not limited to:

- Amplification devices
- Doorbells with flashing alerts,
- Computer magnification
- Voice recognition software
- Other adaptive software
- Walkers
- Grab Bars
- Reachers
- Visual fire alarms

Eligible Clients

Individuals considered for services from MOPD's Personal Assistance program must have first applied to the home services program of the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services (ILDHS-DRS) and must cooperate with the ILDHS-DRS application process or have a completed ILDHS-DRS Exemption form placed in their file. Furthermore, eligible individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Deemed ineligible for services by the Illinois Department of Human Services – Department of Rehabilitative Services.
- Have a disability which substantially limits the person from performing one or more major life activities related to Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living or lacks adequate support systems.
 - Activities of Daily Living (ADL) are tasks done on a regular basis to take care of oneself and overall well-being. ADLs include ambulating (with or without an assistive device), eating, bathing, toileting, cooking, dressing, laundry, and managing money. Routine tasks that are necessary to live independently.
 - Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) are activities that support daily life and are oriented toward interacting with others and your environment. IADLs include caring for others or pets, communication, community mobility, financial management, health management and maintenance, meal preparation and clean up, safety procedures and emergency responses, and shopping.
- Be a resident of the city of Chicago who is 59 years of age or younger
- Have a household income limit of less than 80% of the Area Median Income according to the most recent IL HUD Metro FMR Area Report.
- Submit to an initial phone screening by the selected Respondent
- Agree to the terms and conditions of the program including:
 - Allowing an in-home assessment by the selected Respondent
 - Providing all required documents
- Receive an assessment by the selected Respondent and be deemed appropriate for services based on the assessment
 - Follow all guidelines and recommendations derived from the assessment
 - Cooperate with the selected Respondent
- Eligibility for services may be subject to additional review by MOPD

If for any reason an individual is not eligible for the Personal Assistance Program, then the selected respondent is expected to make referrals to other community, local, state, or federal resources that can support the individual.

Functional Assessments

If a client is eligible, a Functional Assessment will be conducted in their home to evaluate the services needed to support their independence in both ADLs and IADLs.

The primary goal of the assessment is to determine the client's functional abilities, service eligibility, and the specific types of assistance required to help them achieve maximum independence. The assessment must evaluate multiple factors, including the client's psychological, physical, social, environmental, financial, and functional capabilities. Based on the assessments findings and as needed, the selected Respondent will provide appropriate referrals to community, local, state, and federal agencies that can help address their need.

Performance Measures

Selected Respondents are required to track and report programmatic performance monthly. This includes monitoring client intake, assessments, addendums, re-assessments, and terminations, as well as identifying clients who have indicated a preferred worker. In addition, selected Respondents must submit quarterly reports on income and outcomes in accordance with criteria set by the City.. All data submitted to the city must be thoroughly reviewed for accuracy to the best of the selected Respondents ability prior to submission. MOPD will also monitor assistive device expenditures monthly to ensure proper utilization of funds.

Caseload

The selected Respondent will be responsible for providing in-home assessments and services to approximately 450 individuals annually, which may include phone pre-screening, case management, referrals, and in-home assessments. Assessments will consist of initial evaluations, annual renewals, and addendums to address changes in a client's needs. Service determinations will be guided by the Client Service Agreement (CSA), which is informed by the in-home assessment findings. The Respondent is expected to conduct a minimum of 20 assessments or reassessments per month, which will serve as the baseline performance standard for the program.

Data tracked includes, but is not limited to:

1. Number of individuals requesting services
2. Number of individuals receiving services
3. Client Addresses
4. Client level demographics
5. Types of Services rendered
6. Ward Location
7. Additional services
8. Participant satisfaction and quality of services
9. Emergency Interventions, if applicable

Expectations

The selected Respondent will collect and provide quantitative and qualitative data based on requested criteria. For the ILP, the selected Respondent will be evaluated based on average caseload, in-home assessments, phone pre-screening, and hours of case management assistance, and other types of assistance provided, with goals set annually. Selected Respondents are expected to track and report programmatic performance monthly. This includes monitoring client pre-screening, intake, referrals, and termination. Monthly reporting is required utilizing the Monthly Reporting Tool (MRT) provided by MOPD. Quarterly reporting on income and outcomes in accordance with criteria set by the City. Data submitted to the city must be reviewed for accuracy to the best of the DA's ability before report submission.

Contract management and data reporting requirements

The selected respondent will be provided a Statement of Work, outlining all key performance requirements, expectations, and indicators for this program. Furthermore, the selected respondent must be able to provide a program budget not exceeding the available funding. For this opportunity, all program-specific questions, forms, or templates that Respondents must answer or complete will be available on the City of Chicago eProcurement (iSupplier) site. Successful Respondents must be able to adequately offer the following services and comply with the following requirements.

Budget Justification

All staff employed by the respondent and any subcontracting agencies must be paid at minimum, the City of Chicago's minimum wage, as outlined here: [City of Chicago: Minimum Wage](#). The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities strongly encourages Respondents to pay all employees a living wage. More information on calculating living wages can be found at [Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Cook County, Illinois](#) (mit.edu).

Staff supported by this grant are not City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the agency/agencies and must not misrepresent themselves as city employees when working with clients. The respondent is required list the salary and/or hourly wage of all staff assigned to this grant. Volunteering under this grant is strictly prohibited.

Additionally, Respondents must submit a comprehensive program budget detailing all expenses associated with this proposal, including, but not limited to salaries, fringe, operating cost, materials and supplies, and travel reimbursement. The budget cannot exceed the available funding amount indicated in Section III.

Service Delivery

- Provide ILP services to Chicago residents with disabilities, including but not limited to case management, referrals, initial assessments, re-assessments, addendums based on the client's needs.
- Provide services as outlined in the client's Service Plan (SP) and make appropriate referrals to city, state and federal programs.
- Maintain a staff-to-client ratio of to ensure timely completion of phone pre-screenings and in-home assessments/reassessments.
- Ensure staff can serve clients citywide (all 50 wards), including individuals with all types of disabilities and those who may use other languages such as American Sign Language or languages other than English.
- Actively involves the client, as much as possible, in aid in empowering and maximizing their independence.

Staffing Requirements

- Provide MOPD in writing, the principal professional staff members assigned to serve MOPD's clients. The staff listing will include the employees' names, titles, and credentials.
- Ensure that the staff is qualified and experienced in providing personal assistance program services
- Identify and provide staff support as instructed by MOPD during a City "State of Emergency", which may include well-being calls, referrals for well-being checks, home visits, and coordinating referrals and resources as needed.

Client Files and Data Management

- Maintain client files of all MOPD clients receiving services ensuring client's right to confidentiality.
- Must use the City's Enterprise Case Management (ECM) database system or another city approved platform, to track client demographics and services via this program.

- Must have high-speed internet capabilities. ECM requires high-speed internet for users to be able to fully access the database without issues such as the system timing out.

Program and Reporting Management

- Communicate with MOPD regarding service delivery complications, in the manner prescribed by MOPD staff.
- Present a budget for the proposed program that is reasonable and accurate, with minimal revisions.
- Ensure all data and reports submitted to MOPD are reviewed and accurate to the best of the agency's ability prior to submission
- Ensuring that the identified program lead disseminates information communicated by MOPD to all pertinent parties within their organization
- Maintain a formal incident reporting system to document and address any service disruptions, client complaints, or staff misconduct. All incidents must be reported to MOPD within 24 hours of occurrence, along with the corrective action steps taken.

Performance Responsibilities and Goals

- Ensure clients receive appropriate services, the selected Respondent must collaborate with other MOPD-funded programs and follow procedures for initiating, modifying, or terminating services.
- The ability to provide services and effectively communicate with individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind, low vision and/or DeafBlind.
- For service actions (referrals, adjustments, or termination), the selected Respondent must submit a Referral/Service Outcome (RSO) with supporting documents to MOPD and retain a signed copy in the client's electronic file (ECM). The respondent must also monitor Personal Assistant (PA) services and offer a "preferred worker" option if staffing issues arise. Preferred workers must complete orientation and meet employment guidelines.
- All client records (ECM or hard file as stipulated by MOPD) will meet criteria standards at a minimum of 90% for all Program Service Delivery Evaluations conducted by MOPD. Criteria identified from the current year's Statement of Work.
- The Respondent must refer ILP clients to DFSS 30 days before their 60th birthday or, if unsuccessful, no later than their birthday. The selected Respondent must follow up to ensure clients are evaluated for DFSS services and send written correspondence outlining the referral process and client obligations. Any delays by DFSS or its agencies must be reported to MOPD immediately. All referral and follow-up actions must be documented in the client's file
- 100% of all client complaints are rectified in the manner and timeframe described in the current year's Statement of Work.
- 100% of the monthly client billing for service will be on time and accurate.
- The selected Respondent will submit correct voucher reimbursement requests to MOPD by the 8th of each month 100% of the time.
- The selected Respondent will submit an accurate monthly report using the Monthly Reporting Tool provided by MOPD.

Data Files

The Respondent must provide requested data using a city-approved platform or alternate approved method

to submit agency reports. Required reports include sharing qualitative and quantitative data and information about the city leverages to assess program impact every quarter. At the beginning of every program year, the selected Respondent will meet with their assigned Program Managers to set performance goals and discuss expectations for the year. The selected Respondent will be informed of the required reporting structure and must be able to provide data in a dynamic file type or an online platform. Dynamic file types typically include Excel, Word, Adobe, and PowerPoint.

Requested data will include, but is not limited to:

- # Of workshops, events, or classes
- # Of attendees at workshops, events, or classes
- # Of individuals or households receiving services
- # Of staff working on the program
- Client Outcomes
- Thorough responses to narrative questions
- Performance Summary
- Program or client files

In addition to the data outlined above, the selected Respondent must also be following all local, state, and federal requirements governed by the funding source leveraged for the program. MOPD reserves the right to determine the appropriate funding source or funding sources for each program.

Eligibility Requirements for Respondents

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is a competitive process open to not-for-profit community-based organizations. Qualified Respondents must have over five years of experience in completing home assessments for people with disabilities. Respondents must provide their federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt designation and State of Illinois articles of incorporation as verification of their not-for-profit status. Respondents are required to deliver services within the City of Chicago and to Chicago residents only.

Respondents with existing contracts with the City that are not in good standing do not receive consideration for new funding. Also, respondents that have had a city contract and were terminated for default or currently debarred or issued a final determination by a City, State, or Federal agency for the performance of a criminal act, or abridgment of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices will not receive new funding.

Qualified Staff for Respondent

The selected Respondent must employ qualified staff with expertise to provide for the execution of the contract including program manager, fiscal accountability, and grant management.

Minimum qualifications for funded positions:

- Program Manager: Master's or bachelor's in social work or related field, with two years of related experience, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Case Manager: Bachelor's degree in social work or related field, with one year of experience, or an equivalent combination.
- Evaluator: Associate or bachelor's degree in social services (preferred) or related experience in evaluations, including assistive devices.

Staff Supervision is a requirement, and supervision is always provided by the Program Manager or designee, including during the Program Manager's absence. The Program Manager must conduct Supervisory Assessments, observing each ILP staff member.

The selected respondent must provide a written list of staff assigned to the MOPD ILP program, including names, titles and resumes. This list must be maintained and submitted to MOPD at the time of the application and upon MOPD request.

Staff Training by Selected Respondent

The selected Respondent must ensure quality delivery by providing regular in-service training for all ILP staff

and supervisory personnel. This training should relate to people with disabilities' needs, focusing on improving the quality of life in their homes and communities.

The selected Respondent will seek training opportunities, including MOPD-sponsored in-services. The plan must specify training assignments with staff names and dates (if available). At a minimum, the training will include:

- Guidance on assessing clients' independent living capabilities
- Education on advanced assistive devices
- Courses on motivating and empowering people with disabilities, as well as resource seminars on services, benefits, and programs for people with disabilities
- Service Agreement development, advocacy, and time management
- Training in working with individuals with various disabilities
- Instruction on conducting standardized assessments.

Client Files

The selected Respondent must maintain current individual client files and an electronic client database (ECM) or another City-approved platform. All client service documentation must be exclusively on forms provided or approved by MOPD.

The documentation should include, but is not limited to, the following documents in the format identified:

- Pre-screening form / Intake Form
- Assessment Forms (initial, annual, addendum)
- Client Service Agreement
- Dated and signed case notes
- Verification of Disability
- Confidentiality statement
- Financial Profile
- Correspondence
- Referrals
- Receipts and/or invoices for assistive devices/assistive technology
- ILDH-DRS Exemption Form

Monthly and Quarterly Programmatic Reports

The Respondent is expected to track and report programmatic performance monthly. This includes tracking phone calls, conducting phone pre-screenings, referrals, intakes, assessments, re-assessments, addendums, and terminations. These programmatic deliverables will be tracked on the Monthly Reporting Tool (MRT) provided by MRT and submitted by the 8th of each month. Quarterly reporting on income and outcomes in accordance with criteria set by the City. Data submitted to the city must be reviewed for accuracy to the best of the DA's ability before report submission.

The Respondent is expected to submit monthly for reimbursement by the 8th of the following calendar month, contract execution permitting. Personnel records are to be maintained and kept in accordance with standard HR practices and are to include (timesheets, evaluations, attended training courses and any additional performance related documents)

- 100% of the time spent on by staff under this grant will be tracked for accuracy.
- Respondents will submit correct voucher reimbursement requests to MOPD by the 8th of each month 100% of the time.

Program Audits

The DA is subject to an annual program audit, which includes monitoring program service delivery and

processing documents. This includes, but is not limited to, providing the following to MOPD:

- Agency or Program Process Manual for Service Delivery
- Client Data collection procedures
- Policy on serving clients who may use other languages such as American Sign Language or languages other than English
- Policy on serving People with Disabilities including reasonable accommodation process.
- Agency process for determining client satisfaction and program effectiveness.
- Program quality control and program oversight procedures
- Agency's referral and/or resource list
- List of all Board Members with demographics (race, ethnicity, gender identity) and phone number or email address
- Agency Personnel, Record Retention, and Information Security Policy
- Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Procurement Procedure
- Signed contract agreement with subcontractors and/or consultants providing services.
- List of program staff up to date resumes
- Program staff timesheets
- Program files and/or case files
- Education files
- Subcontractor agreements, if applicable
- Marketing, training, or program materials for client use

Any Respondent that is not performing in accordance with MOPD's goals and expectations is subject to corrective measures including, but not limited to:

- Recurring check-ins with Program Manager
- Twice a month reporting in lieu of monthly or quarterly reporting
- Written plan of action by the selected Respondent outlining steps for improvement
- Meeting between MOPD and agency Senior Leadership
- Award decrease or elimination
- Cure notice (failed to meet the terms of their contract)

Application guidance for respondents

The following guidelines are provided to ensure clarity in the application process and to facilitate the submission of well-prepared proposals that align with the objectives of this solicitation.

Submission Requirements

All proposals must be submitted in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this RFP. Respondents are required to adhere to the following:

- Proposals must be submitted by the designated deadline specified in the RFP.
- Submissions should be in the format specified (e.g., PDF, Word document) and follow the prescribed structure.

- Each proposal must include all required sections, including Strength of Proposed Program, Organizational Capacity, Reasonable Costs, Budget Justification, and Leverage of Funds, and Performance Management and Outcomes.
- Ensure the Respondent is complete, accurate, timely, and answers the questions with enough detail to demonstrate knowledge and capacity to carry out the proposed program(s); and submit all necessary information or documentation.
- Incomplete or late submissions will not be considered.

Anticipated term of contract and funding source

Funding for each contract executed under this RFP is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council of the City, State and/or Federal authorities, if applicable. No payments will be made or due to you under the terms of any contract executed under this RFP, beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under the terms of such contract. The City’s obligations under such contract shall cease immediately, without penalty or further payment being required, if the City Council of the City, the Illinois General Assembly and/or federal funding source(s) fail to make an appropriation sufficient to fund terms of such contract.

The city reserves the right to use additional funding sources. For more information about the various rules and regulations that may govern the use of these funding sources, visit the specific web site referenced by each funding source.

- City of Chicago Local Funds
 - chicago.gov/budget
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning

For FY26, the anticipated award range is \$250,000.00 through \$390,000.00 and final awards are contingent on the appropriation and availability of funds from the various sources identified above. Also, the contract period is anticipated to start on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028, with two one-year contract extensions possible at the discretion of the awarding department.

Funding Statistics: The following table contains statistics for the previous RFP cycle, and most recent funding year, FY25, January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Applications Received (FY22)	1
Agencies Funded (FY22)	1
Range of Funding (FY25)	\$390,000
Total Funding (FY25)	\$390,000

Anticipated awards for this program

The total program budget is up to \$390,000. The Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) aims to select only one qualified applicant to manage the entire program.

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

Eligible respondents

Respondents may apply for this Request for Proposal (RFP) and it is a competitive process open to not-for-profit community-based organizations. Respondents must provide their federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt designation and State of Illinois articles of incorporation as verification of their not-for-profit status. Respondents are required to deliver services within the City of Chicago and to Chicago residents only. Respondents must be capable of performing the services outlined in this proposal on January 1, 2026.

Evaluation process

The evaluation process for a Request for Proposal (RFP) is a structured approach used to assess and select the best proposal submitted by vendors or service providers. The process may include but is not limited to:

- Proposal Receipt and Compliance Check
 - Confirm that the proposal was submitted before the deadline
 - Verifying, the proposal meets the basic RFP requirements (e.g. format required documents, legal compliance).
- Initial Screening (pass/fail criteria)
 - Evaluate mandator requirements (e.g. certifications, licenses, experience, financial stability).
 - Proposals that fail to meet critical requirements are eliminated.
- Technical Evaluation
 - Assess the technical approach, methodology, and feasibility of the proposed work program.
 - Review project timelines, deliverables, and compliance with specifications.
- Score proposals based on the predefined evaluation criteria
 - Assign scores based on a predefined rubric or evaluation matrix.
 - Weigh criteria based on importance.
- Qualifications and Experience Review
 - Evaluate the Respondent’s expertise, past performance and relevant experience.
 - Review references or prior work samples.

Selection criteria and basis of this award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Strength of Proposed Program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent describes the population to be served and the agency’s ability to provide ILP services to individuals with a range of disabilities throughout Chicago, (all 50 wards). • The Respondent defines the activities, services, service locations, intake process, and client retention strategies that align with the intent of the program. • The Respondent details existing staff positions, qualifications, caseload capacity, and what functions each role is responsible for in this program. • The Respondent provides an overview of the agency’s ability to implement all components of this program, including its service delivery approach and how they ensure compliance. 	40

<p><u>Organizational Capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to monitor program expenditures and maintain fiscal controls • The Respondent has the Human Resources capacity to recruit, hire and manage staff, including having sufficient staffing levels to operate all components of this program. • The Respondent has demonstrated experience working with individuals with disabilities and possesses the necessary capabilities and infrastructure • The Respondent provides ongoing training for staff in disability etiquette, effective communication, and inclusive delivery of service. Training schedules for new staff must be clearly defined. • The Respondent ensures staff are proficient in serving clients with disabilities, including Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, or those who may use other languages such as American Sign Language or languages other than English. • The Respondent demonstrates past program success and actively engages with the communities it serves. 	<p>35</p>
<p><u>Reasonable Costs, Budget Justification and Leverage of Funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent must demonstrate the use of secured funding sources for this program, including the funding sources, amounts, and their intended use to support service delivery. • The Respondent must propose a reasonable cost per person or per unit, ensuring that all costs align with the scope of work and available resources. The respondent must have a financially sound history, audited financial statements, and a 90-to-120-day cash reserve. • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support the total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) 	<p>15</p>
<p><u>Performance Management and Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent must have the capacity to track, monitor and report on program metrics, while ensuring timely monthly reporting, vouchering, and budget utilization • The Respondent has the relevant systems and software needed to track, collect, report, and store performance on program outcomes, in various dynamic file types, including Excel, Word, Adobe and PowerPoint. • The Respondent has experience using data to inform and improve their services or practices. • The Respondent completed the application in an accurate manner, answers all questions with sufficient detail to demonstrate knowledge and capacity to carry out the proposed program(s), and submits all necessary information or documentation. 	<p>10</p>

MOPD Program: HomeMod (RFP# 53651)

PROGRAM CONTACTS:

Mark Nobriga, Program Director, HomeMod

Mark.Nobriga@cityofchicago.org

312.743.1523

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

A. Organizational background

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) strives to ensure full participation and equal opportunities in all aspects of life for people with disabilities. We advocate for and directly support programs that improve quality of life and open pathways for innovation and partnership. With a goal of inspiring positive change in Chicago, we work to ensure the rights of the disability community are equitably represented across City services, initiatives, and policies.

MOPD collaborates with City of Chicago departments and sister agencies to guarantee that all programs and services are accessible and available to our City's disability community. We are committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities can remain in their homes, maintain independence, and thrive within their communities. As part of this program, we provide critical support, including assistive devices, assistive technology, personal assistance services, and home-delivered meals, which results in empowering individuals to lead self-sufficient and fulfilling lives. Through this RFP, MOPD aims to partner with an organization that demonstrates strong commitment to disability rights, service quality, and program sustainability. Specifically for this program, this includes ensuring an accessible application process, accessible outreach and communications for all disabilities, including physical and communication access.

B. Program Description

The City of Chicago's Home Modification (referred to as HomeMod) program, an accessible home modification Program, administered by the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), is designed to address the critical need for accessible housing modifications that enable individuals with disabilities to live safely and independently in their homes and live independently in our communities. Many residents experience barriers including mobility, accessibility, and home safety, which can severely impact their quality of life and ability to navigate their own living spaces.

HomeMod meets this need by providing essential home modifications, including vertical platform lifts, wheelchair ramps, stairlifts, accessible bathrooms and kitchens, widened doorways, and other structural enhancements. These improvements allow individuals of all ages with disabilities living in Chicago to maintain their independence while enhancing safety and reducing the risk of injury and/or institutionalization.

The HomeMod program receives funding from City, State and federal funding. Our program is successful, utilizing diverse skill sets from case managers, inspectors, accessibility specialists, and contractors, who assess individual needs and implementation of modifications. Additional partners include our local disability advocacy groups, home improvement contractors, and assistive technology providers, who are all a crucial piece of helping us to deliver effective and efficient services. Technology tools such as accessibility assessment software, project management systems and data collection help us to track outcomes and measure effectiveness. Core activities include outreach to ensure individuals with disabilities know about our program and can apply for services, followed by an intake and individualized evaluation of their home accessibility needs. From there, a modification plan is developed for and with the individual, for their home, detailing the necessary structural changes and assistive technology installations. HomeMod works closely with Contractors on coordination and project management to ensure that approved modifications are completed in a timely manner and in adherence to accessibility standards that meet the individual's accessibility needs. Additionally, the contractor offers guidance on home accessibility, maintenance, and

available assistive resources.

HomeMod makes significant, tangible improvements to housing accessibility, including through the installation of lifts, ramps, grab bars, and adapted kitchens and bathrooms. The scope of services extends across all Chicago neighborhoods, prioritizing low-income households where accessibility barriers are most acute. These modifications significantly enhance mobility and safety, allowing residents to perform daily activities with greater ease and reducing reliance on external caregiving services.

The program empowers individuals with disabilities to advocate for their own accessibility needs and make informed decisions about home modifications. Increased awareness among families and communities promotes a culture of inclusion, reducing stigma associated with disability and fostering a broader understanding of accessible design.

HomeMod has a systemic impact, contributing to long-term improvements in housing policies and urban planning, and by prioritizing and integrating accessibility as a key consideration in future developments. It strengthens institutional capacity by equipping contractors and housing professionals with expertise in adaptive modifications, leading to broader adoption of universal design principles. Ultimately, the program drives community-wide advancements in equity and independence for people with disabilities, ensuring that Chicago's housing infrastructure evolves to support all residents, regardless of physical ability.

C. Goals of this RFP

The HomeMod Program, an Accessible Modification Program administered by the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), seeks to address the critical need for safe and accessible housing for individuals with disabilities living in the City of Chicago. Many residents with disabilities face significant barriers within their own homes, limiting their ability to perform daily activities, maintain independence, and safely age in place. Without necessary modifications, these individuals may be at increased risk of injury, falls, hospitalization, or even premature institutionalization in nursing facilities or assisted living settings.

A major challenge is that many residential properties in Chicago were not built with accessibility in mind. Older housing stock often features narrow doorways, steep stairs, inaccessible bathrooms, and other structural obstacles that create unsafe living conditions. Additionally, the cost of home modifications—such as installing wheelchair lifts/ramps, stairlifts, or accessible bathrooms—is often prohibitively expensive for individuals and families with limited financial resources. Without financial assistance and access to expertise, many people with disabilities are unable to make these essential changes to their homes.

The HomeMod program addresses these barriers by providing free home modifications to eligible residents with disabilities, ensuring that individuals with disabilities at any age can safely navigate their homes and maintain their quality of life. Beyond individual benefits, the program also supports broader community and policy goals, including reducing the need for emergency medical services, decreasing hospitalization and institutionalization rates, and promoting inclusive, disability-friendly housing solutions across Chicago's neighborhoods.

The goal of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit qualified contractors to implement the HomeMod program effectively. The City of Chicago seeks partners who can provide high-quality accessibility modifications, maintain compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, and deliver cost-effective, durable solutions tailored to the unique needs of each resident.

Specifically, this RFP aims to:

- Identify and contract with experienced home modification providers who specialize in accessibility upgrades, including construction firms and assistive technology experts.
- Ensure equitable service delivery by prioritizing residents in low-income households, communities with limited accessibility resources, and individuals with urgent safety concerns.
- Streamline the modification process, from initial home assessments and client consultations to project execution and quality assurance, ensuring timely and efficient completion of modifications.

- Enhance program oversight and reporting by requiring contractors to maintain accurate documentation, track project progress, and measure program impact based on predefined performance metrics.
- Promote innovation and best practices in accessibility modifications by incorporating modern assistive technologies, energy-efficient solutions, and universal design principles where possible.

Ultimately, the RFP seeks to expand the reach and impact of the HomeMod program, ensuring that more individuals with disabilities in Chicago receive the critical home modifications they need to live safely, independently, and with dignity.

D. Program requirements

The Accessible Modification Program (HomeMod) is structured around a series of key activities that ensure individuals with disabilities in Chicago receive essential home modifications that improve safety, accessibility, and independence. These activities align with the program’s overarching goal of eliminating accessibility barriers in residential settings, reducing risks of injury, and enabling people with disabilities to remain safe in their homes.

The program follows a systematic process that includes outreach, assessment, design, implementation, quality assurance, and reporting. These activities involve specialized techniques, tools, and technologies that allow for efficient service delivery while maintaining compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and best practices in accessibility modifications. As a contractor participating in the HomeMod program, it is essential to understand the eligibility requirements for applicants to ensure that modifications are made for qualified individuals. Applicants can be of any age but must have a verifiable disability to receive assistance. Additionally, household income eligibility is determined using 24 CFR Part 5 Annual Income calculations, and participants must meet the program’s income limits, which typically include low- and moderate-income thresholds.

HomeMod services are only available to households within the City of Chicago, and contractors must confirm that the property is located within an eligible geographic boundary before proceeding with modifications. For renters, landlord coordination is required, meaning landlords must provide written consent before any work can be performed. They may also be subject to additional program requirements. This Request for Proposals (RFP) is designed to identify qualified contractors who will play a key role in implementing the HomeMod program. The selected partners will be responsible for performing a range of accessibility modifications, assessments, project management, and compliance oversight to ensure that individuals with disabilities in Chicago receive high-quality home improvements tailored to their specific needs:

- a. Home Modification Services - One of the core components of the HomeMod program is physical home modifications, which enhance safety, mobility, and overall accessibility for residents with disabilities. This RFP seeks contractors and service providers who specialize in:
 - i. Installation of wheelchair ramps – Constructing permanent or modular ramps that comply with ADA slope requirements to facilitate safe entry and exit from homes.
 - ii. Vertical platform lifts and stairlifts – Installing mechanical lifts for individuals who cannot navigate stairs, ensuring multi-level home access.
 - iii. Accessible bathrooms, including roll in showers, grab rails, pedestal sinks and extended height toilets.
 - iv. Widening doorways and hallways – Expanding narrow entryways and passageways to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility devices.
 - v. Lowering light switches and thermostats – Adjusting controls to a height that is easily reachable for individuals in wheelchairs.

- vi. Kitchen modifications, including lowered countertops, accessible cabinetry, and adapted appliances.
- b. Accessibility Assessments - Beyond physical modifications, the program requires professional assessments to ensure that each home adaptation is tailored to the resident's specific needs.
 - i. Initial Home Assessments – Conducting in-home evaluations to determine the most effective modifications for the resident's mobility limitations and daily living challenges.
 - ii. Functional Needs Assessments – Evaluating how residents interact with their environment to recommend the most beneficial adaptive solutions.
 - iii. Collaboration with Contractors – Providing guidance to construction teams to ensure modifications meet both medical and functional requirements.
 - iv. Assistive Technology Recommendations – Identifying additional supports, such as voice-activated systems, smart home devices, or alert systems for individuals with sensory disabilities.

Project Management and Compliance Oversight - A key goal of the HomeMod program is to streamline service delivery while maintaining high standards for safety, efficiency, and compliance.

- c. Contractor Coordination and Workflow Management
 - i. Scheduling and coordination of home modifications to minimize disruption to residents.
 - ii. Tracking project timelines and ensuring timely completion of approved modifications.
 - iii. Managing subcontractors and ensuring adherence to contractual obligations.
- d. Compliance with Regulations and Best Practices
 - i. Ensuring all modifications meets ADA accessibility standards and City of Chicago building codes.
 - ii. Conduct post-installation inspections to confirm that work is completed according to program guidelines.
 - iii. Enforcing quality assurance protocols to ensure durability and effectiveness of modifications.
- e. Program Evaluation and Reporting
 - i. Maintaining accurate project documentation, including before-and-after reports, contractor invoices, and resident feedback.
 - ii. Compiling data on program impact, such as improved accessibility outcomes, resident satisfaction levels, and cost-effectiveness of modifications.
 - iii. Providing regular updates to the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) to support ongoing program improvements.
- f. Community Engagement and Resident Support

Beyond physical modifications, this RFP also seeks service providers who can support resident education and engagement efforts to ensure long-term accessibility benefits. Key activities include:

- i. Family and Caregiver Training – Equipping caregivers with knowledge on home accessibility best practices to support individuals with disabilities.

- ii. Ongoing Support and Follow-Ups – Conducting periodic check-ins to ensure modifications continue to meet residents’ evolving needs.
- g. Licensed Lead Abatement Contractors
- i. The HomeMod program recognizes the importance of addressing lead-based paint hazards, particularly in homes built prior to 1978, as these homes are more likely to contain lead-based paint that poses significant health risks to residents, especially children and individuals with disabilities. To ensure the safety of residents and the proper mitigation of these hazards, all contractors participating in the HomeMod program must be licensed lead abatement contractors in the state of Illinois. These contractors must meet the strict requirements set forth by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and local Chicago regulations. Contractors will be required to strictly follow the IDPH and EPA lead-safe work practices, which are designed to protect both workers and residents from lead exposure. This includes properly identifying lead hazards through testing and risk assessments, ensuring all lead-containing materials are contained and isolated during work, and employing approved methods for the removal, cleanup, and disposal of lead-based paint and contaminated materials. Work areas must be effectively sealed off to prevent lead dust and debris from spreading throughout the home. The following specific technical requirements and safety measures must be adhered to:
 - ii. Lead Hazard Identification: Contractors must conduct comprehensive lead hazard assessments using certified lead inspectors or risk assessors. This does not include testing paint, dust, soil, and other surfaces that may have lead contamination. **(MOPD provides visual inspection summaries, remediation direction and clearance inspections)**
 - iii. Containment and Work Area Set-Up: Proper containment procedures must be implemented before any work begins. This involves the installation of physical barriers such as plastic sheeting and air filtration systems (e.g., HEPA filters) to prevent the spread of lead dust. Workers are required to use personal protective equipment (PPE), including respirators, gloves, and protective clothing, to minimize exposure to lead dust.
 - iv. Cleaning and Disposal: After the lead remediation work is completed, contractors must use HEPA vacuums, wet cleaning methods, and specialized cleaning products to thoroughly clean the work area and remove any residual lead dust or debris. All contaminated materials must be disposed of in accordance with EPA regulations on lead waste disposal, ensuring that lead-containing debris is handled safely and in compliance with both EPA and Illinois environmental laws.
 - v. Training and Certification: All workers involved in lead abatement must be properly trained in lead-safe work practices and certified by the EPA or a state-approved training provider. This certification ensures that workers are equipped to safely handle lead hazards and are up to date with the latest safety protocols. Contractors will be required to provide proof of their lead abatement certification and maintain ongoing compliance throughout the program.
 - vi. Recordkeeping and Reporting: Contractors must maintain comprehensive records of all lead-related work, including hazard assessments and certifications of workers involved.

These records must be submitted to the MOPD (Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities) upon request for review and to ensure full regulatory compliance.

- vii. Failure to comply with these technical standards and regulatory requirements will result in disqualification from the program and potential legal consequences, as non-compliance with IDPH, EPA, and Chicago Municipal Code regulations regarding lead-based paint can lead to penalties and fines. By ensuring contractors adhere to these stringent requirements, the HomeMod program can guarantee that lead remediation is conducted safely, effectively, and in full compliance with applicable laws, providing a healthier living environment for residents with disabilities.
- h. The HomeMod program also requires contractors capable of repairing existing vertical platform lifts. This service is essential to maintaining the accessibility of homes for residents with mobility challenges. The selected contractors will be responsible for diagnosing, repairing, and maintaining vertical platform lifts to ensure they function safely and reliably. This includes performing mechanical repairs, electrical troubleshooting, and addressing issues related to lift accessibility features such as controls, safety sensors, and lift platforms. Contractors must have experience and expertise in servicing vertical platform lifts and be knowledgeable about the various models and systems in use.
- i. Program Evaluation and Reporting
 - i. Maintain a data tracking system to monitor program impact, including the number of modifications completed, customer satisfaction levels, and long-term outcomes related to safety and independence.
 - ii. Collect feedback through post-service surveys and community listening sessions to enhance future service delivery.
 - iii. Submit regular reports to the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) detailing program progress, financial expenditures, and overall effectiveness.

Summary:

This RFP seeks qualified contractors, accessibility specialists, and project managers to implement key activities within the HomeMod program, ensuring that individuals with disabilities in Chicago receive critical home modifications tailored to their needs. Selected providers will be responsible for performing essential accessibility upgrades, including the installation of wheelchair ramps, stairlifts, widened doorways, and accessible bathrooms and kitchens.

In addition to construction services, contractors must conduct professional assessments to determine the most effective modifications for each resident, ensuring that all adaptations align with ADA standards and universal design principles. Effective project management and compliance oversight will be essential, with providers expected to coordinate construction timelines, enforce quality assurance measures, and maintain detailed documentation to track program impact.

Additionally, resident education and ongoing support will play a crucial role in maximizing the long-term benefits of modifications, equipping individuals and caregivers with the knowledge needed to utilize new accessibility features effectively.

E. Performance Measures

To ensure the HomeMod Program effectively meets its goal of enhancing home accessibility for individuals with disabilities, performance metrics have been established following Specific, Measurable, Achievable,

Relevant, and Timebound (SMART) criteria. These metrics serve as a framework to track progress, assess program effectiveness, and ensure accountability in delivering essential modifications that improve safety and independence.

Specific – Clear and Concrete Assessment Criteria

The HomeMod Program requires contractors to track performance using well-defined and specific metrics that directly relate to their core objectives. These include:

- a. Number of home modifications completed annually, including lifts, ramps, stairlifts, widened doorways, and accessible bathrooms/kitchens.
- b. Types of modifications provided to evaluate the diversity and scope of accessibility solutions implemented.
- c. Application processing time, tracking how long it takes from initial submission to approval and each additional step along this process.
- d. Project completion timeline, measuring the time taken from approval to the completion of modifications.
- e. Resident satisfaction ratings, based on surveys and feedback collected post-installation.

These concrete metrics provide a direct means of assessing the program’s ability to deliver accessibility modifications efficiently and effectively.

Measurable – Evidence-Based Progress Tracking:

To demonstrate tangible progress, the program will set measurable targets that must be adhered to:

- f. A minimum of 50 homes are modified annually, ensuring a quantifiable impact on accessibility in Chicago.
- g. At least 75% of modifications completed within 120 days of approval, ensuring timely service delivery.
- h. A 15% reduction in application processing time to streamline service accessibility.
- i. A resident satisfaction rate of 90% or higher, indicating the success of modifications in improving daily living.

Data will be collected through tracking systems, surveys, and project reports, providing clear evidence of program achievements and contractual areas needing improvement.

Achievable – Realistic Goals Within Resource and Budget Constraints:

All performance targets are set within the constraints of available resources, funding, and contractor capacity. The HomeMod Program collaborates with licensed contractors to ensure:

- j. Adequate contractor availability to meet demand without overextending resources.
- k. Sufficient funding and pricing allocation to support each modification type.
- l. Scalable processes that allow for service expansion based on available budget and workforce.

Relevant – Direct Connection Between Metrics and Program Goals:

Each performance metric is strategically aligned with the HomeMod Program’s overarching mission of enhancing home accessibility and safety for individuals with disabilities. The effectiveness of the program hinges on ensuring that each metric directly measures progress toward key objectives, such as improving mobility, reducing fall risks, and enabling individuals to live independently in their own homes.:

- m. Tracking the number and types of modifications completed ensures that the program addresses a diverse range of accessibility barriers, such as entryway access, bathroom safety, and kitchen usability. This data helps confirm whether the program is meeting the varied needs of Chicago residents with disabilities.

- n. Measuring project timelines, including application processing and modification completion, ensures efficiency in service delivery. Delays in accessibility modifications can severely impact residents' ability to function safely in their homes, making timely execution a crucial success factor.
- o. Assessing resident satisfaction and usability of modifications allows the program to gauge whether the installed features are truly improving daily life. A high satisfaction rate, particularly when paired with qualitative feedback, confirms that the modifications are functional, appropriately tailored, and meet the real-world needs of residents.
- p. Monitoring health and safety outcomes by tracking reported reductions in falls, emergency room visits, or injuries due to inaccessible home environments further ties the program's success to its core mission of improving safety and well-being.
- q. Analyzing program reach and demographic data ensures that modifications are fairly distributed among different neighborhoods, income levels, and disability types, addressing potential disparities in service delivery.

Timebound – Establishing Realistic Timelines and Benchmarks

To maintain accountability, ensure efficient service delivery, and maximize impact, the HomeMod Program establishes clear deadlines and structured benchmarks that drive progress and prioritization. By implementing ambitious yet achievable timeframes, the program ensures that individuals with disabilities receive the modifications they need without unnecessary delays while maintaining high-quality standards.:

- r. A streamlined application process ensures that eligible residents receive timely responses. The program aims to process applications and determine eligibility within 30 days of submission, reducing administrative bottlenecks and ensuring applicants are not left waiting for essential modifications. This also includes conducting initial home assessments to identify specific needs.
- s. Once approved, home modifications must be completed within a 90–120-day window, depending on the complexity of the project. Simple modifications, such as grab bar installations or doorway widening, may be completed within 90 days, while more extensive modifications, such as bathroom or kitchen renovations, may take up to 120 days. Adhering to this timeline ensures that accessibility improvements are made without prolonged disruptions to residents' daily lives. Delays beyond this timeframe will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- t. The program implements quarterly performance reviews of contractors and service providers to ensure modifications are being delivered on time and in compliance with accessibility standards. These evaluations help identify potential delays, address workflow inefficiencies, and ensure that high-quality service is provided to all residents. Contractors who fail to meet performance benchmarks may be subject to corrective action.

To assess long-term effectiveness, the HomeMod Program compiles annual impact and performance reports that track key performance metrics, including the total number of modifications completed, average completion time per project, resident satisfaction levels, health and safety improvements—such as reductions in fall-related injuries—and demographic reach to ensure equitable service distribution. These reports enable the City of Chicago to make data-driven decisions regarding future program improvements, funding allocations, and potential policy adjustments, ensuring that resources are directed where they are needed most.

While short-term benchmarks focus on immediate efficiency, the HomeMod Program also operates with a long-term strategic vision. Over a five-year period, the program aims to increase service capacity by 25%, allowing more homes to be modified annually. Additionally, it seeks to reduce the average modification

completion time by 15%, ensuring residents receive timely accessibility improvements. To support this growth, the program will expand contractor partnerships, increasing the availability of qualified professionals to meet the growing demand. Lastly, the program will enhance outreach and accessibility awareness, ensuring that more residents are informed about the services available to them.

Outputs

The HomeMod Program will provide a wide range of home modifications and repairs to improve accessibility and safety for individuals with disabilities in Chicago. In addition to installing lifts, wheelchair ramps, stairlifts, accessible bathrooms and kitchens, widened doorways, and other structural adjustments, the program also includes lead remediation work to ensure homes are safe from environmental hazards. Furthermore, the program provides repairs to existing vertical platform lifts, ensuring that essential mobility equipment is functioning properly and continues to meet the needs of residents.

The program aims to complete modifications and repairs in at least 150 homes per year. Key output metrics include the total number of modifications and repairs completed, the types of services provided, average project completion timelines, resident satisfaction levels, and demographic data to ensure equitable service distribution.

Performance targets include processing applications within 30 days, completing modifications and repairs within 120 days of approval, achieving at least 90% resident satisfaction, and reducing average project completion time by 15% over five years.

Outcomes

The HomeMod Program enhances independence, safety, and quality of life for individuals with disabilities in Chicago. By providing essential home modifications and repairs, including lifts, wheelchair ramps, stairlifts, accessible kitchens and bathrooms, lead remediation, and repairs to vertical platform lifts, the program reduces safety risks, increases mobility, and prevents unnecessary institutionalization.

Specific benefits include improved home navigation, greater confidence, and increased self-reliance. The program's outcome metrics will track improvements in resident mobility, reductions in fall-related injuries or hospital visits, increased satisfaction with living conditions, and self-reported independence through surveys, health data, and resident feedback.

Specific outcome targets include a reduction in fall-related injuries, achieving at least 90% resident satisfaction, and an improvement in residents' ability to live independently after modifications are completed.

F. Contract management and data reporting requirements

Effective contract management and data reporting are essential to ensure accountability, compliance, and program efficiency for the HomeMod initiative. The selected contractors and service providers must adhere to strict performance monitoring, documentation standards, and reporting procedures to maintain transparency and alignment with program goals.

Contract Management

A. Project Documentation & Work Orders

- a. Maintain detailed records of all home modification projects, including initial assessment reports, scope of work, cost estimates, and before-and-after photos.
- b. Submit work orders and change requests for approval before commencing work.
- c. Document all project adjustments and maintain clear communication with program staff.

B. Performance Monitoring & Compliance

- a. Ensure all work complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), City of Chicago Building Codes, and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) regulations.

- b. Contractors performing lead abatement services must comply with the EPA’s Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) Rule and Illinois’ Lead Poisoning Prevention Act.
 - c. Conduct quality assurance checks and obtain final inspection approvals before submitting project completion reports and invoices.
- C. Workforce & Licensing Requirements
 - a. Maintain up-to-date certifications for lead abatement contractors, including proof of training and licensing under Illinois law.
 - b. Ensure all subcontractors and employees meet background check and insurance requirements as outlined by the City of Chicago procurement policies.
- D. Project Scheduling & Timelines
 - a. Develop structured project timelines to ensure modifications are completed within established deadlines.
 - b. Submit scheduling updates and progress reports biweekly to the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD).
 - c. Immediately notify program administrators of delays or unforeseen circumstances affecting project timelines.

Data Reporting Requirements

- A. Service Delivery Metrics
 - a. The number of home modifications completed per quarter.
 - b. Breakdown of modification types (e.g., ramps, vertical platform lifts, accessible bathrooms, lead remediation).
 - c. Average time to complete modifications, from assessment to project completion.
- B. Financial Reporting & Budget Tracking
 - a. Submit invoices with itemized costs for labor, materials, fees and permits.
 - b. Provide quarterly financial statements detailing expenditures and any budget deviations.
 - c. Maintain records of grant fund utilization and submit reconciliation reports annually.
- C. Resident Outcomes & Impact Analysis
 - a. Collect and report resident feedback through post-service surveys.
 - b. Track improvements in safety and accessibility (e.g., reduction in fall-related incidents).
 - c. Document the number of individuals benefiting from modifications, categorized by disability type, age group, and geographic location.
- D. Regulatory & Compliance Reporting
 - a. Provide evidence of compliance with ADA, building code, and lead abatement regulations. (reviewed by HomeMod staff)
 - b. Submit compliance audits for lead remediation projects, including clearance testing results. (completed by HomeMod staff)
 - c. Ensure all required permits and inspection approvals are documented and stored in project records.
- E. Annual Program Review & Strategic Recommendations
 - a. Participate in an annual performance review with city officials to assess program effectiveness.
 - b. Identify operational challenges and propose recommendations for improving efficiency, service reach, and cost-effectiveness.

- c. Provide data-driven insights to support future policy decisions and program funding allocations.

Penalties for Non-Compliance

- A. Failure to adhere to the program's contractual obligations, compliance regulations, or reporting requirements may result in penalties, including but not limited to:
 - a. Contract Suspension or Termination: Contractors who repeatedly fail to comply with program requirements or demonstrate subpar performance may have their contracts suspended or permanently terminated.
 - b. Legal Liabilities: Contractors failing to adhere to federal, state, or local laws—particularly related to lead abatement, ADA compliance, or building safety—may be subject to legal action.
 - c. Disqualification of Future Projects: Contractors who fail to meet program expectations may be barred from bidding on future City of Chicago contracts.

Audit Requirements

- A. To maintain program integrity and ensure financial and regulatory compliance, contractors must undergo periodic audits, including:
 - a. Yearly Compliance Audits: Review of work orders, completed modifications, and regulatory adherence to ADA and lead abatement laws.
 - b. Financial Audits: Examination of invoices, budget allocations, and program expenditures to ensure proper use of funds.
 - c. On-Site Inspections: Random and scheduled inspections of ongoing and completed home modifications to verify quality, safety, and compliance with program guidelines.
 - d. Resident Follow-Ups: Interviews with beneficiaries to ensure satisfaction, functionality, and durability of modifications.
 - e. Annual Independent Review (Audited Financial Statements): A third-party auditor will evaluate program effectiveness, contractor performance, and financial transparency.

Failure to comply with audit requirements may result in penalties, contract termination, or legal action.

Data Security Measures

- A. Given the sensitive nature of resident information collected through the HomeMod program, contractors must implement strict data security protocols, including:
 - a. Secure Digital Record-Keeping: Resident data, project documentation, and financial records must be stored in a secure, encrypted system that complies with Chicago's Data Protection Ordinance and HIPAA (if applicable).
 - b. Limited Access: Only authorized personnel should have access to sensitive resident information.
 - c. Data Retention Policy: All project records must be retained for a minimum of seven (7) years as per City of Chicago procurement policies.
 - d. Breach Notification Protocols: In the event of a data breach, contractors must notify city officials within 24 hours and take immediate corrective action.

By implementing these contract management, reporting, and compliance measures, the HomeMod program will ensure high-quality service delivery, maintain financial transparency, and uphold legal and ethical standards in providing accessibility modifications to Chicago residents with disabilities.

G. Application guidance for contractors

This section provides detailed instructions for contractors responding to the City of Chicago HomeMod Program Request for Proposals (RFP). Applicants must ensure that their submissions meet all requirements outlined below to be considered for participation in the program.

To be eligible for consideration, contractors must meet the following qualifications:

A. Business Licensing & Certification:

- a. Must be a registered business entity in the State of Illinois.
- b. Must possess all necessary professional licenses and certifications required to perform or sub-contract home modifications, including lead abatement, general contracting, electrical, and plumbing work where applicable.

B. Insurance & Bonding:

- a. Proof of general liability insurance (\$1,000,000 minimum coverage).
- b. Proof of workers' compensation insurance for all employees.

C. Experience & Technical Capacity:

- a. Minimum of three (3) years of experience performing accessibility modifications and lead abatement services.
- b. Documented past performance on projects of similar scope and scale.
- c. Capacity to manage multiple projects simultaneously within designated timeframes.

D. Regulatory Compliance:

- a. Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Lead Abatement Regulations, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Lead-Safe Work Practices, and City of Chicago Building Codes.

E. Warranty:

- a. Contractors must provide a minimum one-year warranty on all labor and materials used for accessibility modifications and lead abatement services.
- b. The warranty must cover defects in workmanship and materials, ensuring that all installed components function as intended.
- c. Contractors must provide written warranty documentation to the homeowner upon project completion.
- d. Any defects or failures occurring within the warranty period must be promptly addressed at no additional cost to the homeowner or contracting agency.
- e. Contractors must outline their warranty claim process, including response times and resolution procedures.

F. Company Profile & Qualifications (5 Pages Maximum)

- a. Organizational structure, history, and key personnel.
- b. Licenses, certifications, and accreditations.
- c. Description of experience performing ADA-compliant modifications, lead abatement, and vertical platform lift repairs.
- d. Documentation of past projects, including references.

- G. Project Approach & Work Plan (10 Pages Maximum) Detailed description of how the organization will fulfill contract requirements, including:**
- a. Home modifications and repairs (ramps, stairlifts, accessible kitchens/bathrooms, vertical platform lifts, etc.).
 - b. Lead abatement processes, including compliance with IDPH and EPA regulations.
 - c. Assessments and quality assurance measures.
 - d. Project timeline and workflow management.
 - e. Resident engagement and support strategies.
- H. Key Personnel & Subcontractors (5 Pages Maximum)**
- a. List of key team members, their roles, and relevant experience.
 - b. Identification of any subcontractors, including scope of work and qualifications.
- I. References & Past Performance (3 Pages Maximum)**
- a. Minimum of three (3) references from past clients or government agencies.
 - b. Contact information and project details for each reference.
- J. Required Forms & Certifications**
- a. Proof of insurance and bonding.
 - b. Certification of compliance with City of Chicago procurement policies.
 - c. Documentation of lead abatement licensure (if applicable).

H. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The anticipated term of the contract for the City of Chicago HomeMod Program will be for an initial period of **three (3) years**, with the option to extend up to **two (2) additional one-year renewal terms** based on contractor performance, program needs, and availability of funding. The contract will commence upon successful execution and approval by the City of Chicago, with work beginning immediately following the completion of contractor onboarding and compliance verification. Contractors must be prepared to initiate services promptly and demonstrate the capacity to manage project timelines efficiently.

Funding for the HomeMod Program is provided through a combination of federal, state, and local sources, including but not limited to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the City of Chicago's General Fund, and other potential grants or appropriations dedicated to accessibility modifications and lead abatement initiatives. All awarded contractors must comply with funding requirements, including federal procurement standards, prevailing wage laws (where applicable), and reporting obligations. Continued funding is contingent upon program performance, adherence to regulatory requirements, and the successful fulfillment of contractual obligations. The City of Chicago reserves the right to adjust funding allocations and contract terms based on budgetary considerations and programmatic needs.

I. Anticipated awards for this program

Funding for each contract executed under this RFP is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council of the City, State and/or Federal authorities, if applicable. No payments will be made or due to you under the terms of any contract executed under this RFP, beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under the terms of such contract. The City's obligations under such contract shall cease immediately, without penalty or further payment being required, if the City Council of the City, the Illinois General Assembly and/or federal funding source(s) fail to make an appropriation sufficient to fund terms of such contract.

The city reserves the right to use additional funding sources. For more information about the various rules and regulations that may govern the use of these funding sources, visit the specific web site referenced by each funding source.

- City of Chicago Local Funds
 - o chicago.gov/budget
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - o https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning

For FY26, the anticipated award range is \$900,000.00 through \$2,300,000.00 and final awards are contingent on the appropriation and availability of funds from the various sources identified above. Also, the contract period is anticipated to start on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028, with two one-year contract extensions possible at the discretion of the awarding department.

Funding Statistics: The following table contains statistics for the previous RFP cycle, and most recent funding year, FY25, January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Applications Received (FY22)	2
Agencies Funded (FY22)	2
Range of Funding (FY25)	\$949,000 - \$2,347,000
Total Funding (FY25)	\$3,296,000

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible contractors

To be eligible, contractors must meet all the requirements outlined in this RFP, including the Application Review Criteria immediately following this section. Contractors must have a proven track record of providing services to vulnerable Chicagoans and being deeply engaged in their community. Additionally, successful contractors will:

- A. Have a proven history of providing similar services to the communities they serve.
- B. Have adequate staffing levels to carry out the proposed activities, including any applicable program intakes, case management services, workshop management, program quality assurance, program evaluation and monitoring, and fiscal controls.
- C. Have adequate systems, internal processes, and procedures outlining:
 - a. Process Manual for Service Delivery Process and Policy assisting individuals who may use languages other than English such as American Sign Language.
 - b. Plan for continuity of services should responsible program staff change.
- D. Have the capacity to coordinate and network with other public or private agencies to support or enhance resources to target populations.
- E. Can carry out the services under the program within the allotted timeframe of one-year.
- F. Can work under a reimbursement model.
- G. The contractor must submit invoices to the city for payment.

- H. Have a competent Board of Directors and Staff responsive to the needs of the community or communities they are serving.

Current: Contractors who have been an MOPD contractor within the past five years are subject to additional evaluation. This includes disclosing information about your organization to the Evaluation Committee members(s) before scoring. Information and/or documentation to be shared with the Evaluation Committee includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Review of current Year to Date (YTD) deliverables
- B. Review of historical performance and outcomes
- C. Review of any performance summary or summaries

The contractor is advised to carefully review the Request for Proposals (RFP) instructions and adhere to all requirements. The contractors must provide all the information requested, provide thorough responses, and submit all requested documents. The contractors applying to multiple RFPs must include all required documents requested by the RFP. Failure to fully comply may cause the submitted proposal to be categorized as non-compliant and subsequently have the rejection of the non-compliant proposal.

The City reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from the contractor during the evaluation and selection process. Any contractor that makes a material misrepresentation will be eliminated from further consideration. The City reserves the right to reject proposals for any of the following reasons:

- A. Non-compliant proposals (e.g., required documents not uploaded).
- B. Contractors have MOPD or other City Departments performance-related concerns in the past (5) five years.
- C. The deadline for submissions was missed
- D. The proposal topic was not aligned with the requirements of the RFP.
- E. The budget was unrealistic in terms of the estimated requirements for the program.
- F. Contractors proposed staffing is insufficient to carry out the scope of the proposed program.
- G. Contractors proposed Work Program does not meet MOPD Standards and or is unrealistic in terms of the requirements for the program.

B. Evaluation process

MOPD reserves the right to consider additional factors in the selection of contractor agencies to ensure program-level needs are met, including prioritizing organizations whose proposals demonstrate they have a strong track record serving people with disabilities. MOPD may also factor in the organization's geographic location to ensure residents in all Chicago wards can be provided services through the entire contractor network.

The selection of contractor agencies will not be final until the city and the selected contractors have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The city assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs by the contractor chosen in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in preparing an application. Furthermore, the contractors' history of prior executed contractor contract with MOPD is not a guarantee of continued funding under this RFP.

All proposals received by the deadline within the City's procurement system, iSupplier Portal, will undergo a technical review to determine whether all required components have been addressed and included. Only complete proposals will be considered by MOPD, and formal notice of rejection will be provided to the

contractors submitting incomplete proposals. MOPD reserves the right to waive minor irregularities across all submitted proposals. Minor irregularities include anything within the proposal that does not affect the quality of the proposed services or mandatory requirements. For example, spelling and grammatical errors may be classified as minor irregularities.

Additionally, MOPD reserves the right to review the contractors' MOPD performance-related and performance-related concerns in other City Departments and remove from consideration contractors without a proven track record of effective program management.

Applications will be reviewed and scored using an Evaluation Committee comprised of members selected by MOPD. Evaluation Committee members will be responsible for reviewing applications and supporting documents and any additional information supplied by MOPD Staff to score applications based on the selection criteria outlined below.

MOPD will then tabulate all Evaluation Committee Scores and review any comments or concerns identified by Evaluation Committee members. Finally, MOPD's Program Director will work to create a memo of recommended contractors.

A recommendation of contractor agencies will be provided to The Commissioner. Upon review, the Commissioner may reject, deny, or recommend agencies that have applied based on previous performance or area need.

Required Document: As part of the RFP submission process, the following documents must be uploaded in the Administrative Section and labeled accordingly.

- A. Liability Insurance
- B. Board Member Identification
- C. IRS Determination Letter
- D. SAM Certificate
- E. Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
- F. Organizational Chart
- G. Up-to-date resumes
- H. Quality Assurance or Control procedures, if applicable.
- I. Work Program Form
- J. Budget Forms
- K. Audit or review findings within the past five (5) years, if applicable.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p>Community involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contractor must demonstrate experience working with Chicago communities and individuals with disabilities. Higher scores will be awarded for partnerships with local organizations, advocacy groups, or disability service providers and participation in city-led initiatives or housing programs. • The Contractor must show a commitment to local hiring and workforce development, prioritizing local workers, subcontractors, and MBEs/WBEs. Additional points will be awarded for involvement in apprenticeship programs and creating career opportunities for individuals with disabilities or disadvantaged backgrounds. • The Contractor must outline a strategy for public outreach and resident education, including resident sessions on accessibility modifications, lead safety, and home adaptation best practices. Proposals with ongoing homeowner and caregiver support and public awareness campaigns will be prioritized. 	15

<p>Strength of proposed program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contractor must present a clear and comprehensive program outlining how services will be delivered efficiently while meeting accessibility, safety, and quality standards. Proposals should demonstrate a strong understanding of home modifications, lead remediation, and vertical platform lift repairs. • The Contractor must detail a realistic and achievable implementation strategy, including timelines, staffing, and resource allocation. Higher scores will be awarded for proposals that show the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously while maintaining high-quality service delivery. • The Contractor must incorporate innovative and evidence-based solutions to enhance accessibility and improve outcomes for residents. Proposals should demonstrate the use of best practices, emerging technology, and cost-effective strategies to maximize impact. 	<p>30</p>
<p>Performance management and outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contractor demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Contractor must demonstrate a strong data collection and reporting system to ensure accurate tracking of program activities. Proposals should outline methods for monitoring progress, evaluating impact, and maintaining compliance with city and federal requirements. • The Contractor must establish a quality assurance plan to maintain high standards and address issues proactively. Proposals that include regular inspections, contractor oversight, and resident feedback mechanisms will receive higher scores. • The Contractor must commit to continuous improvement and long-term impact, detailing strategies for refining service delivery, adapting to community needs, and improving efficiency over time. Higher scores will be awarded for proposals with a plan for ongoing assessment and innovation. 	<p>20</p>
<p>Organizational capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contractor has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery • The Contractor has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Contractor has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Contractor has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Contractor prepares staff with ongoing trainings on serving the target population 	<p>20</p>
<p>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Contractor has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Contractor leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support the total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Contractor demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan 	<p>15</p>

Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS)

DFSS Program: Human Services: Emergency Food for At-Risk Populations (RFP# 10107)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Phone: 312-743-1938

Email: Lauren.doss@cityofchicago.org

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The purpose of the Emergency Food for At-Risk Populations Program is to reduce food insecurity among underserved and vulnerable populations by ensuring access to and availability of nutritious and culturally appropriate food. This program aims to identify an organization specializing in procurement and distribution of fresh fruits, vegetables, and essential food items to food pantries, DFSS-designated shelters, and DFSS Community Service Centers. Additionally, the initiative seeks to enhance the overall well-being of individuals and families by offering culturally relevant holiday meals during Thanksgiving and the winter season, thereby fostering dignity, community belonging, and support during pivotal times.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The Human Services Division is committed to addressing the immediate and long-term needs of Chicago residents by providing access to essential resources and fostering self-sufficiency. Through its six Community Service Centers (CSCs) across the City, the Division offers a range of resources such as access to food and clothing, housing stabilization supports, and public-benefits enrollment assistance. In addition, these centers provide comprehensive support by connecting clients with case managers and social workers for personalized assessments and long-term planning. The Division also collaborates with community-based delegate agencies to enable access to specialized programs connecting Chicagoans to vital resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empowers them to thrive.

The Division also plays a critical role in emergency human services by activating the six CSCs as warming and cooling centers during extreme weather. Additionally, the Division activates the Multi-Agency Resource Center in partnership with other City departments when the City deems it critical during an emergency response.

B. Program description

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The Emergency Food Assistance for At-Risk Populations program, administered by DFSS, is dedicated to improving the availability and accessibility of nutritious food for low-income and at-risk individuals, especially during emergencies or crises. The selected Respondent will be responsible for maintaining a comprehensive network of easily accessible food pantries, including at least one within a five-mile radius of each DFSS Community Service Center (CSC), and focusing on areas designated as “food deserts.” These areas, as defined by Illinois Public Act 100-0493, lack adequate access to fresh, healthy foods due to the absence of grocery stores and other healthy food providers. The program will also supply homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters, as designated by DFSS, with fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, the Respondent will ensure that culturally appropriate holiday food items, such as turkeys and hams, are delivered to the CSCs and shelters during Thanksgiving and the winter holidays. In response to unforeseen circumstances, including emergencies or natural disasters, the Respondent may be required to provide additional food deliveries as needed.

Current state and priorities for improvement

According to the Food Equity Council, food insecurity remains significantly high among Latinx communities at 29% and Black communities at 37%. Overall, approximately one in four children in Cook County metro area experiences or is at risk for food insecurity.

In addition, during the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health the Biden-Harris administration set a goal of “ending hunger and increasing healthy eating and physical activity by 2030 so fewer American experience diet related diseases—while reducing related health disparities.” The strategy proposed prioritizes “improving food access and affordability” as a key action required to address food insecurity and highlights the continued need for Emergency Food Assistance programs.

Similarly, Healthy Chicago 2025, launched in September 2020, comprised of more than 200 strategies addressing a range of health issues, acknowledges the need for hyper-local emergency food distribution systems to be in place to serve as a strong safety net when an emergency hits.

Complementing this healthy food system, the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) was developed in 2012 and adopted in 2017 to procure and serve healthier foods to staff, visitors, clients, and patients. The GFPP is a national program that uses the purchasing power of institutional/program food procurement to create a healthier, more fair food system.

The purpose of the program is to make Good Food (defined as “food that is healthy, affordable, fair, and sustainable”) more widely available to all communities in order to promote healthier eating habits, support our local economy (local food businesses), and create more well-paying jobs along the food supply chain. The

Good Food Purchasing Standards (“Standards”) emphasize five values: Local Economies, Environmental Sustainability, Valued Workforce, Animal Welfare, and Nutrition.

In 2023, the current delegate provided 1,129,514 pounds of emergency food to 387,614 individuals experiencing food insecurity. This data includes Chicago residents served at shelters, emergency food pantries and DFSS’ Community Service Centers. Out of the 387,614 at-risk individuals served (with fresh meat, poultry, fruits and vegetables); 2,574 persons were served at community service centers (holiday food for Thanksgiving and winter holidays); and 13,192 persons were served at shelters (fruits and vegetables).

Target Population

The target population are individuals/households that frequent the DFSS CSCs, homeless and domestic violence shelters, and food pantries.

C. Program Activities and Requirements

The selected respondent must have the ability to meet DFSS’ operational needs for the four distribution models listed below:

1. **Food pantries:** Identify, select, and monitor local food pantries at locations concentrated in food insecure and food desert areas, and at least one food pantry located within a five-mile radius of each of the DFSS’ six CSCs. Source and distribute food to selected pantries. Ensure that pantry coverage near DFSS CSCs operates at a minimum from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. DFSS prefers to have some pantries open for extended evening and weekend hours.
2. **Homeless and domestic violence shelters:** Source and distribute produce, including fruit and vegetables, to the DFSS homeless and domestic violence shelter network every two weeks. Currently, there are 53 homeless shelters and four domestic violence shelters (this number may fluctuate with the new RFP cycle and contracts awarded). Additionally, provide holiday foods to homeless and domestic violence shelters identified by DFSS throughout the city.
3. **Community Service Centers (CSCs):** Source and distribute holiday foods, including Thanksgiving and the Winter Holiday Season, to the six CSCs for families participating in case management services. Each year, approximately 500 turkeys and 500 hams will be sourced and distributed across all centers.
4. **Special circumstances:** If needed, source and distribute additional food upon demand due to an emergency, natural disaster, and/or special request.

In addition, the Selected Respondent must demonstrate the ability to meet the following requirements:

Food sourcing and distribution requirements

- Food pantries:
 - Source and distribute at least 1.2 million pounds of food per year to pantries
 - Develop order menu for pantries (minimum biweekly distribution)
 - Source and distribute both non-perishable and perishable items such as fruits, vegetables, dairy items, and meat at pantries
 - Ensure that pantries offer services to underserved populations including those that are disabled, homeless, with limited English proficiency, etc.
- Homeless and domestic violence shelters:
 - Source and distribute at least .5 million pounds of food per year to shelters
 - Source and distribute produce to homeless and domestic violence shelters every two weeks
- Meet the varied needs of the populations served by DFSS, including the ability to address nutritional needs and dietary constraints due to age, allergies or medical conditions, veganism and vegetarianism, and religious practices at pantries.

Staff and facility requirements

- Possess adequate space to store up to a three-month reserve of food
- Maintain a staff of qualified food handlers at both the main facility and food pantry sites
- Maintain and monitor pantries and homeless/domestic violence shelters to maintain City of Chicago and Federal sanitation standards. Minimum pantry requirements include:
 - Two staff members or volunteers to manage and operate the food program
 - Two people with food sanitation certificates
 - Pest-proof containers with tight fitting lids to store dry products such as rice, cereal, and beans
 - Shelving
 - Reliable phone number and e-mail address
- Maintain an adequate labor force to perform necessary tasks (i.e., truck drivers for food delivery, food packagers, and inventory control staff)

Other requirements

- Conduct annual site visits at food pantries, homeless shelters, and domestic violence shelters to ensure the sanitary storage of food for distribution
- Post written pest control plan and contract with professional exterminator
- Provide the policy and criteria for determining the acceptability of donated foods for use in the program
- Work closely with DFSS to redesign the program if needed to respond to population shifts or a variety of population groups or any other changes or needs
- Conduct surveys at the food pantry network sites to secure patron feedback to be incorporated into the service delivery program model
- Provide food pantry networks with referral information to other resources (i.e., other pantries, soup kitchens, other programs to access food)

Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) requirements

- Sign and submit GFPP Commitment
- Submit monthly, itemized record of each fruit, vegetable, meat/poultry, dairy, and grain products purchased during the contract period. Items to include: 1) product name, 2) unit type purchased, 3) number of units purchased, 4) volume per unit, 5) name and location of each supplier along the supply chain, and 6) total dollar amount spent for each product to include the price per unit and farm or ranch sourced. Reporting forms to be provided.
- Submit mutually agreed upon data requests to Chicago Food Policy Action Council
- Incorporate GFPP recommendations when feasible

Pantry locations

Selected Respondent must provide and maintain a listing of suggested pantries, with the recommended funding allotment for use by each site, under this program. This pantry listing must include the following minimum information: 1) Name, 2) Address, 3) Pantry Ward/Community Area locations, 4) Hours/days of operation, and 5) Miles to CSC.

DFSS Community Service Center locations

Englewood Center
1140 W. 79th St.
Chicago, IL 60620

Garfield Center
10 S. Kedzie Ave.
Chicago, IL 60612

King Center
4314 S. Cottage Grove Ave.
Chicago, IL 60653

North Area
845 W. Wilson Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640

South Chicago
8650 S. Commercial Ave.
Chicago, IL 60617

Trina Davila
4312 W. North Ave.
Chicago, IL 60639

2025 DFSS designated homeless shelter locations

These locations are subject to change after the current RFP and contract cycle. There are five DV shelters not listed due to confidentiality.

Agency Name	Program/Site Name	Site Address
A Little Bit of Heaven	A Little Bit of Heaven Emergency Overnight Shelter	11321 S Wentworth
A Safe Haven Foundation	A Safe Haven Youth-Dedicated Shelter Program	2750 W. Roosevelt
A Safe Haven Foundation	A Safe Haven West	3757 W Polk & 807-11 S Springfield
A Safe Haven Foundation	ASHF Interim Shelter Program	2750 W. Roosevelt
Breakthrough Urban Ministries, Inc.	Breakthrough Interim Housing Program - Men's Center	402 N St. Louis
Breakthrough Urban Ministries, Inc.	Breakthrough Interim Housing Program - Women's Center	3330 W Carroll
Casa Central Social Services Corporation	La Posada Interim Housing Program I	1322 N. Kedzie
Casa Central Social Services Corporation	La Posada Interim Housing Program II	3221 W. Evergreen
Casa Central Social Services Corporation	La Posada Interim Housing Program III	2744 W Evergreen
Christian Community Health Center	Amani House	8025 S. Honore
Cornerstone Community Outreach	Hannah Shelter for Families	4628 N. Clifton
Cornerstone Community Outreach	Naomi Shelter for Women	4615 N. Clifton
Cornerstone Community Outreach	Naomi Shelter for Men	5253 N Kenmore Avenue
Cornerstone Community Outreach	Sylvia Shelter for Families	4615 N. Clifton
Covenant House Illinois	Covenant House Illinois Interim Residential Program	2934 W. Lake Street
Deborah's Place	Teresa's Interim Housing	1532 N. Sedgwick
Featherfist	Hope Village	7852 S. Essex
Franciscan Outreach	Franciscan House of Mary and Joseph	2715 W. Harrison
Franciscan Outreach	Franciscan Annex	200 S. Sacramento
Franciscan Outreach	Franciscan House-Pilsen	1856 S. Loomis
Good News Partners	New Life Interim Housing	1600 W. Jonquil Terrace
La Casa Norte	Casa Corazon Emergency Beds Program	1736 W. 47th Street

La Casa Norte	Casa Corazon Emergency Beds Program	1940 N. California
La Casa Norte	Casa Corazon Pregnant & Parenting Emergency Beds Program	1942 N. California
Lincoln Park Community Services	Lincoln Park Community Shelter	600 W Fullerton
Lincoln Park Community Services	Lincoln Park Community Services Interim Housing Program - Sedgwick	1521 N Sedgwick
Margaret's Village	Believe Shelter	9519 S. Commercial
Margaret's Village	Maria Shelter	7320 S. Yale
Olive Branch Mission	Lamplight Adult Singles/Women & Men	6310 S. Claremont
Olive Branch Mission	Lamplight Adult Singles/Men	544 W. 123rd Street
Olive Branch Mission	Lamplight Families	6310 S. Claremont
Primo Center for Women and Children	The Primo Center's Interim Housing Program - Madison	4952 W. Madison
Primo Center for Women and Children	The Primo Center's Interim Housing Program - Sangamon	6212 S. Sangamon
Sarah's Circle	Sarah's Circle Interim Housing Program	1005 W Leland
St. Leonard's Ministries	St. Leonard's House Interim Housing for Formerly Incarcerated Men	2100 W Warren Blvd
St. Leonard's Ministries	St. Leonard's House Interim Housing Grace House	1801 W Adams
The Boulevard of Chicago Inc.	Respite/Assessment	3456 W Franklin Blvd
The Inner Voice	Pioneer House Interim Housing Program	4458 W Jackson
The Night Ministry	Interim Program at Open Door Shelter - West Town	1110 N Noble Street
The Night Ministry	The Crib	1735 N Ashland
The Salvation Army	EHARC	924 N. Christiana
The Salvation Army	The Evangeline Booth Lodge Family Interim Shelter	800 W. Lawrence Ave
Unity Parenting and Counseling, Inc.	Ujima Village Low Threshold Shelter for Youth	7320 S. Yale

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

For food distribution to local food pantries

- Number of pantries and the hours of operation (minimum 99 pantries)
- Number of pounds of food delivered to selected food pantries (minimum 1.2 million pounds annually)
- Number of people served (minimum 350,000 annually)
- Pantry satisfaction with delivery and quality of food product received (as determined by surveys distributed by the Respondent and completed by pantries)

For food distribution to shelters

- Number of pounds of food distributed to shelters (minimum .5 million pounds)

- Number of shelters participating in the program (minimum 50)
- Number of deliveries to shelters (every two weeks)
- Number of people served (minimum 10,000 – data will be tracked and submitted to DFSS by shelter partners)
- Shelter satisfaction with delivery and quality of food products received (as determined by surveys completed by shelters)

For Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP)

To monitor and acknowledge progress toward the implementation of the GFPP, DFSS intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- Signed GFPP Commitment
- Submission of annual report with an itemized record of the fruit, vegetable, meat/poultry, dairy, and grain products purchased during the contract period.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, Human Service Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

Reporting requirements

- Develop daily, weekly, and monthly reports that represent inventory, individual pantry and homeless and domestic violence shelter budget and distribution, and overall program budget
- Submit monthly report that includes number of individuals and households served by pantry (including demographics), number of pounds of food distributed to pantries, and number of pounds of produce distributed to shelters
- Maintain a database/method to track the distribution of all products to all entities under the three program models
- Establish and maintain on file agreements with selected Respondent's selected pantries, DFSS homeless and domestic violence shelters, and outside donations to receive food in accordance with DFSS guidelines, to include nondiscrimination policy
- Monitor pantries and shelters receiving food and services at least once a year to ensure the activities and operations of the pantries and shelters adhere to eligibility criteria, residency requirements, and confirm the adequacy of storage of commodities. It is the responsibility of the Selected Respondent to take necessary actions to correct deficiencies identified through monitoring of distribution sites.

- Provide brief, year-end program report highlighting performance strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations to DFSS to improve program goal.
- Provide other reports upon request.

F. Guidance for respondents

Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement. In addition, respondents must provide the following:

- Documentation demonstrating adequate warehouse and storage capacity to meet facility requirements in section C. Program Activities and Requirements section of the RFP.
- Food safety and handling plan outlining protocols for the proper storage, handling, and distribution of food items to ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal health regulations. This plan should include inventory management system(s), staff training procedures, food safety certifications, and measures for preventing contamination and spoilage including regular cleaning and sanitation protocols to maintain hygienic food storage and distribution areas.
- Provide current or proposed policy and criteria for accepting donated foods for use in the program.
- Provide current or proposed pest control plan and contract with professional exterminator.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate making one award of up to \$1,006,000 per year depending on the size of their proposed program. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received: 1
 Projects funded: 1
 Range of funding: 1,006,000
 Total funding: 1,006,000

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public, all units of government and sister agencies. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

Staffing

The wages of the staff who are employed by the respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the respondent must meet the City's minimum wage requirements found here https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/bacp/supp_info/minimumwageinformation.html.

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the agency/agencies. The respondent must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant, provide job descriptions and resumes of staff and explain time allocation for each person (full-time, part-time, as well as hourly), as well as job descriptions for any vacant positions or new positions that will be created because of this funding opportunity. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, applicable life experience, and expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g., salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement).

The Department of Family and Support Services, [city partners, and stakeholders have worked together to define the components of a quality job](#). The City of Chicago believes that every resident should have access to a quality job that focuses on livable wages, stable and fair scheduling, safety and security within the workplace, voice and representation, work that is purposeful and meaningful, with opportunity for learning and development, comprehensive benefits, within a healthy environment and culture. More information on the components of a quality job can be found here [The Good Jobs & Equity Project - Results for America \(results4america.org\)](#).

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent must demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the target population, including both their strengths and assets, as well as the challenges and needs they face. • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group and demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery. • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves. 	<p>20</p>
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight and management and has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff. • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls. • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to securely collect and store key participant and performance data. 	<p>20</p>
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence based and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has strong existing partnerships with shelter providers and food pantries or demonstrates a strong plan to identify and build partnerships to enable their program and outcomes. • The Respondent has additional partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way 	<p>35</p>
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent demonstrates the ability to disaggregate and assess data to identify disparities or gaps in service delivery 	<p>15</p>
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program. • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) 	<p>10</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan.	
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Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Division on Domestic Violence: Legal Services for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking (RFP# 10118)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Division on Gender-Based Violence (DGBV) seeks applications from organizations to provide direct legal representation for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and human trafficking (HT). The goal of the GBV/HT Legal Services program is to enhance safety and stability for survivors through seeking legal remedies in court (criminal and/or civil), immigration, housing, and other systems in trauma-informed and culturally specific ways. This can include legal representation of survivors, where a licensed attorney represents the survivor in court proceedings in family court, immigration court, or other legal proceedings. It also includes advising survivors of their rights under various State, Federal, and Local laws and the subsequent enforcement of those rights, as necessary.

GBV and human trafficking disproportionately impact women of color, indigenous women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, immigrants, and people with disabilities. It is a human rights violation and a public health crisis. GBV is a form of discrimination and recognized as a manifestation of unequal power. GBV is bias-based harm caused by one's bias against another person's gender identity. Harm acts can include, but not limited to domestic violence, sexual violence/assault and/or exploitation, human trafficking, and/or workplace violence. Human trafficking includes anyone who is compelled, through force, fraud, or coercion, for the purposes of commercial sex or forced labor.

The GBV/HT Legal Services Program seeks applicants that have a demonstrated history of representing survivors to intervene on survivors' behalf in seeking interventions, enforcement of legal rights, legal immigration status, and/or financial restitution to reduce the violence and instability they experience.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners

- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services – one that moves the department beyond measuring *how many* people receive services, to focus on how Chicagoans *leave better off* after receiving services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund. For more information on DFSS's commitment to outcomes, please visit: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/department-strategic-framework.html

Division Priorities

The primary goal of the Division on Gender-Based Violence (DGBV) is to enhance the safety and well-being of survivors, and their children, of gender-based violence through delegate agencies that provide direct services and in collaboration with stakeholders for better coordination of services.

Current DGBV funding sustains community-based agencies to provide counseling and legal advocacy, case management, legal services, hotel stays and rapid rehousing, cash assistance, monitored child visitation services, training and education, and other supportive services. Additionally, DGBV works with city, county, state, and community partners to raise awareness on GBV for better screening, response, and coordination of services.

Definitions

Gender-based Violence (GBV): Harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. GBV is an umbrella term for a range of interpersonal violence including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. Domestic violence and sexual assault are thought of subset behaviors of GBV, while human trafficking is not exclusively a GBV behavior.

Domestic violence (DV): A learned harmful behavior used to gain and maintain control over another person within the context of an intimate partner, family, or household relationship. An intimate partner can be a boyfriend or girlfriend, dating partner, sexual partner, or spouse, and is not limited to someone with whom the survivor has been sexually intimate.

Sexual assault (SA): Any sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the survivor. Some forms of sexual assault include attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, forcing a survivor to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body, and penetration of the survivor's body, also known as rape.

Human Trafficking (HT): When an individual is compelled through force, fraud and/or coercion for the purposes of commercial sex and/or forced labor. For minors engaged in commercial sex, force, fraud and/or coercion is not required to be proven. Though HT is often fueled by bias-based harm, it is not exclusively GBV.

Stalking: Behavior which includes following a person, conducting surveillance of the person, appearing at the person's home, work or school, making unwanted phone calls, sending unwanted emails, unwanted messages via social media, or text messages, leaving objects for the person, vandalizing the persons property

or injuring a pet.

B. Program Goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

Goals

This RFP seeks to increase survivor safety by providing legal services and representation for survivors who may not otherwise have access to these services. Respondents will educate survivors about their rights under the Federal, State, and local laws and provide legal advice and representation by accessing legal protections and remedies available. Protections can include but not limited to seeking protective orders (including Orders of Protection, Civil No Contact Orders, and Stalking No Contact Orders), sole custody of the residence and dissolution of marriage, accessing child support, or seeking immigration relief. The objective in providing these services is to achieve increased safety and well-being for survivors of GBV and/or HT.

Objectives include:

- Provision of legal services to meet the individualized needs of survivors
- Collaboration with and training for local partners (e.g., service providers, criminal justice professionals, members of the judiciary, community and faith-based organizations) to ensure survivors are properly identified and referred for appropriate legal and social services
- Assistance or referrals to other essential services for survivors
- Data collection and participation in evaluation activities to determine if the program is meeting stated goals and objectives

Best Practices

Providing legal representation to survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking offers them essential legal remedies to address and combat the violence they experience. “Civil legal services improve the likelihood that women will be able to obtain protective orders from courts, which is a significant factor in reducing rates of domestic violence. In fact, studies have shown that the availability of civil legal aid can be effective in reducing rates of violence, and even more effective than alternative interventions such as the provision of shelters or counseling services.”⁷ “Because legal services help women with practical matters (such as protective orders, custody, and child support), they appear to actually present women with real, long-term alternatives to their relationships.”⁸

Theories of Change

Legal representation under this program will offer legal remedies to survivors who would otherwise not be able to afford legal representation. Legal services and representation will be provided to all survivors seeking assistance regardless of ethnicity, gender, income status, language ability, race, or sexual orientation. In addition, legal service providers will provide emotionally supportive crisis counseling and safety planning as needed. Survivors of GBV/HT need increased access to legal services, as survivors often have complex legal needs that stretch across legal fields. Having access to these solutions empowers survivors to embark on their path to recovery, enhancing their safety by distancing them from the individual responsible for harm. Furthermore, it broadens the avenue to justice by providing survivors with access to their rights and remedies under the law.

⁷ Supporting Survivors: The Economic Benefits of Providing Civil Legal Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence, Jennifer S. Rosenberg and Denise A. Grab, Institute for Policy Integrity, New York University School of Law, July 2015

⁸ Farmer, Amy and Tiefenthaler, Jill, “Explaining the Recent Decline in Domestic Violence”, Contemporary Economic Policy, Volume 21 Issue 2, 2003

Current state and priorities for improvement

Domestic violence, sexual violence/assault, stalking, and human trafficking often involve similar dynamics of power and control, increasing the chances that vulnerable people experience multiple victimizations. For example, a survivor of human trafficking may be in an intimate relationship with, and have been sexually assaulted by, their trafficker.⁹ When analyzing current statistics and significant factors, it is important to recognize the intersectionality of these four victimizations. This recognition is critical because survivors may have experienced complex traumas that intertwine and intensify across the different forms of gender-based violence.

Providing legal representation to GBV/HT survivors offers ways to enhance their safety from the violence they experience. Research has shown that civil legal services support domestic violence survivors in obtaining orders of protections, which have a demonstrated impact in reducing rates of violence.¹⁰ Further, legal services provide additional options for DV survivors and their family to seek alternate relationships or opportunities that are aligned with their preferences for safety and well-being.¹¹

For sexual assault survivors, avenues for legal assistance include representation in criminal court and assistance in civil law issues. Law enforcement and the criminal legal system's responses to the needs of sexual assault survivors has led to low reporting rates of sexual assault cases. Because of this, there is a heightened emphasis on how legal service providers can respond to immediate needs to reduce the threat of sexual violence in survivors' lives. Primary remedies sought through legal services include brief consultation and/or full representation for matters of protective orders, criminal issues, privacy, educational issues (including Title IX cases), housing issues, and immigration issues.¹²

Legal services for survivors of human trafficking serve to safeguard their rights. "Survivors may face concurrent cases in the federal criminal court, local criminal court, immigration court, and local civil court—all related to the trafficking scheme, all at the same time".¹³ A study conducted from a human trafficking clinic cites at least a third of case clients requiring legal services.¹⁴ In this same report, the most common need among survivors seeking services was a T-visa (45%) or other immigration services (45%). Undocumented immigrants face challenges that make them particularly susceptible to human trafficking and

⁹ *Fact Sheet: The Intersection of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking | Center for Court Innovation*. <https://www.courtinnovation.org/publications/fact-sheet-intersection-domestic-violence-sexual-assault-and-human-trafficking>. Accessed 30 Nov. 2021.

¹⁰ Rosenberg, J. S., & Grab, D. A. (2015). *Supporting survivors - policy integrity*. Retrieved February 10, 2022, from <https://policyintegrity.org/documents/SupportingSurvivors.pdf>

¹¹ Farmer, A. and Tiefenthaler, J. (2003), Explaining the Recent Decline in Domestic Violence. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 21: 158-172. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cep/byg002>

¹² Palmer, Jane, and Stacy Malone. *Civil Legal Needs of Survivors of Sexual Assault*. 2019, <https://ncvc.dspacedirect.org/handle/20.500.11990/1554>.

¹³ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime . (2015). *The Legal Rights and Needs of Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States*. Retrieved February 10, 2022, from https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/media/document/HT_Legal_Rights_Needs_fact_sheet-508.pdf

¹⁴ The Justice in Government Project. (2021). *KEY STUDIES AND DATA ABOUT HOW LEGAL AID CAN ASSIST HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS*. Retrieved April 3, 2024, from <https://legallaidresourcesdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/human-trafficking.pdf>

other forms of gender-based violence, with 32% of calls to the Human Trafficking Hotline with “high indicators for trafficking referencing foreign nationals” .¹⁵ For undocumented immigrants, providing legal services to support their legal status to remain in the U.S. can lead to an increased sense of safety and security, a path to employment authorization for jobs where exploitation is less likely, and educational opportunities.¹⁶

Survivors, having endured trauma from violence, often witness the erosion of their basic needs such as food and housing, typically provided by the person who caused harm. Access to legal services becomes crucial to enhance their safety through court-ordered protections that consider their rights to custody and property as they escape the violence. Moreover, survivors who are vulnerable in terms of income and housing often require legal intervention and advocacy to navigate their path to independence. The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated the challenges faced by survivors of GBV and human trafficking in accessing basic needs, sustaining income and stability, and securing legal representation. In response to these challenges, DFSS aims to increase the availability of legal services for survivors of all forms of GBV and HT.

Between 2022-2024, the Legal Services for GBV/HT Survivors program, funded through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, served 970 survivors. Over 25% of those survivors received immigration services and 25% received assistance with family law cases. Across both the Legal Services for GBV/HT Survivors and Legal Services for DV Survivors programs currently existing within DGBV, 88% of survivors believed that the services helped them find ways to keep them safe. Over 90% of survivors felt better informed of their legal options after engaging with the program.

Target Population

Any Chicago resident (and their children) who has been the victim of gender-based violence and/or human-trafficking seeking legal representation is eligible for services.

Respondents should be able to offer services to underserved populations including undocumented survivors, those who do not speak English, all genders, those who are disabled, and LGBTQIA survivors. Respondents must demonstrate that they have a referral system in place to receive referrals from domestic violence organizations, rape crisis centers, community-based organizations, law enforcement, and more.

DFSS expects programs:

- Provide specialized legal services to GBV/HT survivors.
- Specialize in serving communities of survivors with greater barriers to access and retention and those who are disproportionately impacted by GBV/HT.
- Collaborate and form partnerships with community based GBV/HT organizations that can offer services and support to survivors.
- Provide training and technical assistance to the field to increase the identification of survivors and link them to appropriate services and supports.

The general and focus populations are summarized below:

¹⁵ National Human Trafficking Hotline. (2020, April 7). *The Victims*. National Human Trafficking Hotline. Retrieved February 10, 2022, from <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/what-human-trafficking/human-trafficking/victims>

¹⁶ City Bar Justice Center. (2016). *MEASURING THE IMPACT OF LEGAL SERVICES ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS*. Retrieved February 10, 2022, from <https://www.citybarjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/images/stories/pdfs/impact-of-legal-services-on-human-trafficking-survivors.pdf>

Population	Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons or households experiencing GBV such as domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and/or human trafficking. 	Basis of overarching eligibility, outreach, and referral strategy; all participants must meet this threshold
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGBTQIA+ Male identified survivors Immigrant and/or culturally specific services 	Focused outreach, engagement efforts, and service strategies by programs to encourage and facilitate services to these populations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undocumented households Non-native English speakers Survivors with disabilities 	Targeted strategies to overcome anticipated barriers of access to these populations.

C. Program Activities and Requirements

Legal Services for GBV/HT program agencies will provide legal services by licensed attorneys and/or Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) accredited professionals that will provide assistance and representation in a trauma-informed and culturally specific way to GBV/HT survivors as described above in the Target Population section. Legal services programs will represent survivors in the GBV definition criteria and those that serve specific focus populations. Legal services will be survivor-centered and delivered by trauma-informed, culturally, and linguistically competent staff.

DFSS encourages leadership and staff receive ongoing training opportunities in trauma-informed care, culturally specific services, and GBV/HT. Legal services agencies will provide legal representation and assistance with completing the paperwork when seeking an Order of Protection, child custody, child support, dissolution of marriage, and immigration issues in domestic violence and family courts. Legal service providers will provide assistance to survivors seeking legal resolutions available under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), including stalking no contact orders, U-Visas for crime victims, and T-Visas for survivors of trafficking. Respondents can also propose funded partnerships to support the legal process (not including rental or housing assistance).

The list below outlines allowable services:

- **Civil Litigation**
 - Civil No Contact Order
 - Stalking No Contact Order
 - Charges of Human Trafficking
 - Violations of labor/employment laws
- **Family Law**
 - Protection/restraining order
 - Separation/divorce, child custody, guardianship, and/or adoption for survivors related to their traffickers
- **Employment Law**
 - Violations of Fair Labor Standards Act, minimum wage laws, or contract laws.
- **Housing Law**
 - Defense under Safe Homes Act/Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
- **Public Benefits Access**
 - Health and Human Services: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid
 - Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)
 - Refugee cash assistance

- Refugee medical assistance
 - Refugee social services and targeted assistance
 - Voluntary agencies matching grant program
- **Criminal Law**
 - Sealing/expungement of records for survivors forced to commit crimes under trafficking
- **Immigration**
 - Continued presence
 - T-Visa
 - U-Visa
 - VAWA self-petitions/cancellation of removal
 - Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SUS)
- **Victim rights representation**

Respondents must demonstrate the ability to deliver, at a minimum, all the following services, or provide a clear referral pathway to a program or agency that can deliver the particular service if the program does not provide those (for example, referral pathways between a family law program and immigration program within the same agency or a different agency with a Memorandum of Understanding between the agencies):

Accepting Survivors

- Respond to a request for legal services within 48 hours and closely coordinate with other project grantees to refer survivors when at capacity or unable to meet their specific need.
- Provide services that are responsive to the cultural background and circumstances of the communities and individuals they serve.
- Take referrals from crisis hotlines (e.g., DV Hotline, Rape Crisis Hotline, and/or the I Human Trafficking Hotline), community-based organizations, or from law enforcement.
- Provide services without charging survivors fees for representation.
- Assist survivors to create a safety plan for himself/herself and his/her children.

Advising and Representing Survivors

- Provide survivors an explanation of survivor rights and protections.
- Provide survivors with legal advice and legal counseling.
- Provide services in a survivor-centered way while supporting their choices and decisions.
- Communicate with survivor what they may expect to occur in court or other interviews, meetings or hearings.
- Ensure that all legal representation is provided by an attorney with a license to practice in Illinois, whereas legal advice and services are provided by an attorney with a license to practice Illinois or a BJA accredited professional.
- Refer clients to emotionally supportive crisis counseling if ongoing supportive counseling is needed.
- Refer clients to appropriate services, public benefits, shelter, etc., through partnering, entering into Memorandum of Understandings, or linkage agreements with GBV/HT community-based organizations.
- At a minimum, each staff person providing services is trained to provide services to the focus population including but not limited to trauma-informed care, domestic or sexual violence/assault or human trafficking certification, and cultural competency. For new or untrained staff, certification training must be completed within 90 days from date of hire or contract start date.
- Assist survivors with completion paperwork or other steps necessary to petition for a Protective Order (which includes an Order of Protection, Civil No Contact Order, and Stalking No Contact Order).
- Represent survivors in family court and other court activity related to GBV/HT cases.

- Represent survivors seeking legal resolutions available under VAWA such as U-Visas for crime survivors, T-Visas for survivors of trafficking, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Survivors Economic, Security and Safety Act (VESSA), etc.
- Intervene with civil or criminal court or law enforcement on survivor’s behalf.
- Advocate on survivor’s behalf with civil or criminal court or law enforcement.
- Advocate on survivor’s behalf with a third party with the Department of Children and Family Services, survivor’s employer, housing provider, Illinois Department of Human Services, etc.
- If any court ceases or restricts in-person appearances, programs must provide court representation remotely accordingly.

Data Collection

- Enter data into InfoNet and submit quarterly data through DFSS template on survivor demographic and services.
- Assist survivor to complete DGBV-issued Evaluation of Services Survey (ESS). Copies of written surveys will be submitted to DGBV.
- Maintain attorney/client privilege.
- Participate in minimum monthly cohort meetings with DFSS to determine performance measurement outcomes on GBV/HT survivors to inform and guide services impact and improvement.

Community Education and Outreach

- Provide community education workshops and/or outreach events to educate the general public and allied service providers about GBV/HT survivor rights, remedies, and services available.
- Collaborate with and receive referrals from GBV/HT community-based organizations.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client’s next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

The Division on Gender-based Violence conducted a needs assessment, collecting information and feedback from both service providers in the community and survivors themselves. The two highest needs identified were mental health and housing support. Legal Service providers must be able to provide support and referral to these critical services as requested by survivors.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

Minimum Staff Training Requirements

Below are the minimum training requirements by the type of GBV services proposed. Proposed programs applying for funding in this program are not limited to the minimum training or certification requirements. Respondents must demonstrate that staff working directly with survivors have minimum training and appropriate certifications.

All staff providing direct service must have completed, or be willing to complete, specialized training within 90 days of the contract’s start date. Staff hired during the contract period must complete training, or have scheduled a training, within 90 days of their hire date.

Type of Participants Served	Training Required*
Domestic Violence (DV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each staff person providing direct service must have, at a minimum, 40 hours of DV training from an accredited agency listed with the Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professional (ICDVP) Board. Each staff person providing direct service must complete Illinois DCFS’s Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters, found here: https://mr.dcfstraining.org/
Human Trafficking (HT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each staff person providing direct service must have, at minimum, a 2-hour training from an agency or entity specializing in human trafficking. This training must include both topics of sex and labor trafficking. The agency or entity must also be able to provide a certificate or other form of written document attesting to the individual’s completion of the training. Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training
Sexual Assault (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 hours of SA training in accordance with the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) standards or 60-hour SA/DV training in accordance with both ICASA and ICDVP standards. Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training
Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum 2-hour intro to GBV or GBV 101 to be provided by DFSS or equivalent from another provider Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training

***Note: DFSS reserves the right to review all training materials in advance.**

Beyond the training requirements:

- Respondents must describe other certification or ongoing training opportunities for staff related to other types of gender-based violence such as stalking, sexual assault and human trafficking.
- Respondents must describe other ongoing training offerings for staff on trauma-informed, survivor-driven, and culturally competent service delivery.
- DFSS encourages respondents to provide staff with training opportunities during the contract period intended to enhance survivor services and offer professional development opportunities.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor

a set of performance indicators that may include, but is not limited to:

- 50% of survivors seeking a Protective Order with the assistance of the program will be granted a Protective Order.
- 33% of survivors seeking a Protective Order with the assistance of the program will be granted a Protective Order.
- 80% of Evaluation of Services Survey (ESS) Respondents know more about available community resources.
- 80% of ESS Respondents felt supported in making their own decisions.
- 80% of ESS Respondents better understand what happens at court.
- 80% of ESS Respondents would tell a community member in a similar situation about this program.
- 80% of ESS Respondents agreed they were given information on how laws can provide protection.
- 80% of ESS Respondents agree that the program and staff were helpful and that they received the legal assistance they needed.

In order to monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- Number of participants enrolled and their community area (can be provided through aggregate zip code data and/or InfoNet report on zip code).
- Number of participants who discuss safety options with the survivor.
- Number of participants who receive an explanation of their rights under all GV/HT laws, regulations and policies.
- Number of participants represented in Circuit and Federal courts.
- Number of participants receiving assistance with legal resolutions other than Protective Orders.
- Number of participants assisted with family reunification processes.
- Number of applications filed for legal status/work authorization issues.
- Number of participants assisted with finding safe housing.
- Number of participants who received representation in civil matters.
- Number of participants who received restitution and amount per receipt per participant.
- Number of participants who received criminal record expungement or vacatur.
- Number of community education/awareness workshops presented by delegates that educate attendees about the dynamics of gender-based violence and highlight available resources.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress. DGBV will also be requesting that delegate agencies track the co-occurrence of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence and provide zip codes of survivors served.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Division on Gender-Based Violence seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract as follows:

- Quarterly reports must be submitted to the Division on Gender-Based Violence (DGBV) via Excel Workbooks and data entry into InfoNet. Respondents are required to collect and submit data in InfoNet and agree to provide DFSS authorization to generate reports that include both project specific and GBV program-wide service data. Delegate agencies that do not have an appropriate project in InfoNet must set one up by the quarter two of the first award year.
- Client information must be entered to accurately reflect the new and existing clients the agency is serving.
- Agencies are also expected to submit evaluation of services surveys through electronic links provided by DGBV or paper.
- These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.
- DFSS also reserves the right to conduct analysis on data to ensure services are offered and provided to survivors fairly by gender, race and ethnicity.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases as specified in the Illinois Domestic Violence Act. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS through InfoNet. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

F. Application guidance for respondents

Respondents must include a proposed budget for operating the program for a 12 month or one year period, using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Proposals must provide attachments of required documentation as described in the application.

- Completed job description forms for every staff person listed on personnel budget. Available at: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/delegate-agency-contracting-documents.html)
- Up-to-date resume for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff
- Proof of 40-hour domestic violence training, or other appropriate and equivalent training certificate for the survivor population served such as 40-hour sexual assault training, from an accredited training institute for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff. For untrained staff, Respondent must instead attach policy regarding training plan for untrained staff.
- Formal written linkage agreements with gender-based violence agencies to provide on-going counseling, legal, or victim advocacy services (if the Respondent does not provide any of these directly)
- Formal written linkage agreements with other gender-based violence agencies to provide services to other survivors of domestic violence (non-IPV) protected under the IDVA (if the Respondent does not provide these services themselves)
- A list of other formal written linkage agreements between the Respondent and other services providers that enhance the array of services offered to survivors. The list should detail who the linkages are with and what services they agree to provide for your participants.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must

be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028. DFSS may extend this term up to two additional years, with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding.

DFSS anticipates that each award will be between \$320,000 - \$400,000 depending on the size of their proposed program for a total funding availability of \$1,600,000. DFSS anticipates funding 4 to 5 agencies. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant funds and Corporate funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the Community Development Block Grant must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received:	5
Projects funded:	3
Range of funding:	\$48,000 – 66,000
Total funding:	\$180,669

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group and demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves 	25
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery, including adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to securely collect and store key participant and performance data, including data quality assurance 	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines legal services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence based and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and engaging program participants (including rules/regulations that reduce barriers to participation) • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way, including existing linkages to mental health counseling and housing resources, and describes client screening for these needs 	30
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent demonstrates their experience in disaggregating data to identify disparities in their program delivery <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	15
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program 	10

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan.	
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Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, legal specialty service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Division on Domestic Violence: Multi-Disciplinary Team for Survivors of Gender Based Violence (RFP# 53659)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The goal of the Gender Based Violence Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) is to reduce gender-based violence homicides in Chicago through specialized response to high-risk households. This RFP seeks organizations to proactively engage via phone with survivors of gender-based violence referred by the participating Chicago Police Department: Zone 1 includes Police Districts 003 and 004 and Zone 2 includes Police District 014. Respondents applying to Zone 1 are proposing to serve Districts 003 and 004 and Respondents applying to Zone 2 are proposing to serve District 014. Respondents may choose to apply for Zone 1, Zone 2, or both. Respondents must submit one application and budget per Zone.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/department-strategic-framework.html) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services – one that moves the department beyond measuring *how many* people receive services, to focus on how Chicagoans *leave better off* after receiving services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund. For more information on DFSS's commitment to outcomes, please visit: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/department-strategic-framework.html

Division Priorities

The primary goal of the Division on Gender-Based Violence (DGBV) is to enhance the safety and well-being of survivors, and their children, of gender-based violence through delegate agencies that provide direct services and in collaboration with stakeholders for better coordination of services.

Current DGBV funding sustains community-based agencies to provide counseling and legal advocacy, case management, legal services, hotel stays and rapid rehousing, cash assistance, monitored child visitation services, training and education, and other supportive services. Additionally, DGBV works with city, county, state, and community partners to raise awareness on GBV for better screening, response, and coordination of services.

Definitions

Gender-based Violence (GBV): Harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. GBV is an umbrella term for a range of interpersonal violence including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. Domestic violence and sexual assault are thought of subset behaviors of GBV, while human trafficking is not exclusively a GBV behavior.

Domestic violence (DV): A learned harmful behavior used to gain and maintain control over another person within the context of an intimate partner, family, or household relationship. An intimate partner can be a boyfriend or girlfriend, dating partner, sexual partner, or spouse, and is not limited to someone with whom the survivor has been sexually intimate.

Sexual assault (SA): Any sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the survivor. Some forms of sexual assault include attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, forcing a survivor to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body, and penetration of the survivor's body, also known as rape.

Human Trafficking (HT): When an individual is compelled through force, fraud and/or coercion for the purposes of commercial sex and/or forced labor. For minors engaged in commercial sex, force, fraud and/or coercion is not required to be proven. Though HT is often fueled by bias-based harm, it is not exclusively GBV.

Stalking: Behavior which includes following a person, conducting surveillance of the person, appearing at the person's home, work or school, making unwanted phone calls, sending unwanted emails, unwanted messages via social media, or text messages, leaving objects for the person, vandalizing the persons property or injuring a pet.

B. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

Goals

This RFP seeks to increase domestic violence survivor safety by identifying survivors at elevated risk of future violence, including death, by contacting survivors immediately after a violent incident to engage them with services such as mental health, legal advocacy and representation, medical care and other services as requested. Proactive outreach can enhance survivor safety, especially to survivors who may not seek services on their own.

Theories of Change

This RFP seeks proactive and timely telephone outreach and follow-up to survivors of domestic violence referred to the MDT selected delegate agency. Officers from participating CPD districts (003, 004, and 014) complete a domestic violence assessment when responding to an incident where domestic violence has occurred. CPD must obtain the survivor's consent to then forward the assessment to the MDT delegate agency. The delegate must review the assessment, determine survivor risk, and attempt multiple timely contacts as needed to reach the survivor and offer services. Direct, timely contact with the survivor increases the likelihood of their safety by connecting them with services. Delegates may connect survivors to their own programs or other service providers more conveniently located for the survivor and that can meet their identified needs. Preference will be given to RFP Respondents that are able to enroll and provide services to the survivor so that survivors are more than likely to accept services without a third-party referral or having to seek services on their own.

Best Practices

Multi-disciplinary teams utilize the skills, knowledge and best practices from multiple service organizations or stakeholders in order to provide a curated service that is catered to the specific need of each survivor of domestic violence. A multidisciplinary approach helps to ensure that a survivor is treated respectfully, compassionately, and with dignity.

The Domestic Violence Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) provides specialized criminal justice and survivor services in cases of domestic violence, specifically intimate-partner violence, through a multi-disciplinary response. MDT partners include the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO), the Chicago Police Department (CPD), Office of Probation, Family Rescue, Connections for Abused Women and their children (CAWC), Life-Span Center for Legal Services, and Cook County Adult Probation. Currently, there are four participating CPD districts – 003, 004, 005 and 014. While the districts have expanded in 2023, DGBV intends to fund services in only the originating three districts of 003 and 004 in Zone 2 and district 014 in Zone 2.

The MDT identifies households that are at elevated risk for future violence as indicated by police involvement with a domestic violence incident. The MDT proactively connects families to services, strengthens investigation and prosecution of domestic violence offenders, and ensures that partner agencies meet to discuss common cases and share information to enhance investigation, prosecution, survivor restoration, and offender accountability.

Current state and priorities for improvement

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, on average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States; nearly three women are killed each day in the United States by a current or former intimate partner.

Research shows that survivors are more likely to obtain the recommended services offered by the MDT than of those services recommended by one entity handling their case. Furthermore, the MDT response to intimate partner violence proves better outcomes for all parties involved including improved service delivery. MDT alleviates the confusing feelings of fear, frustration and feelings of loneliness that might be felt by a survivor of Domestic Violence who would have had to locate services for their needs alone all while being overwhelmed by their unfortunate circumstances. The ability to coordinate and collaborate as a team enhances the victim's outcome for justice and services by providing each survivor with an advocate who will assist with the processes. By using trauma-informed interviewing skills, the advocates retain information that is relevant to the crimes in such a manner that minimizes the survivors stress and discomfort. Also, court-based advocates provide comfort and knowledge to survivors as they proceed through the complex and ever-

changing court process. In 2024, there were 1,891 clients served by programs in the MDT model. In the MDT districts, all 1,891 survivors consented for their assessment to be forwarded to an MDT agency. Of those, 1,078 survivors accepted services or referrals.

Additionally, the Division on Gender-based Violence conducted a needs assessment, collecting information and feedback from both service providers in the community and survivors themselves. The two highest needs identified were mental health and housing support. Advocates must be able to provide support and referral to these critical services.

Target Population

The target population of this RFP is limited to survivors of domestic violence incidents in the 003rd, 004th, and 014th CPD districts who provide consent to share their assessment. However, at DFSS discretion, CPD district expansion will be considered.

C. Program activities and requirements

Respondent must demonstrate their capacity to provide emotionally supportive crisis counseling, safety planning, explanation of survivor rights under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA), and referrals to services needed per the survivor's service plan. Respondents must demonstrate the ability to fulfill the following program activities and requirements and deliver, at a minimum, the following services:

Accept Referrals from CPD

A previously mentioned, at DFSS discretion, CPD district expansion will be considered. However, until consideration, DFSS accepts referrals from one or more of the following CPD districts participating in the MDT (currently the 003rd, 004th, and 014th districts).

1. Zone 1: 3rd District – Grand Crossing, 7040 S. Cottage Grove Ave., Chicago, IL 60637 and 4th District – South Chicago, 2255 E. 103rd St., Chicago, IL 60617
2. Zone 2: 14th District – Shakespeare, 2150 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60647

- Assess Survivor Risk
 - Review each domestic violence assessment to assess survivor risk as either elevated or non-elevated.
 - Prioritize immediacy and frequency of follow-up contact.
- Attempt to Contact Survivor
 - Attempt to contact survivor over the phone within 24 hours of receipt of referral from CPD.
 - Attempt to contact survivor multiple times as needed and as indicated by risk categorization to reach survivor.
- Provide Direct Services to Survivors
 - Provide services over the phone as identified by the survivor, including one or more of the following:
 - Emotionally supportive crisis counseling
 - Safety planning
 - Information regarding available domestic violence services
 - Explanation of survivor rights under the IDVA
 - Information on how to file for an Order of Protection.
 - Preference will be given to respondents that can engage the survivor in their own gender-based violence service programs.

Provide Referrals

- Refer survivor to services needed per the survivor’s service plan such as mental health, legal advocacy and representation, medical care and other services as requested.
- Respondents should be able to refer a survivor to these services based on their geographic preferences.
- These referrals must be made to an agency with which the respondent has a formal written linkage agreement or, at a minimum, a warm hand off to a service provider. A warm hand off means that the respondent contacts (via three-way call, appointment setting or other introduction) the third-party service provider on the survivor’s behalf.

Minimum Staff Training Requirements

Respondents must demonstrate at time of application or after award within 90 days of hire all staff interacting with survivors must complete a 40-hour Domestic Violence certification training. Staff hired during the contract period must complete training, or have scheduled a training, within 90 days of their hire date.

Type of Programming	Training Required*
Domestic Violence (DV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each staff person providing direct service must have, at a minimum, 40 hours of DV training from an accredited agency listed with the Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professional (ICDVP) Board. • Each staff person providing direct service must complete Illinois DCFS’s Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters, found here: https://mr.dcfstraining.org/ or provide a request to waive this requirement to DGBV
Human Trafficking (HT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each staff person providing direct service must have, at minimum, a 2-hour training from an agency or entity specializing in human trafficking. This training must include both topics of sex and labor trafficking. The agency or entity must also be able to provide a certificate or other form of written document attesting to the individual’s completion of the training. • Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training
Sexual Assault (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 hours of SA training in accordance with the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) standards or 60-hour SA/DV training in accordance with both ICASA and ICDVP standards. • Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training
Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum 2-hour intro to GBV or GBV 101 to be provided by DFSS or equivalent from another provider • Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training

***Note: DFSS reserves the right to review all training materials in advance.**

Beyond the training requirements:

- Respondents must describe other certification or ongoing training opportunities for staff related to other types of gender-based violence such as stalking, sexual assault and human trafficking.

- Respondents must describe other ongoing training offerings for staff on trauma-informed, survivor-driven, and culturally competent service delivery.
- DFSS encourages respondents to provide staff with training opportunities during the contract period intended to enhance survivor services and offer professional development opportunities.

Collaborate with MDT Partners

- Respondent must build and maintain working relationships with the Commander, the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO), and other relevant staff at the referring police district(s) in order to ensure ongoing training of officers and the district's ongoing participation in the MDT. Such training would be provided by the subgrantees or other organizations identified by the subgrantees for CPD.
- Respondents must attend and participate actively in the MDT subcommittee meetings that occur every other month led by the CCSAO.
- Respondents must work collaboratively with the MDT partners identified in the Program Goals section above and other community stakeholders to help inform and improve the MDT procedures and protocols.

Offer Services to Underserved Populations

- Offer culturally competent services to underserved populations including undocumented survivors, non-English speakers, male survivors, those who are disabled, and all LGBTQIA survivors.

Maintain Confidentiality

- Maintain survivor confidentiality and confidentiality of survivor files as required by the IDVA.

Implement Quality Improvement

- Collect data on survivor outcomes, such as if the survivor accepts or declines direct services, were referred to other services, and which services survivors were referred to.
- Use survivor outcome data to inform program improvement.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients.
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments.
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service

coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 100% of survivors classified as elevated risk will be contacted/attempted to be contacted within 24 hours.
- 80% of survivors contacted receive safety planning, review of options, emergency emotionally supportive counseling, and other assistance during the initial call or follow-up call.
- 80% of survivors contacted are referred to counseling services, legal advocacy, legal representation, shelter, and other services needed per the survivor's service plan.

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- Number of assessments received from CPD (dependent on number of incidents and survivor consent)
- 70% of survivors interviewed.
 - 80% of survivors contacted who accept services.
 - 20% of survivors contacted who decline services.
- 30% of survivors not interviewed due to disconnected or wrong number or no answer.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, Division on Gender-Based Violence seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted:

- To DGBV via Excel workbooks and the InfoNet database.
- To the CPD as requested.
- To the CCSAO as requested.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

F. Application guidance for respondents

- Respondents may choose to apply for Zone 1, Zone 2, or both. Respondents must submit one application per Zone.
- Respondents must indicate in their application which Zone they are applying for.
- DFSS will make award recommendations based on Zone. Respondents applying to Zone 1 are proposing to serve Districts 003 and 004 and Respondents applying to Zone 2 are proposing to serve District 014.
- Proposals must provide attachments of required documentation as described in the application. Required documentation will be reviewed and scored in accordance with the Selection Criteria. Respondents may be penalized if the following documents are not included in the eProcurement application:
 - Completed job description form (available at https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/delegate-agency-contracting-documents.html) for every staff person listed on personnel budget.
 - Up-to-date resume for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff.
 - Proof of 40-hour domestic violence training from an agency authorized by the Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professional Board for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff.
 - Written linkage(s) with domestic violence service provider(s) proximal to the referring CPD district that provide counseling and legal advocacy and representation.

Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028. DFSS may extend this term up to two times, with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$60,000-\$100,000 depending on the size of their proposed program and the districts proposed to serve. \$160,000 for total program. DFSS anticipates funding one (1) to two (2) agencies. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant and Corporate funding. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the Community Development Block Grant must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received: 3
Projects funded: 2
Range of funding: \$44,000-\$65,000 (per year)
Total funding: \$110,495 (per year)

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths, assets, needs and challenges • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group and demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery. • The Respondent’s Leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves. • The Respondent demonstrates an existing strong relationship with the referring CPD district or a plan to create a collaborative relationship. 	20
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery, including adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff. • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to securely collect and store key participant and performance data 	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence based and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying, engaging, and retaining program participants through program completion • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way 	30
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent demonstrates their experience in disaggregating data to identify disparities in their program delivery • The Respondent thoroughly describes existing data management practices compliant with the IDVA <p><i>*When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	20
<p><u>Reasonable costs and budget justification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program 	10

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	
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Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above. DFSS will make award recommendations based on score per Zone.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Domestic Violence: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Services (RFP# 10116)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

This RFP seeks organizations with experience in providing Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange (SVSE) services to survivors of intimate partner violence and their children to enhance their safety and maintain a relationship between the visiting parent and the children. The facility where the services are provided must eliminate opportunities for interactions between the parents. Likewise, virtual visits (where applicable) must ensure minimal interactions between parents.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services – one that moves the department beyond measuring *how many* people receive services, to focus on how Chicagoans *leave better off* after receiving services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund. For more information on DFSS's commitment to outcomes, please visit: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/department-strategic-framework.html

Division Priorities

The primary goal of the Division on Gender-Based Violence (DGBV) is to enhance the safety and well-being of survivors, and their children, of gender-based violence through delegate agencies that provide direct services and in collaboration with stakeholders for better coordination of services.

Current DGBV funding sustains community-based agencies to provide counseling and legal advocacy, case management, legal services, hotel stays and rapid rehousing, cash assistance, monitored child visitation services, training and education, and other supportive services. Additionally, DGBV works with city, county, state, and community partners to raise awareness on GBV for better screening, response, and coordination of services.

Definitions

Gender-based Violence (GBV): Harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. GBV is an umbrella term for a range of interpersonal violence including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. Domestic violence and sexual assault are thought of subset behaviors of GBV, while human trafficking is not exclusively a GBV behavior.

Domestic violence (DV): A learned harmful behavior used to gain and maintain control over another person within the context of an intimate partner, family, or household relationship. An intimate partner can be a boyfriend or girlfriend, dating partner, sexual partner, or spouse, and is not limited to someone with whom the survivor has been sexually intimate.

Sexual assault (SA): Any sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the survivor. Some forms of sexual assault include attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, forcing a survivor to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body, and penetration of the survivor's body, also known as rape.

Human Trafficking (HT): When an individual is compelled through force, fraud and/or coercion for the purposes of commercial sex and/or forced labor. For minors engaged in commercial sex, force, fraud and/or coercion is not required to be proven. Though HT is often fueled by bias-based harm, it is not exclusively GBV.

Stalking: Behavior which includes following a person, conducting surveillance of the person, appearing at the person's home, work or school, making unwanted phone calls, sending unwanted emails, unwanted messages via social media, or text messages, leaving objects for the person, vandalizing the persons property or injuring a pet.

B. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

This RFP seeks to increase survivor safety by providing SVSE services to residential parents, visiting parents, and their children in a safe environment.

“SVSE can be vital in building safety in the immediate period of a supervised visit or exchange and during the longer period of the divorce or custody process. Visitation services also provide opportunities for change that can diminish the harm and risk that a batterer might pose over time to a current or future victim.” Lessons from a Decade of Change, Jane Sadusky, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, 2016.

The DGBV considers the SVSE program's highest priority to be the safety of children and adult survivors while facilitating opportunities for visiting parents to interact with their children. Therefore, the target population for this program is survivors of intimate partner violence and their children. The provision of SVSE services is mandated by court orders, which are issued based on a judge's determination of intimate partner violence committed by the visiting parent. Supervised visitation services protect the safety of the residential parent

and children during a supervised visit between the visiting parent and the children through staff-monitoring and separating the parents before, during, and after the visit. Safe Exchange services protect the safety of the residential parent during the transfer of children to the visiting parent for an unsupervised visit. This involves separating the parents before, during, and after the exchange and monitoring the return of the children from the visit.

Safety is facilitated by structural elements of the visitation facility such as separate parking lots, entrances and exits, and waiting rooms for residential and visiting parents. Additionally, respondents must include staggered arrival and departure times in their protocol and the use of security cameras in all areas used by residential parents, children, and visiting parents.

Supervised visitation and safe exchange services are designed to support healthy family relationships in the aftermath of abuse. A study of preschool aged children demonstrated fewer depressive, anxious and somatic symptoms if they had safe weekly contact with their violent fathers. Those children who saw their fathers regularly in a safe, monitored environment also had fewer negative representations of their mothers.¹⁷ SVSE services have the capacity to positively impact all members of the family and promote long-term safety.

Current state and priorities for improvement

Nearly half of all women and men will experience psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey), and three or more women are murdered by their intimate or dating partners on average each day (American Psychology Association).¹⁷ There can be several health effects that linger long after someone leaves an abusive partner, including many psychological consequences, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At the same time, between 2017 and 2021, only 18.6% of survivors of a violent crime perpetrated by their intimate partner received assistance from a service provider, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.¹⁸

Domestic violence is a learned behavior used to gain and maintain control over an intimate partner. An intimate partner can be a dating partner, a sexual partner, or a spouse, and is not limited to someone with whom the survivor has been sexually intimate.

Domestic violence spans across all ethnic, racial, and socio-economic groups, and affects both survivors and abusers of all ages, sexual orientations, and gender identities. Domestic violence can take the form of physical abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, and psychological abuse.

Supervised visitation and safe exchange programs as an intervention are centered on protecting survivors of domestic violence and their children. It recognizes that the process of separating from and leaving an abusive partner can increase rather than decrease danger for survivors of domestic violence and their children. Supervised visitation and safe exchange programs are in a unique position to positively impact the lives of families by enhancing their safety, ensuring no further harm is experienced and motivating people who cause harm to understand the impact of their actions, and ultimately reduce incidences of future harm.

“A primary strategy for working with abusive fathers in visitation centers could be helping them understand the effects that exposure to violence has on their children, even if they have not suffered direct abuse. Some Batterers' Intervention Programs (BIPs) have used this approach to encourage men to change their abusive behavior, having observed that some fathers are able to develop empathy more readily toward their children than toward intimate partners.” *Beyond Observation: Considerations for*

¹⁷ <http://www.apa.org/topics/violence/partner.aspx?item=2>

¹⁸ [Building Knowledge About Victim Services | National Institute of Justice](#)

Advancing Domestic Violence Practice in Supervised Visitation, Jay Campbell and Derrick Gordon with Ona Foster, Futures Without Violence, 2007.

SVSE providers must have a current formal linkage agreement with a Partner Abuse Intervention Program (PAIP) certified by the state of Illinois, the recognized BIP model for Illinois, or other service providers for persons that do harm. These services help the referred parent accept responsibility, modify abusive attitudes and beliefs, and give them tools to become and remain healthy non-abusive partners and parents. DGBV prefers that program participant referrals be made to an agency with which a selected Respondent has a formal written linkage agreement or at a minimum a warm hand off to a service provider. A warm hand off means that the selected Respondent contacts (via three-way call, appointment setting, or other introduction) the third-party service provider on the survivor's behalf.

The Division on Gender-based Violence conducted a needs assessment, collecting information and feedback from both service providers in the community and survivors themselves. The two highest needs identified were mental health and housing support. SVSE providers must be able to provide support and referral to these critical services as requested by survivors.

Target Population

The program is targeted to those who have been court-ordered for SVSE services, based on findings from a judge that visitation or exchange between the visiting parent and children must be monitored by third-party social services. The program targets intimate partner violence survivors and persons with whom they have children in common. Only one parent must be a city of Chicago resident. Selected Respondents must be able to offer services to underserved populations including undocumented individuals, those who do not speak English, male survivors, those who are disabled, and LGBTQIA survivors.

C. Program activities and requirements

At a minimum, the selected Respondents must provide all the following services with safety for all participants as the highest priority of the program:

Accepting Participants

- Respond to service requests within 48 hours of initial contact from the prospective new client.
- Conduct individual intake/orientation sessions with new participants. Develop a visitation plan and facilitate court-ordered visitation between visiting parent and children.
- Provide culturally competent supervised visitation services that accommodate individuals who speak languages other than English; offer services to underserved populations including undocumented individuals, male survivors, visitation units comprised of same-sex parents, those who are disabled, and LGBTQ+ individuals.

Advising Participants

- Conduct an assessment with the residential parent, visiting parent, and child(ren) to assess their safety during services and ability to comply with court order.
- Provide explanation of rights and legal protections under the IL Domestic Violence Act (IDVA) as needed.
- Provide explanation of how to obtain or modify an Order of Protection as needed.
- Ongoing assessment of the residential parent and children to provide comprehensive services such as crisis intervention counseling, parental support and training, as well as individual and group counseling. The selected Respondents may provide these services directly or through a formal linkage agreement.

Minimum Staff Training Requirements

In addition to the requirements listed below, all staff providing direct service must have completed, or be willing to complete, specialized training within 90 days of the contract’s start date. Staff hired during the contract period must complete training, or have scheduled a training, within 90 days of their hire date.

Type of Programming	Training Required*
Domestic Violence (DV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each staff person providing direct service must have, at a minimum, 40 hours of DV training from an accredited agency listed with the Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professional (ICDVP) Board. Each staff person providing direct service must complete Illinois DCFS’s Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters, found here: https://mr.dcfstraining.org/
Human Trafficking (HT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each staff person providing direct service must have, at minimum, a 2-hour training from an agency or entity specializing in human trafficking. This training must include both topics of sex and labor trafficking. The agency or entity must also be able to provide a certificate or other form of written document attesting to the individual’s completion of the training. Each staff person providing direct service must complete the IL DCFS mandated reporter training
Sexual Assault (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 hours of SA training in accordance with the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) standards or 60 hour SA/DV training in accordance with both ICASA and ICDVP standards. Each staff person providing direct service must complete the IL DCFS mandated reporter training
Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum 2-hour intro to GBV or GBV 101 to be provided by DFSS or equivalent from another provider Each staff person providing direct service must complete the IL DCFS mandated reporter training

***Note: DFSS reserves the right to review all training materials in advance.**

Beyond the training requirements:

- Respondents must describe other certification or ongoing training opportunities for staff related to other types of gender-based violence such as stalking, sexual assault and human trafficking
- Respondents must describe other ongoing training offerings for staff on trauma-informed, survivor-driven, and culturally competent service delivery.

Facility

In order to ensure the physical, auditory, and visual separation of residential and visiting parents while on-site, facilities must adhere to the following structural and safety elements in place as provided in the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women “Guiding Principles for Safe Havens: SVSE Grant Program”ⁱⁱ:

- Provide **separate entrance and exits** for residential and visiting parents to decrease the likelihood that parents will come into contact with one another while traveling to and from the center. Exits and entrances must be accessible.
- Coordinate **staggered arrival and departure times**. DFSS recommends at least a 15-minute gap between the time visiting and residential parents arrive as an added precaution. If the visiting parent is running late, DFSS recommends that the delegate call the residential parent to delay their arrival time.

- **Allow residential parents to wait on- or off-site**, based on the safety needs, age, and developmental stage of the visiting children. The waiting area must be secure and not in a location accessible to the visiting parent. DFSS requires that the selected Respondents' facilities have separate waiting areas for residential and visiting parents. DFSS recommends that the visiting parent should not be able to hear the residential parent or determine where they are waiting in the facility as additional safety precaution.
- **Maintain security cameras.** DFSS recommends that security cameras are installed in strategic locations, including entrances for residential and visiting parents, on elevators, stairwells, and throughout the facility to ensure the safety of the child(ren), residential parent, and visiting parent.
- In circumstances where the mentioned structural and safety elements are not available, the Respondent must provide, as part of their application, enhanced procedures to ensure the safety of all clients. Residential and visiting parents must not come in contact with one another.
- All Respondents must provide a site floor plan demonstrating parent and child(ren) flow of entry and exit from services, as well as accessibility. A floor plan is still required even if the Respondent is in the final planning stages of making facility improvements, in the process of acquiring a facility, or relocating. If the Respondent plans to make facility improvements to improve the auditory, physical, and visual safety features and/or accessibility of the facility during the contract term, that site plan, along with enhanced safety plans and procedures, must be submitted with the Respondent's proposal for consideration. As part of this proposal, DFSS may visit the proposed locations to examine the facility design to ensure the proposed facilities will decrease the opportunity for parents to come into contact with one another.
- Services may be provided remotely via telephone, video, or other methods if extenuating circumstances preclude the use of in-person visits and the services do not violate the court order for services. Respondents must include a protocol for remote or virtual services.
- Accessibility plans for virtual and in-person services for individuals with a disability are required.

Minimizing Risk

- Create a survivor-led plan for ongoing safety for the survivor parent and children from the parent who causes harm.
- Facilitate safe exchanges of children from residential parent to visiting parent, monitoring compliance with time allotted for visit, and facilitating the safe exchange of children back to residential parent.
- Facilitate safe exchanges and visits while maintaining survivor and child safety and confidentiality.
- Develop and keep current program policies and procedures for ongoing safety for the survivor parent and children from the parent who causes harm.
- Develop and keep current security policies and protocols that meet the safety needs of the community and individuals using the facility, including the use of security personnel and security devices.
- Develop criteria by which cases are rejected, suspended, or terminated if the safety needs of residential parent, visiting parent, or children cannot be met.
- End visits, or do not allow exchanges to take place, if parents engage in behavior that compromises or endangers the emotional or physical safety of children, the survivor parent, program staff, or other individuals. Prior to terminating a visit, and if it is safe to do so, the program staff must attempt to redirect or stop a parent's behavior.
- Report incidents to DFSS immediately and provide written incident reports within 24 hours.

Provide Referrals

- Coordinate survivor care within the agency and with other agencies to expand the range of services available to survivor, children, visiting parent, or persons that inflict harm.
- Provide referrals to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline.

- Provide referrals to survivors in need of services beyond SVSE, including, but not limited to: DFSS coordinated social services, including housing, food, transportation, public benefits, job training, and others such as case management, medical care, and behavioral health services as needed.
- Provide referrals for services related to other forms of gender-based violence, including services for sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking.
- Provide information and referral for the visiting parent for comprehensive services as needed, including referral to an Illinois Department of Human Services accredited PAIP or other services for persons that inflict harm.
- Provide information and/or referral for legal advocacy and representation, to modify the visitation order when appropriate.

Maintain Confidentiality

- Maintain confidentiality of residential and visiting parents' and their children's information as required in the IDVA. Ensure staff expertise that prevents disclosure of confidential addresses and communication.

Quality Improvement

- Facilitate survivor completion of DGBV-issued Evaluation of Services Surveys and submission of surveys to the DGBV.
- Use survivor outcome data to inform program improvement.
- Collect survivor feedback on satisfaction with services.
- Use survivor feedback to inform program improvement.
- DFSS encourages selected Respondents to provide staff with training opportunities during the contract period intended to enhance services.
- Participate in a learning cohort with the other service agencies to share best practices, lessons learned and help identify trends.

Community Education and Outreach

- Provide ongoing public education workshops for the community on the nature, dynamics, and impact of domestic violence.
- Provide ongoing trainings to stakeholders and court personnel to educate on the benefits of the SVSE model and the availability of services to all races, gender identities, and sexual orientations.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identify clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and provide a higher level of coordination support to those clients
- Use warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as curating a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments
- Work proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention

DFSS recognizes these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders.

DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance indicators that may include, but are not limited to:

- 80% of scheduled supervised visits are attended by both residential and visiting parents
- 80% of scheduled safe exchanges are attended by both residential and visiting parents
- 80% of program participants surveyed agree that they felt safe while at the center
- 80% of program participants surveyed agree that they know more about available community resources
- 80% of program participants surveyed agree that they felt supported in making their own decisions

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- Number of participants enrolled
- Number of potential clients who are turned away and number of clients who are put on a waitlist for services
- Number of participants who discuss safety options with their worker
- Number of participants who receive an explanation of their rights under the IDVA
- Number of community education/awareness workshops presented by delegate that educate attendees about the dynamics of domestic violence and highlight the benefits of the SVSE model
- Number of survivor parents who are connected with supportive services, either at the SVSE center or another appropriate agency
- Number of parents who cause harm who are referred to PAIPs and other appropriate resources through an approved linkage agreement with the selected Respondent
- 50% of adult clients will complete an Evaluation of Services Survey
- Total services hours including time spent on visits, exchanges, and advocacy work with both the survivor and parent who causes harm

In addition to race and ethnicity (demographic data required by CDBG), DFSS may also track survivor outcomes by sexual orientation, gender identity, and other underserved groups through data collected by DFSS or in InfoNet.

DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

Additionally, selected agencies will be required to participate in a learning cohort with the other selected agencies to share best practices, lessons learned and help identify trends.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcome-oriented, DGBV seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. Quarterly reports must be submitted to the Division on Gender-based Violence (DGBV) via Excel Workbooks and data entry into InfoNet. Respondents are required to collect and submit data in InfoNet and agree to provide DFSS authorization to generate reports that include both project specific and DV program-wide service data. Delegate agencies that do not have an appropriate project in InfoNet must set one up by the quarter two of the first award year. Client information must be entered to accurately reflect the new and existing clients the agency is serving. Agencies are also expected to submit evaluation of services surveys through electronic links provided by DGBV or paper. DFSS also reserves the right to conduct analysis on data to ensure services are offered and provided to survivors fairly by gender, race, and ethnicity.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases as specified in the IDVA. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS through InfoNet and/or another format specified by DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doit/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

F. Application guidance for respondents

Respondents may only serve survivors of intimate partner violence referred for court-ordered SVSE services under this program.

Proposals must provide attachments of required documentation as described in the application. Required documentation will be reviewed and scored in accordance with the Selection Criteria. Respondents may be penalized if the following documents are not included in the eProcurement application:

- Completed job description form (available at <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/suppinfo/delegate-agency-contracting-documents.html>) for every staff person listed on the personnel budget.
- Up-to-date resume for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff.
- Proof of 40-hour domestic violence training from an agency authorized by the Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professional Board for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff.
- Safety protocol for in-person and virtual visitations and exchanges.
- Facility floor plans (including parking lots and common areas) that demonstrate the flow of residential parent and children and the visiting parent that separates their entry and exits.
- Any planned facility improvements to improve the physical, auditory, and visual safety features of the facility during the contract term.
- Written linkage(s) with PAIP or other programs to provide services for the visiting parents.
- A list of other linkage agreements that enhance the array of services offered to domestic violence survivors and their children.

Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term up to two additional years, with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$120,000 –\$170,000 annually depending on the size of the proposed program. DFSS anticipates funding 3 to 4 agencies. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant and local Corporate funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the Community Development Block Grant must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received: 3
Projects funded: 3
Range of funding: \$120,000 - \$151,470
Total funding: \$405,110

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **20 percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to

be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of survivors of intimate partner violence and their needs and challenges, as well as the needs and challenges of their children and people who cause harm. • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group and demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent's leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the community it serves 	20
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight and management and demonstrates appropriate staff training and ongoing professional development on topics related to SVSE and GBV generally. • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and securely store key participant and performance data • The Respondent has detailed safety protocols that are informed by the needs of survivors and their children as they engage in supervised visits and exchanges 	25
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) for the visiting parent, residential parent, and child. • The Respondent proposes an evidence-based/best practices design and implementation for the services outlined • The Respondent has effective partnerships with the Court system and other referral sources to ensure sufficient referrals to the program, including protocol around program capacity and managing a waitlist • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way • The Respondent has control or is in the process of acquiring a facility that is aligned with the best practices of providing SVSE services 	30

<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent demonstrates their experience in disaggregating data to identify disparities in their program delivery and demonstrates ability to track and report program data in InfoNet. <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	<p>15</p>
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	<p>10</p>

Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, facility, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

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**DFSS Program: Division on Domestic Violence Resource and Information Advocates
(RFP#10113)**

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

This RFP seeks organizations that are able to proactively engage survivors at various locations throughout Chicago's Domestic Violence (DV) Courthouse - Circuit Court of Cook County to improve survivors' understanding of their legal options and processes and assist survivors with determining which legal remedies to pursue inside and outside of the courthouse. The selected delegate(s) will increase survivors' safety and satisfaction with legal responses to gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking, and increase the number of survivors who follow through in obtaining protective orders. For purposes of this RFP, while human trafficking is not exclusively GBV, survivors of both sex and labor trafficking are eligible for services and should be assumed to be included whenever "gender-based violence" or survivors is mentioned throughout.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- o **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- o **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- o **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- o **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit:

www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services – one that moves the department beyond measuring *how many* people receive services, to focus on how Chicagoans *leave better off* after receiving services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the

delegate agencies we fund. For more information on DFSS's commitment to outcomes, please visit: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/department-strategic-framework.html

Division Priorities

The primary goal of the Division on Gender-Based Violence (DGBV) is to enhance the safety and well-being of survivors, and their children, of gender-based violence through delegate agencies that provide direct services and in collaboration with stakeholders for better coordination of services.

Current DGBV funding sustains community-based agencies to provide counseling and legal advocacy, case management, legal services, hotel stays and rapid rehousing, cash assistance, monitored child visitation services, training and education, and other supportive services. Additionally, DGBV works with city, county, state, and community partners to raise awareness on GBV for better screening, response, and coordination of services.

Definitions

Gender-based Violence (GBV): Harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. GBV is an umbrella term for a range of interpersonal violence including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. Domestic violence and sexual assault are thought of subset behaviors of GBV, while human trafficking is not exclusively a GBV behavior.

Domestic violence (DV): A learned harmful behavior used to gain and maintain control over another person within the context of an intimate partner, family, or household relationship. An intimate partner can be a boyfriend or girlfriend, dating partner, sexual partner, or spouse, and is not limited to someone with whom the survivor has been sexually intimate.

Sexual assault (SA): Any sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the survivor. Some forms of sexual assault include attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, forcing a survivor to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body, and penetration of the survivor's body, also known as rape.

Human Trafficking (HT): When an individual is compelled through force, fraud and/or coercion for the purposes of commercial sex and/or forced labor. For minors engaged in commercial sex, force, fraud and/or coercion is not required to be proven. Though HT is often fueled by bias-based harm, it is not exclusively GBV.

Stalking behavior which includes following a person, conducting surveillance of the person, appearing at the person's home, work or school, making unwanted phone calls, sending unwanted emails, unwanted messages via social media, or text messages, leaving objects for the person, vandalizing the persons property or injuring a pet.

B. Program Goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

This RFP seeks to increase survivor safety by providing brief (most often less than 15 minutes) legal advocacy services to many survivors seeking legal services at Chicago's DV Courthouse – Circuit Court of Cook County located at 555 W. Harrison. Resource and Information Advocacy Services (RIAs) proactively engage survivors at various locations throughout the DV Courthouse and provide an overview of legal options available to them both inside and outside of the courthouse. The information and support provided by RIAs improves survivor experiences and the flow of survivors through the courthouse. RIAs can increase the likelihood that

a survivor receives legal protection, especially survivors who would otherwise petition for assistance before a judge unaccompanied by a legal advocate nor advised by an attorney. DFSS seeks Respondents with the ability to serve survivors in English and Spanish.

Survivors of gender-based violence are often referred to the DV Courthouse by law enforcement, the Illinois Domestic Violence (DV) Hotline, social service providers, family, and friends. Many survivors arrive with no clear idea of what legal options and services are available to them or how to access these services. Survivors are often overwhelmed by the legal system and traumatized by abuse they have suffered, often having transpired in the recent past. RIAs act as triage agents, engaging survivors throughout the courthouse, briefly ascertaining their presenting needs, and helping them decide which legal options to pursue. Services provided include *a brief overview of* Orders of Protection, civil no-contact orders and stalking no-contact orders, and instruction on how to complete paperwork to file for an Order of Protection. Survivors needing more intense advocacy are referred to court advocates.

Proactive engagement with survivors increases the chances they will:

- Be directed to the service(s) they want/need more quickly than if they had to wait for an available legal advocate
- Feel emotionally supported more quickly than if they had to wait for an available legal advocate
- Feel more confident to utilize the legal resources available within the courthouse
- Be referred to an available legal advocate.

The primary goal for this program is to provide survivors of gender-based violence with brief interventions that will enhance their safety. The impact of this program on participants will result in improving the self-determination of the survivor to make informed decisions about pursuing legal remedies to enhance their safety. The interaction with the RIA affords the survivor an opportunity to understand an overview of the legal process of filing for an Order of Protection and the potential other remedies available allowing them to make informed decisions. Thus, survivors of violence are better equipped to pursue efforts that make them feel safer, which impacts their overall sense of well-being.

In 2023, DGBV conducted a needs assessment, surveying both service providers and survivors of gender-based violence. Survivors listed legal services as one of the top services that could have helped them achieve their goals. Legal services and advocacy can have a huge impact on survivors as they navigate a complex system. In a discussion regarding legal services for survivors, Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) stated:

Victims often experience secondary victimization during the legal process... Victims report feeling depressed, violated, and less likely to seek additional support as a result of negative interactions with the legal system... Victims who are afforded the opportunity to have a more active role in the legal process have better mental health outcomes than victims who are prevented from doing so, likely due to the sense of empowerment and inclusion they feel.¹⁹

RIAs are the first point of contact for survivors at the courthouse and are an important resource in helping survivors feel a sense of agency as they navigate this challenging process. As a result of the services provided by RIAs, participants should be more informed about the legal options available to them and how they can obtain supportive services which can result in them feeling safer. The interventions provided by the RIAs are delivered in a thoughtful, compassionate, trauma-informed manner. As a result, survivors are more likely to participate in legal proceedings once they have been educated about the processes and what to expect. Early intervention with survivors of gender-based violence can result in more impactful decision making for

¹⁹ <https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/comprehensive-legal-services-for-victims-of-crime>

survivors and realistic expectations about what to expect when seeking to obtain orders of protection.

Current state and priorities for improvement

Nearly half of all women and men will experience psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey), and three or more women are murdered by their intimate or dating partners on average each day ([American Psychology Association](#)). There can be several health effects that linger long after someone leaves an abusive partner, including many psychological consequences, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At the same time, only 18.1% of intimate partner violence victims received assistance from a victim service agency in 2018, according to U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Annually over 10,000 cases are filed in the 1st Court District of Cook County - which is in the city of Chicago - seeking assistance with domestic violence. The DV Courthouse provides space for assistance at the court’s Help Desk, which RIAs use to greet survivors as they enter the courthouse. In 2024, the DFSS-funded RIA program served 4,682 survivors (18-20 on average per day). Of those, 3,525 received legal advocacy services. Nearly 100% of survivors surveyed strongly or somewhat agree that they felt better informed about their legal options and the court process. The most common services provided include:

- Approximately 85% receive an overview of the legal options available to them
- Approximately 81% receive an explanation of rights available to them under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA)
- Approximately 43% receive an overview of stalking no-contact orders

The impact of COVID-19 resulted in closure of the DV Courthouse during the Stay-At-Home Mandate. In-person court appearances were unavailable. Court sessions were held virtually until limited in-person appearances were allowed during the summer months of 2020. Presently, the court offers in-person and virtual hearings, and remote support remains high, and the court advocacy programs continue to maintain the Legal Advocacy Hotline. Survivors of gender-based violence that interact with RIAs may often experience multiple forms of gender-based violence including domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. RIAs must be trained on how to respond to survivors with varying experiences of gender-based violence and how to connect them to services that meet their needs.

DFSS’ goal is to maintain five (5) full-time RIAs at the courthouse Monday – Friday, from 8:30am to 4:30pm with at least one Spanish-speaking RIA available throughout the day.

Target Population

The target population of this RFP is limited to survivors of gender-based violence seeking legal advocacy at the DV Courthouse located at 555 W. Harrison. Survivors can be walk-ins or be referred to RIA by a social service provider, law enforcement, The Illinois DV Hotline, family and friends, or others.

C. Program Activities and Requirements

Respondent must provide legal advocacy and referral services to survivors of gender-based violence in the DV Courthouse. Respondents must work collaboratively with other court agents and service providers at the DV Courthouse, at 555 W. Harrison. While there is a high demand for virtual hearings; in-person demand is highly sought. This requires sufficient staffing of Resource and Information Advocates at the DV Courthouse. RIAs may be utilized to assist hotlines or virtual sessions, if needed. RIAs need training on other forms of gender-based violence including domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and stalking so they

know how and where to refer survivors to best meet their needs. Therefore, Respondents must have the ability to provide survivors with services and support to legal advocacy programs during court closures. DFSS seeks Respondent(s) with the ability to serve survivors in English and Spanish.

Each staff person providing services must have, at a minimum, 40 hours of domestic violence training from an accredited agency listed with the Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professional Board. For untrained staff, training must be completed within 90 days of the contract start date. Staff hired during the contract period must complete training within 90 days of hire date.

Respondents must demonstrate the ability to deliver, at a minimum, all the following services:

- **Serve as an entry point guide at the DV Courthouse for survivors who are not familiar with services available to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking.**
 - Proactively engage survivors at various locations throughout the DV Courthouse such as the pro-se clerk desk, the help desk, and inside and outside of the courtrooms.
 - Provide adaptability of program operations in the event of an interruption of in-person court sessions.
- **Provide brief services (15 to 30 minutes) to survivors at the DV Courthouse:**
 - Provide an overview of legal options available to survivors of gender-based violence, both inside and outside of the courthouse, including Orders of Protection, stalking no-contact orders, and civil no-contact orders.
 - Assist survivors in determining which options to pursue, including those listed above.
 - Provide survivors with an overview of their rights and legal options under the IDVA and other applicable laws.
 - Educate survivors about next steps before and after court proceedings.
 - Assist survivors as needed with form completion.
 - Provide survivors with other services such as assistance to obtain a copy of court documents, accompanying survivors to court, providing emotional support, etc.
 - Support legal advocacy programs during prolonged courtroom closures to ensure that survivors continue to have the ability to file for an Order of Protection.
- **Direct survivors to other services both in and outside of the DV Courthouse:**
 - Provide survivors with resources and referrals for other services as needed.
 - Link survivors to available court advocates as needed.
 - Accept referrals from providers or other community stakeholders of survivors who may present at the Courthouse.
 - At a minimum, link survivors to the Illinois DV Hotline or hotlines related to other forms of gender-based violence including the Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline and the local Human Trafficking Hotline.
- **Provide updated DV Courthouse and program information to the Illinois DV Hotline, as needed.**
- **Offer services to underserved populations including undocumented survivors', non-English speakers (primarily Spanish), male survivors, those who are disabled, and LGBTQIA+ survivors.**
- **Maintain survivor confidentiality and confidentiality of survivor files.**
- **Collaborate with other RIA providers and court personnel:**

- Respondents must demonstrate a plan to coordinate with other RIA service providers at the courthouse to provide RIA coverage during court operating hours.
- Respondents must demonstrate a plan to coordinate with other RIA service providers at the courthouse to provide Spanish-speaking RIA coverage during court operating hours.
- Respondents must demonstrate a relationship with key court personnel including the Chief Judge’s Office.
- Respondents must demonstrate a plan to provide support to other court programs on continuation of services during prolonged court closures.
- **Implement quality improvement:**
 - Create a system by which survivors can respond to DGBV-specified outcome questions in a confidential manner.
 - Use survivor outcome data to inform program improvement.
- **Conduct staff development:**
 - DFSS encourages respondents to provide staff with training opportunities during the contract period intended to enhanced client services.

Minimum Staff Training Requirements

Below are the minimum training requirements by the type of GBV services proposed. Proposed programs applying for funding in this program are not limited to the minimum training or certification requirements. Respondents must demonstrate that staff working directly with survivors have minimum training and appropriate certifications.

All staff providing direct service must have completed, or be willing to complete, specialized training within 90 days of the contract’s start date. Staff hired during the contract period must complete training, or have scheduled a training, within 90 days of their hire date.

Type of Participants Served	Training Required*
Domestic Violence (DV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Each staff person providing direct service must have, at a minimum, 40 hours of DV training from an accredited agency listed with the Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professional (ICDVP) Board. ● Each staff person providing direct service must complete mandated reporter training
Human Trafficking (HT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Each staff person providing direct service must have, at minimum, a 2-hour training from an agency or entity specializing in human trafficking. This training must include both topics of sex and labor trafficking. The agency or entity must also be able to provide a certificate or other form of written document attesting to the individual’s completion of the training. ● Each staff person providing direct service must complete mandated reporter training
Sexual Assault (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 40 hours of SA training in accordance with the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) standards or 60-hour SA/DV training in accordance with both ICASA and ICDVP standards. ● Each staff person providing direct service must complete mandated reporter training

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum 2-hour intro to GBV or GBV 101 to be provided by DFSS or equivalent from another provider • Each staff person providing direct service must complete mandated reporter training
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***Note: DFSS reserves the right to review all training materials in advance.**

Beyond the training requirements:

- Respondents must describe other certification or ongoing training opportunities for staff related to other types of GBV such as stalking, sexual assault and human trafficking.
- Respondents must describe other ongoing training offerings for staff on trauma-informed, survivor-driven, and culturally competent service delivery.
- DFSS encourages respondents to provide staff with training opportunities during the contract period intended to enhance survivor services and offer professional development opportunities.

Service Coordination

DFSS is interested in testing and supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for high-need populations. Some favorable strategies identified include systematically identify clients with high needs and assess those needs holistically; use referral strategies to make sure clients are successfully connected to supportive services; and work proactively with referral partners to overcome barriers to engagement and retention for individual clients. DFSS encourages delegates to adopt these practices and reserves the right to convene and implement service coordination efforts with delegate agencies to better serve high-needs populations.

The DGBV conducted a needs assessment, collecting information and feedback from both service providers in the community and survivors themselves. The two highest needs identified were mental health and housing support. Therefore, Respondents must be able to provide support and referral to these critical services as requested by survivors.

D. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 90% of survivors' who receive RIA services agree that they are better informed about their legal options
- 90% of survivors' who receive RIA services agree that they better understand the court process

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track **output metrics** that may include, but are not limited to:

Direct services provided by RIA

- 90% of survivors receiving individual explanation of their rights under the IDVA
- 90% of survivors receiving an overview of protective orders
- 90% of survivors receiving post-hearing information
- 25% of survivors receiving assistance completing forms
- 100% of survivors receiving translation support, where applicable

Linkage to court advocate

- 95% of survivors who receive information and ask or need further assistance are linked to an available court advocate

Referrals provided

- 100% of survivors receiving referral to the Illinois DV Hotline, Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline, or the local Human Trafficking Hotline, if applicable
- 100% of survivors receiving other referrals

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Division on Gender-Based Violence seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract including quarterly reports, and monthly reports if requested, submitted to the Division on Gender-Based Violence (DGBV) detailing services provided via Excel Workbooks (or other format determined by DFSS DGBV). Additionally, narratives in the quarterly reports that may highlight a particular case, or services provided to survivors of intimate partner violence or teen dating violence that demonstrate value in the ongoing services or a gap in services.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

F. Application guidance for respondents

Proposals must provide attachments of required documentation as described in the application. Respondents will be penalized if the following documents are not included in the eProcurement application:

- Completed job description forms for every staff person listed on personnel budget.
- Up-to-date resume for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff
- Proof of 40-hour domestic violence training from an accredited training institute for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff. For untrained staff, Respondent must instead attach a policy that demonstrates how training will be completed within 90 days of contract start date.
- Proof of training, depending on the type of programming being offered, to meet the requirements listed in Table 1 of this RFP.
- Formal written linkage agreements with other GBV agencies to provide on-going counseling, legal, or survivor advocacy services (if the Respondent does not provide any of these directly).

- A list of other formal written linkage agreements between the Respondent and other services providers that enhance the array of services offered to survivors. The list should detail who the linkages are with and what services they are agreeing to provide your participants.
- Respondents that propose to serve survivors from multiple program sites are encouraged to consolidate their applications. If the proposed multiple sites vary based on services offered, organizational capacity, subpopulations served, or in other ways that need to be distinguished in one application, then Respondents may consider submitting separate proposals.

Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028. DFSS may extend this term up to two additional years, with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be approximately \$75,000 for each RIA up to \$375,000 available for the total program. DFSS anticipates funding 1-3 agencies. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Corporate funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received:	3
Projects funded:	3
Range of funding:	\$60,000-\$160,000
Total funding:	\$273,000

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public, all units of government and sister agencies. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal

agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

A. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

B. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	20
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight and management, including staff with appropriate training and Spanish-speaking capacity, and adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to securely collect and store key participant and performance data 	20

<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and engaging survivors that may need basic gender-based violence information in the DV Courthouse • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence based and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies and the court to expand or improve services in the court for survivors in a client-centered, comprehensive and addresses how clients are connected with other needed services outside of the courthouse. 	30
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and securely store key participant and performance data <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	20
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	10

Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Division on Domestic Violence: Counseling and Legal Advocacy Services for Survivors of Gender-Based Violence (RFP# 10119)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Gender-Based Violence Counseling and Legal Advocacy RFP seeks to enhance the well-being, safety, and self-determination of Chicago survivors and their children, by increasing access to no-cost counseling and legal advocacy services. This RFP seeks organizations that are able to proactively engage and connect survivors to no-cost counseling and advocacy services and improve their understanding of their legal options. Organizations with experience providing services to survivors of gender-based violence, including advocacy, service planning, case management, emergency and long-term emotionally supportive counseling, filing for a protective order and explanation of victim rights under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA), Illinois Safe Homes Act (SHA), Illinois Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA), and other applicable laws, should apply. While human trafficking is not exclusively GBV, for purposes of this RFP, survivors of both sex and labor trafficking are eligible for services and should be assumed to be included whenever "gender-based violence (GBV)" is mentioned throughout.

Counseling can be provided either by the selected Respondent or via a formal written linkage agreement with a domestic violence, rape crisis center, or gender-based violence provider with experience providing counseling.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

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Domestic Violence (DV): A learned harmful behavior used to gain and maintain control over another person within the context of an intimate partner, family, or household relationship. An intimate partner can be a boyfriend or girlfriend, dating partner, sexual partner, or spouse, and is not limited to someone with whom the survivor has been sexually intimate.

Sexual Assault (SA): Any sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the survivor. Some forms of sexual assault include attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, forcing a survivor to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body, and penetration of the survivor's body, also known as rape.

Human Trafficking (HT): When an individual is compelled through force, fraud and/or coercion for the purposes of commercial sex and/or forced labor. For minors engaged in commercial sex, force, fraud and/or coercion is not required to be proven. Though HT is often fueled by bias-based harm, it is not exclusively GBV.

Stalking: behavior which includes following a person, conducting surveillance of the person, appearing at the person's home, work or school, making unwanted phone calls, sending unwanted emails, unwanted messages via social media, or text messages, leaving objects for the person, vandalizing the person's property or injuring a pet.

B. Program Goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

This RFP seeks to increase the self-determination and safety of gender-based violence survivors by providing advocacy, safety planning, emergency and long-term emotionally supportive counseling, explanation of how to file for a protective order, and of victim rights under the IDVA, VESSA, and SHA. Survivors of DV and GBV are often referred to the DV courthouse by law enforcement, the Illinois DV Hotline, Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline, social service providers, and family and friends. Many survivors, often overwhelmed by the legal system and traumatized by the abuse they have suffered, arrive at the DV Courthouse with no clear idea of what legal options and services are available to them, or how to access these services.

This RFP combines **counseling** and **legal advocacy** to ensure that a) a survivor receiving counseling services can also pursue their rights under the law with the help of a legal advocate, whether the agency has a legal advocate or not, and b) a victim pursuing a Protective Order can also access emotionally supportive counseling.

Goals

There can be several health effects that linger long after someone experiences gender-based violence, including many psychological consequences. Counseling and advocacy for survivors can help in many ways, including promoting survivor well-being. The goal of this RFP is to increase the safety and self-determination of Chicago survivors and youth experiencing or witnessing gender-based violence by increasing access to no cost gender-based violence counseling and legal advocacy services.

Theories of Change

Through this program, survivors will have more ways to plan for their safety, will feel supported in making their own decisions, will understand they are not responsible for the abuse, and will coordinate survivor care. Activities that will directly lead to those changes include, but are not limited to:

- Creating service plans
- Participating in ongoing service provision
- Receiving emotional support and guidance
- Understanding of how to file for an order of protection
- Survivor advocacy

Best Practices

Delegates are encouraged to demonstrate training equivalent to those listed in Table 1 in section C. Program Activities and Requirements below.

Current state and priorities for improvement

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a major public health concern throughout the world. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. GBV is an umbrella term for a range of interpersonal violence including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, GBV is associated with many negative consequences, including poor physical and mental health outcomes, limited access to education and poorer learning outcomes, and increased costs related to medical and legal services.²⁰

While DFSS programs have historically focused primarily on domestic violence, there is an increased demand for expanded services for survivors experiencing other forms of GBV, or other types of violence that intersect with their intimate partner violence relationship. Therefore, DGBV has implemented other types of services for GBV survivors and is seeking to expand counseling, case management and legal advocacy services to all survivors of GBV.

²⁰ 2022 U.S. Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, United States Department of State : United States Agency for International Development, 2022.

² "About Intimate Partner Violence." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/index.html.

³ "Gender-Based Violence and the Effects on Behavioral Health." *SAMHSA*, www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/trauma-violence/gender-based-violence.

GBV cuts across all ethnic, racial, and socio-economic groups, and affects both victims and abusers of all ages, gender identities, and/or sexual orientations. Gender-based Violence can take many forms, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, and psychological abuse. According to the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 41% of women and 26% of men reported having experienced, at some point in their lifetimes, contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner that resulted in an intimate partner violence-related impact (including, for example, injury or concern for safety, need for housing or legal services, or help from law enforcement).² GBV survivors are at a higher risk for depression, anxiety, substance misuse disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide attempts.³

Helping survivors of GBV address their needs is a critical component for their healing and recovery. Advocates must be able to provide support and referral to these critical services. In 2023, agencies funded through this initiative for domestic violence services (not including other forms of GBV) provided counseling and advocacy to 4,416 victims of domestic violence. Of those, 938 victims received an Order of Protection with the assistance of an advocate from the program. DFSS intends to increase the number of survivors served by adding other projects that serve different types of GBV.

Advocates will work with survivors to provide safety planning, emergency and long-term emotionally supportive counseling, an explanation of victim rights under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA), Illinois Safe Homes Act (SHA), Illinois Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA) A, SHA, and VESSA, an explanation of how to file for a Protective Order, and survivor advocacy.

Target Population

The target population of this RFP is Chicago survivors of gender-based violence (including domestic violence) and their children who seek to increase their safety and self-determination through counseling and/or advocacy services. *Domestic violence can occur between intimate partners, including a boyfriend/girlfriend, dating partner, sexual partner, or spouse, and is not limited to someone with whom the survivor has been sexually intimate with. It also includes family and/or household relationships. Gender-based violence includes survivors of sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking.* Respondents must demonstrate the ability to offer culturally appropriate services to under-served populations including youth, uninsured survivors, undocumented survivors, those who do not speak English, male survivors, those who are disabled, and LGBTQIA+ survivors of gender-based violence.

Respondents may serve other victim relationships under the IDVA, including:

- Any person who has experienced similar violence by family or household members.
- Any high-risk adult with disabilities who is abused, neglected, or exploited by a family or household member

C. Program Activities and Requirements

Selected Respondents must provide referral services to survivors of gender-based violence and emergency and long-term emotionally supportive counseling. If an agency does not provide both, then the other service must be provided by an experienced DV/GBV service provider through a formal linkage agreement.

DFSS seeks Respondents with the ability to serve survivors in English and Spanish and prefers Respondents with experience in providing emotionally supportive crisis counseling, safety planning, explanation of victim rights under the IDVA, SHA, and VESSA, how to file for Protective Order, and referrals to other victim services. DFSS prefers program staff to have previous experience providing the required services.

Minimum Staff Training Requirements

Below are the minimum training requirements by the type of GBV services proposed. Proposed programs applying for funding in this program are not limited to the minimum training or certification requirements. Respondents must demonstrate that staff working directly with survivors have minimum training and appropriate certifications.

All staff providing direct service must have completed, or be willing to complete, specialized training within 90 days of the contract’s start date. Staff hired during the contract period must complete training, or have scheduled a training, within 90 days of their hire date.

Table 1: Minimum Training Requirements by GBV Type

***Note: DFSS reserves the right to review all training materials in advance.**

Beyond the training requirements:

- Respondents must describe other certification or ongoing training opportunities for staff related to other types of GBV such as stalking, sexual assault and human trafficking.
- Respondents must describe other ongoing training offerings for staff on trauma-informed, survivor-driven, and culturally competent service delivery.
- DFSS encourages respondents to provide staff with training opportunities during the contract period intended to enhance survivor services and offer professional development opportunities.

Type of Programming	Training Required*
Domestic Violence (DV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each staff person providing direct service must have at a minimum, 40 hours of DV training from an accredited agency listed with the Illinois Certified Domestic Violence Professional (ICDVP) Board. • Each staff person providing direct service must complete Illinois DCFS’s Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Training for Mandated Reporters, found here: https://mr.dcfstraining.org/
Human Trafficking (HT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each staff person providing direct service must have at minimum, a 2-hour training from an agency or entity specializing in human trafficking. This training must include both topics of sex and labor trafficking. The agency or entity must also be able to provide a certificate or other form of written document attesting to the individual’s completion of the training. • Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training
Sexual Assault (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 hours of SA training in accordance with the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) standards or 60-hour SA/DV training in accordance with both ICASA and ICDVP standards. • Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training
Gender-Based Violence (GBV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum 2-hour intro to GBV or GBV 101 to be provided by DFSS or equivalent from another provider • Each staff person providing direct service must complete IL DCFS mandated reporter training

Accepting Survivors

- Ensure that incoming crisis calls are answered immediately by an appropriately trained professional, as described in Table 1 above, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Crisis calls during non-business hours must either be connected to the agency’s own hotline or referred to the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline, Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline, or the Human Trafficking Hotline

- Respond to non-crisis requests for counseling and legal advocacy services within 48 hours.
- Any services must be made available in person unless it is unsafe.
- Any services to survivors *may* occur in a location that provides enhanced safety to the survivor and their children.
- Any services to survivors *may* also be provided in locations that reduce the burden on the survivor due to lack of resources such as, but not limited to, transportation or childcare.
- Offer services to under-served populations including undocumented survivors, those who do not speak English, male survivors, those who are disabled, and LGBTQIA survivors.
- Take referrals from the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline, Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline, the Human Trafficking Hotline, from legal advocates, or from law enforcement.
- Provide services without charging survivors fees.
- Assist survivors to create an emergency safety plan for themselves and their child(ren).

Provide Crisis Victim Services (directly or through a formal linkage agreement)

Provide the following initial services, as needed, for any type of GBV:

- Provide survivors with an explanation of victim rights and legal protections under the IDVA, SHA, VESSA, and other applicable laws.
- Explain how to file an Order of Protection.
- Assist survivors with creating or modifying their safety plan for themselves and their child(ren).
- Provide survivors with emotional support as needed.
- Refer clients to appropriate gender-based violence services such as, but not limited to, legal representation or shelter.

Ongoing Supportive Counseling and Case Management (directly or through a formal linkage agreement)

- *For survivors of domestic violence:* provide ongoing, individual interaction between a 40-hour trained domestic violence worker and survivor.
- *For DV and other types of GBV:* the Respondent must demonstrate that program staff has the requisite training, education, and experience to provide ongoing, individual interaction with a survivor.

These interactions should include, at a minimum, the following services.

- Service planning:
 - Assist the survivor in creating a *service plan* led by survivor priorities - a service plan is defined as a written statement that includes victim-driven, achievable, and time-defined goals toward, but not limited to, self-determination, enhanced safety or independence.
 - Document survivor progress towards goals via case notes.
- Ongoing service provision:
 - Ongoing assessment of survivor needs.
 - Updating service plans as goals are achieved or survivor goals change.
- Coordinating service care:
 - Within the agency and with other agencies to expand the range of services available to survivors such as legal services, shelter, and/or housing programs for survivors of GBV, entitlement income, and medical services.
- Emotional support and guidance:
 - Ongoing emotionally supportive counseling that supports a survivor's self-determination and choices.
 - Education and information about the dynamics of GBV.
 - Problem solving and discussion of options.
 - Each staff person providing services must comply with the State of Illinois Mandated Reporter Training requirement.

Legal Advocacy

- Assist survivors with completion of paperwork to petition for Protective Order from the Domestic Violence Court of Cook County and/or other steps necessary to petition for a Protective Order.
- Accompany survivors to court for emotional support, advocacy, and clarification of information such as law and court process.
- Assist survivors with petitioning for Stalking No Contact Orders (SNCO) or Civil No Contact Orders (CNCO)
- Advocate on the survivor's behalf in family court and other court activities related to the domestic violence case.
- Advocate on survivor's behalf with other civil or criminal court or law enforcement.

Survivors Advocacy (directly or through a formal linkage agreement)

- Advocate on a survivor's behalf with a third party after execution of necessary release of information, including advocacy with Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), victim's employer, housing provider, Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), etc.
- Assist survivors seeking legal resolutions available under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) such as but not limited to U-Visas for crime victims, T-Visas for victims of trafficking, Ensuring Success in School Law (ESSL), or the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA).

Maintain Survivor Confidentiality

- Maintain survivor confidentiality and confidentiality of survivor files as required by the IDVA or applicable state laws.

Community Education and Outreach

- Provide community education workshops and/or outreach events to educate the general public and allied service providers about gender-based violence and available services.
- Conduct outreach to engage survivors in the community, especially those underserved survivors that have experienced disparate outcomes based on gender, race, and ethnicity.
- Support and connect with survivors by offering open office hours, either in person or virtually, allowing for survivors to ask questions and connecting them to other resources as needed.

Quality Improvement

- Facilitate the confidential completion of online survivor outcome surveys by at least 50% of survivors.
- Use survivor outcome data quarterly from InfoNet and/or SurveyMonkey to inform program improvement including outcome achievements for underserved survivors.
- Collect survivor surveys on evaluation of services to inform program improvement.
- DFSS encourages delegate agencies to provide staff with training opportunities during the contract period intended to enhance and improve survivor services.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;

- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance Measures

To track progress towards achieving the outcome goals of this program, and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance indicators that may include, but is not limited to:

Services

- 100% of survivors receive triage or crisis services related to gender-based violence (e.g., safety planning, explanation of victim rights under IDVA, crisis counseling, etc.)
- 60% of survivors show progress towards a service plan goal.

Orders of Protection

- 50% of survivors seeking an Order of Protection with the assistance of the program are granted an Order of Protection.

Survivor Outcomes

- 90% of survivors who know more ways to plan for their safety
- 90% of survivors who felt supported in making their own decisions
- 90% of survivors who understand that they are not responsible for the abuse
- 90% of survivors who felt supported in court

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

Clients Served by GBV Category

- Number of survivors receiving services who are survivors of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV).
- Number of survivors receiving services who are survivors of non-IPV domestic violence, if applicable
- Number of survivors receiving services who are survivors of other forms of GBV, including survivors of SA, HT, and stalking.

Counseling and Case Management Services

The following outcomes are required from programs that offer ongoing counseling services directly:

- Number of survivors who develop a service plan
- Number of survivors who receive supportive counseling and case management
- Number of supportive counseling and case management sessions held

Survivor Advocacy

The following outcomes are required from programs that offer victim advocacy services directly:

- Number of survivors receiving interventions with systems such as, but not limited to, DCFS or IDHS, survivor's employer, housing provider, or family, law enforcement

Community Education and Outreach

- Number of community education/awareness workshops on domestic violence presented
- Number of community education/awareness workshops on other forms (not DV) of gender-based violence presented
- Number of victims enrolled into services

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Division on Gender-Based Violence seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract.

Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract. Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. Quarterly reports must be submitted to the Division on Gender-based Violence (DGBV) via Excel Workbooks and data entry into InfoNet.

Respondents are required to collect and submit data into InfoNet and agree to provide DFSS authorization to generate reports that include both project specific and GBV program-wide service data, where applicable. *Delegate agencies that do not have an appropriate project in InfoNet must set one up by quarter two of the first award year.* Client information must be entered to accurately reflect the new and existing clients the agency is serving. Agencies are also expected to submit evaluation of services surveys through electronic links provided by DGBV or paper. DFSS also reserves the right to conduct analysis on data to ensure services are offered and provided to victims of all demographic groups.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases as defined in the IDVA. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS and report into InfoNet on a quarterly basis. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

F. Application guidance for respondents

Proposals clearly indicate the types of GBV services offered and how staff will be trained and qualified to provide survivors with services when requested. Respondents must provide attachments of the required documentation as described in the application. Respondents will be penalized if the following documents are not included in the eProcurement application:

- Completed job description forms for every staff person listed on personnel budget. https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/delegate-agency-contracting-documents.html

- Up-to-date resume for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff
- Proof of 40-hour domestic violence training from an accredited training institute for every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff. For untrained staff, Respondent must instead attach proof of registration for training that will be completed within 90 days of contract start date.
- Proof of training, depending on the type of programming being offered, to meet the requirements listed in Table 1 of this RFP.
- Formal written linkage agreements with other GBV agencies to provide on-going counseling, legal, or survivor advocacy services (if the Respondent does not provide any of these directly).
- A list of other formal written linkage agreements between the Respondent and other services providers that enhance the array of services offered to survivors. The list should detail who the linkages are with and what services they are agreeing to provide your participants.

Respondents that propose to serve survivors from multiple program sites are encouraged to consolidate their applications. If the proposed multiple sites vary based on services offered, organizational capacity, subpopulations served, or in other ways that need to be distinguished in one application, then Respondents may consider submitting separate proposals.

Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. DFSS may extend this term up to two additional years, with each extension not to exceed one year, based on need, availability of funds and selected Respondent’s performance. DFSS anticipates funding approximately 20-30 projects in a range of \$50,000-\$150,000 annually depending on the size of the proposed program, with a total funding availability of \$2,600,000. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through the Community Development Block Grant and Corporate funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the Community Development Block grant must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated by this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Last RFP release: 2021

Applications received: 16

Projects funded: 13

Range of funding: \$31,000 - \$49,000

Total funding: \$1,086,242

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Administrative costs will be capped at 15%, regardless of whether your agency has negotiated a different federally approved indirect rate.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population and their strengths, assets, needs and challenges • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group and demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves • The Respondent provides ongoing community outreach and education programs about gender-based violence to stakeholders and other service providers to raise awareness and recruit survivors in need of services 	25
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery, including adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to securely collect and store key participant and performance data, including data quality assurance 	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence based and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and retaining program participants through program completion • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way and including linkages to mental health counseling and housing resources, and describes client screening for these needs 	30
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent demonstrates their experience in disaggregating data to identify disparities in their program delivery • The Respondent uses InfoNet or other relevant systems and processes needed to track and report performance on program outcomes <p><i>*When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	15

<p><u>Reasonable costs and budget justification</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	<p>10</p>
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Basis of Award

It is a priority for DFSS to have services under this program model that serve as many of the listed GBV types as possible, as well as that services are located in a geographically dispersed manner that supports city-wide access. In addition to applicant score based on the selection criteria above, DFSS may factor these goals into our selection decision-making process. DFSS is seeking to fund a comprehensive city network of providers that offer specialized services to all GBV survivors.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Centralized Shelter Intake, Transportation, and Crisis Response (RFP 10126)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Email: Jeremy.Nichlos@cityofchicago.org

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

Through this RFP, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Homeless Services Division seeks an organization to provide centralized shelter intake, transportation, and crisis response (CSITCR). The CSITCR program is the point of contact for Chicagoans seeking shelter or crisis response services in Chicago, as well as the manager of the City's real-time shelter bed inventory. Services from this program are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and citywide. In addition to 24/7 intake, referral, and transportation services for individuals and families requesting shelter or crisis response, the program works in conjunction with the City's 311 Services, the Chicago Fire Department (CFD), Office of Emergency Management Center (OEMC), DFSS Senior Services Division, and the Chicago Police Department (CPD) to assist with wellbeing checks, disaster relief, and in other situations where city residents may need connection to crisis resources, transportation, or shelter.

Services included in this RFP:

- Maintain a real-time inventory of available shelter beds for individuals experiencing homelessness and domestic violence and serve as the central clearinghouse for single-occupancy beds. Collaborate with the delegate agency responsible for managing the clearinghouse for family shelter beds.
- Respond to requests for shelter for all populations including survivors of domestic violence. This includes contacting clients, conducting intake assessments, identifying appropriate shelter placements, and providing transportation to shelter.
- Manage and staff a central intake facility for single individuals and provide shelter diversion for single individuals.
- Respond to crises including requests for well-being checks, assisting victims of fire or other disasters, general outreach and engagement, transportation, extreme weather events, mass care services, and emergency vacate orders.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive

- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Homeless Services Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning/coordination efforts. The Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant (All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System, other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the City towards the ultimate aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago. For further information about these and the other services offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss.

B. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The goal of the CSITCR program is to quickly connect anyone requesting shelter or crisis response to the necessary intervention, with a seamless, trauma-informed approach. A qualified respondent will have a clear plan to manage daily crisis response requests alongside a real-time bed inventory and provide shelter referral, transportation, and outreach either in house or through subcontracted partners. A qualified applicant will also have a strong understanding and commitment to stewarding the data collection of this program and work as a partner with the City to analyze trends and develop a deep understanding of how the system front door (wherever households first engage with the homeless services system) is functioning.

The CSITCR program is designed to be responsive to a variety of crisis response needs including a prominent role in conducting senior well-being checks to identify seniors that are living in substandard conditions that could benefit from temporary shelter while being connected to the DFSS Senior Services Division for additional supports/wrap-around services. Another significant role is as a conduit into the homeless and domestic violence shelter system. DFSS is unique across the country in seeking to reduce barriers to shelter access by funding a single delegate agency to transport, refer, and place residents facing homelessness in open shelter beds across the city. Additionally, the awarded agency will serve as the central clearinghouse for shelter beds for single individuals and collaborate with the delegate agency responsible for maintaining the clearinghouse for family beds to maintain a real-time inventory of available beds throughout the system. To achieve these goals the respondent must build supportive relationships with shelter providers and establish a clear process for regular communication and data collection.

A successful proposal must highlight the organization's ability to respond to crisis requests for assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, anywhere in the city of Chicago. This will also include coordinating

referrals and providing transportation to homeless and domestic violence shelters as well as other placements (e.g. drug treatment facilities, hospitals, and warming/cooling centers) on behalf of DFSS.

A successful program will have the following effects on participants and the wider crisis response system:

- Impact those seeking shelter by managing bed inventory and responding to shelter requests, so they have safe places to stay in order to regain stability.
- Impact those seeking shelter by having a system front door that is person-centered, maintains clear and consistent communication around the process, is welcoming and respectful, and provides updates about the status of their shelter request.
- Impact shelter providers by coordinating shelter placements and connecting providers to individuals seeking shelter in Chicago in a centralized manner.
- Impact those attempting to assist with shelter placements (service providers/outreach/aldermen/etc.), by serving as the main contact to connect and coordinate with for shelter placements.
- Impact the Homeless Services Division by providing up-to-date, reliable data regarding supply and demand in the shelter system that can then impact our strategic funding and programming choices for the City.
- Impact at-risk seniors by conducting wellness checks to ensure their safety and connect them to additional resources when needed.
- Impact victims of fire or other natural disasters by providing transportation to safe locations.
- Households displaced by eviction and vacate orders are safely transported to shelter or alternative residences as requested by DFSS and relevant City agencies.

Current state and priorities for improvement

Homelessness in Chicago: The Point-In-Time (PIT) Count is one way to estimate the number of Chicagoans experiencing homelessness each year. The 2024 PIT Count— held on January 25th, 2024 – estimated that 18,836 Chicago residents were experiencing homelessness on the night of the Count. Of those, 17,202 individuals were residing in sheltered locations – which included 3,523 Non-New Arrivals and 13,679 New Arrivals – while over 1,600 individuals were residing on the street or other areas not meant for human habitation.

Of those counted as experiencing homelessness during the 2024 PIT Count, 7,948 were individuals in households without children, while 10,874 were individuals in households with children (3,038 families). A total of 1,458 unaccompanied youth under 25 were counted.

As seen in historic PIT results, Black or African American households are disproportionately impacted by homelessness in Chicago: Black or African American individuals make up roughly 30% of the city of Chicago’s total population but made up over 72% of the Non-New Arrivals counted as experiencing homelessness in the 2024 PIT.

One System Initiative: In 2024, the City, State, homeless services providers, community partners, and people with lived experience convened as part of a collaborative effort called the One System Initiative to integrate the systems supporting people experiencing homelessness and new arrivals in the Chicago area. The goal of the initiative is to streamline how the city serves anyone who needs homeless services, ensuring standardized care across a single system. In 2025, the total unified shelter system now constitutes roughly 7,400 shelter beds and now includes two physical locations where shelter requestors can wait 24/7 while shelter placement is identified: the Emergency Homeless Assessment and Response Center (EHARC) for families with children and the Shelter Placement and Resource Center (SPARC) for single adults.

311 and Other Service Requests: Chicagoans experiencing a housing crisis primarily seek shelter through the 311 system. Review of City of Chicago’s 311 requests has shown an overall increase in the number of calls for shelter since 2020, see table below. Of note, these requests do include both re-requests from the same person or family and re-requests if an original call did not end in placement. As such, the existence of such duplicate requests means the total volume of 311 calls is not accurately representative of the exact number of people seeking shelter.

Table 1

Year	Count of Shelter Requests Opened*^
2020	35,258
2021	38,816
2022	51,637
2023	43,104
2024	42,573

*Note: Includes requests only from requestors not marked as Asylum-Seeking individuals or families who requested shelter through a different process.

^ Count includes duplicate request

While Shelter requests constitute the majority of requests received, the other requests that are received via 311 are important. From 2020 to 2024, the share of requests by category ranged from:

- shelter request and transportation services: 87% - 93%
- well-being checks: 5%-8%
- crisis referral: 2-3%
- fire assistance and relocation assistance: <1%

A qualified respondent will also plan for and adapt to fluctuations in the number of requests by time of day and season. See below for the number of requests by category by month in 2024:

Month	Crisis Referral	Fire Assistance	Relocation Request	Senior Well-Being Check Request	Shelter Request	Total
Jan	288	21	5	656	4116	5086
Feb	89	27	6	279	3348	3749
Mar	96	18	3	256	3401	3774
Apr	86	24	1	192	3499	3802
May	90	13	3	206	3198	3510
Jun	107	8	3	273	3290	3681
Jul	112	5	3	290	3325	3735
Aug	110	17	1	288	3429	3845
Sep	95	19	1	219	3382	3716
Oct	87	12	1	321	3617	4038
Nov	129	16	6	304	3673	4128
Dec	187	24	4	382	4295	4892
Total	1476	204	37	3666	42573	47956

Best Practice Area: Diversion

DFSS believes that a successful CSITCR program should include a shelter diversion component. Shelter

diversion is a brief intervention that takes place when a client first touches the homeless system. It empowers persons facing imminent homelessness to identify safe and appropriate housing options, thereby avoiding shelter and returning immediately to housing. The practice of diversion is built on experienced, well-trained staff (diversion experts) capable of facilitating a conversation that fosters creative solutions for alternative housing options outside of shelters. The respondent should identify key staff that will be trained specifically for diversion conversations, create staffing schedules that provide time for staff to have one-on-one, in-depth conversations with individuals seeking shelter, and record diversion data in HMIS. DFSS is committed to working with an awarded delegate to support capacity building in this program component area.

Priority for Improvement: Placement Rate

The placement rate, defined as the percent of requests for shelter ending in successful placement in shelter, is both a key indicator of the management of this contract and most importantly, that Chicagoans experiencing a housing crisis are able to access the support they need. On average, due to the limited number of shelter beds, only about 16% of calls requesting shelter currently result in individuals being successfully placed in shelter.

Through this contract term, DFSS will work with the delegate agency to gain a better understanding of the factors driving placement rates, identify and remove barriers to shelter placements, and identify the appropriate placement rate targets and action steps to meet those targets. Additionally, DFSS will also take an seek to understand and address disparities in the placement rate related to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, neighborhood, or language. FSS is interested in partnering with the awarded agency to evaluate and improve accessibility and viability of pick-up locations and overall speed of response.

DFSS recognizes that placement rates are dependent on available shelter beds. A successful delegate will work with DFSS to continue to develop strategies to ensure that Chicagoans waiting for placement are effectively triaged and alerted to the status of their shelter placement.

Priority for Improvement: Shelter Bed Inventory Tracking

To meet the crisis housing needs of people experiencing homelessness or domestic violence, Chicago has roughly 7,400 temporary beds serving individuals and families across the system following the implementation of the One System Initiative. Maintaining an up-to-date and accurate inventory of available beds across the city is a critical role of the delegate agency identified through this RFP. DFSS is interested in improving the accuracy of the inventory, its availability to DFSS staff, and its ability to be tracked electronically in real time. DFSS is exploring options for improving the current system and seeks a delegate to partner on successful implementation and continuous improvement of any new system. We believe daily, organized, and open coordination with shelters is critical to achieving this. Additionally, the delegate selected through this contract will coordinate with The Salvation Army's Emergency Homeless Assessment and Response Center (EHARC) who manages family bed availability.

Priority for Improvement: Data Availability and Analysis

DFSS believes that making progress on the above priorities will assist the awarded delegate in having increased capacity to continue to become a system partner in data collection and analysis. A successful delegate will be able to provide DFSS with real-time shelter placement rates and shelter bed inventory updates. Through complete and timely data entry, the delegate should be able to make proactive system improvement suggestions and craft recommendations to DFSS on how the City could provide support to increase program performance. The CSITCR delegate plays a critical role in collecting necessary data on how Chicago's homeless system front door is performing and DFSS seeks applicants that have experience in complex data collection.

Target Population

The target population for this RFP is any Chicagoan experiencing a housing crisis, fleeing domestic violence, in need of a wellbeing check, or who is a survivor of fire or other disasters.

Services provided through this RFP must be delivered in a way that is sensitive to each individual crisis and respectful and supportive to all individuals and households served, including:

- A variety of ethnic populations
- Non or limited English speakers
- LGBTQ+
- People with disabilities
- Veterans
- People with low-incomes or who are unemployed
- People experiencing mental or behavioral health concerns
- People who are on Sex Offender Registry
- Survivors of gender-based violence
- All types of families including single parents
- Unhoused newcomers (not born in the US and arrived within the year)
- People with varying levels of documentation
- Youth and older adults

C. Program activities and requirements

DFSS is seeking proposals to provide the array of services listed below 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year across Chicago. Additionally, a successful delegate will propose strategies for balancing and ensuring that the arrays of crisis response are provided in a holistic and coordinated manner to ensure that the success of one response type does not hinder another. The awarded delegate agency will be required to participate in DFSS, City of Chicago, or State of Illinois led work on continuing the implementation of the One System Initiative. The Awarded delegate agency will need to address cultural competence and language access needs to adequately serve the non-English speaking populations that access this crisis response system. Of requests where the caller's primary language spoken was noted in 2024, the majority of caller's primary language was listed as English (over 90% of requests) followed by Spanish, Polish and French, though requests were made in nearly 30 overall languages.

Respondents are encouraged to subcontract with other organizations to fulfill the program requirements of this RFP. The selected respondent may award additional subcontracts. Secondary providers are expected to meet the same requirements and standards outlined in the program requirements below. The Respondent must directly coordinate with subcontracted providers for this program's requirements and is responsible for ensuring all subcontracted agencies follow the requirement.

Maintain the city-wide clearinghouse for shelter beds and respond to requests for shelter for all populations

- **Serve as the central clearinghouse for shelter beds and maintain a real-time inventory of available beds:** Maintain an up-to-date and accurate inventory of available beds across the homeless system for single individuals as well as coordinate family bed availability with the Emergency Homeless Assessment and Response Center (EHARC) operated by The Salvation Army. Share the real-time bed inventory with other shelters and DFSS upon request.
- **Conduct intake and referrals to shelter:** Receive shelter requests from 311's Salesforce system, contact clients, conduct intake assessments, assist households in identifying any safe alternatives to shelter (diversion), match households to shelter (including domestic violence shelters) placements based on need and bed availability and update the 311 Salesforce system with progress notes on referrals.

Physical space for citywide intake for singles

- **Manage and staff a central intake point for singles:** Provide on-site, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, crisis management, and a waiting area for singles seeking shelter at the Garfield Community Service Center located at 10 S. Kedzie Avenue. See "Work site requirements" for additional information about the costs associated with this site.
- Provide 1-2 intake support staff to work from the Shelter Placement and Resource Center (SPARC) during day shift hours to support with shelter request and placement coordination.

Transportation support

- **Dispatch and transportation to shelter:** Coordinate the transportation of clients from their location or designated locations to shelter.
- **Maintain vehicle fleet:** Respondents or their subcontracted providers will be responsible for determining the number and type of vehicles needed to provide services. All vehicles will need to be labeled or marked as belonging to the selected respondent and will need to maintain Automobile Liability Insurance and Excess/Umbrella Liability Insurance as stated in the contract with DFSS. Additionally, the respondent will need to ensure that all drivers have a valid driver's license and meet all driving requirements as required by the State of Illinois. DFSS suggests maintaining a minimum of seven 12-passenger vans. At least two vehicles must be able to accommodate persons in wheelchairs. The Respondent may conduct transportation dispatch activities at either 10 S. Kedzie or an alternate site proposed by the Respondent. DFSS can provide the Respondent with access to parking spaces at its Garfield Community Service Center located at 10 S. Kedzie Avenue. If the respondent is proposing an alternate work site for dispatch, that location must have a secured on-site parking lot.
- **Other transportation needs:** As assigned by DFSS provide relocation assistance; support for outreach and engagement initiatives; and additional transportation for crisis response activities listed below.

Senior well-being checks

- **Well-being checks and support services:** Receive well-being check requests from 311's Salesforce system, visit homes of at-risk seniors (60 and up) to verify that the resident is safe and well. Follow up may include referrals to DFSS Senior Services Division and City of Chicago Department of Buildings depending on need or may require coordination with the Chicago Police Department, Chicago Fire Department, or EMS as needed, for augmentation of service delivery.
- **Clinical skills:** Possess clinical skills to conduct safety assessment and have the proper training in the following areas:
 - **Health Concerns Education:** Staff must be trained on common health issues in older adults, including physical and mental health challenges.
 - **Basic Physical and Mental Health Assessment:** Staff must be trained to conduct basic assessments of physical health (mobility, hygiene, nutrition) and mental health (cognition, mood, social engagement).
 - **Recognizing Red Flags:** Ability to recognize signs of health decline, abuse, neglect, or other potential risks to the senior's well-being.
 - **Effective Communication:** Staff must be trained on communication techniques that are empathetic and clear when working with seniors, especially those with cognitive impairments or emotional challenges.
 - **Community Resources:** Staff must be familiar with local resources available to support seniors, including healthcare providers, meal services, and emergency contacts.
- **Contact and Referral Notes:** Notes must be documented via data, assessment, and plan note format of referrals made to other agencies. Notes must document at least three attempts for initial visit until contact is made.
 - Must follow standard operating procedure for Salesforce data entry (as developed by DFSS)

- **Case Elevation:** For abuse, neglect, and exploitation cases, Adult Protective Services (APS) reports should be filed immediately with APS agency and DFSS notified as soon as possible, but no less than within 24 hours of APS referral. CSITCR staff are considered mandated reporters and all staff must complete APS and DCFS mandated reporter training annually.

Crisis response

- **Assistance for victims of fire or other disasters:** In instances of fire or other natural disasters, communicate with partners at the American Red Cross to assist with any requests regarding relocation and/or transportation to safe locations such as temporary shelter or relatives as needed.
- **Outreach and engagement:** Canvas areas of the city to offer homeless residents' access to shelter placement and other facilities (e.g. substance abuse treatment) and transportation to these facilities as requested by DFSS.
 - Coordinate with DFSS 6 Community Service Centers as needed.
- **Mass care services:** Support the City's response to a citywide emergency as requested by DFSS and directed by the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) (e.g. mass relocation of impacted residents to temporary emergency shelters).
- **Emergency vacate orders:** Relocate households displaced by eviction and vacate orders to shelter or alternative residences as requested by DFSS and relevant City agencies.

Continuous quality improvement

- **Evidence-based practices:** The proposed program must reflect the core values of Chicago's homeless services Continuum of Care (CoC) including a housing first approach, harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and the use of culturally competent, non-discriminatory, developmentally appropriate practices. For more information on these best practices, please review the Chicago CoC's Community Standards at <https://allchicago.org/continuum-of-care/standards-and-monitoring/>
- **Client feedback:** The proposed program must incorporate an intentional process of regularly seeking feedback on service provision from clients and the applicant must be able to express how this feedback will be integrated to improve program services and performance.
- **Continuous service improvement:** In partnership with DFSS, identify system and process adjustments that could improve how our shelter system engages and connects people experiencing homelessness to resources. The Respondent will be required to meet with DFSS regularly to provide program updates and discuss program improvements and data.
- **Open communication:** Maintain regular and open communication with partner shelters as well as DFSS to ensure that issues that arise can be taken care of with the most efficiency.
- **Staff training:** Provide new staff with proper onboarding training to maintain service quality, communication, as well as ensure data collection validity.
- **Improved efficiency:** Continually update systems and move away from outdated modes of communication. The proposed program should be reviewing data to identify emerging trends around supply and demand of Shelter bed stock. A Successful delegate will use these insights to inform service delivery and elevate potential concerns to DFSS, for example: flagging for DFSS if a specific shelter is experiencing an increased rate of placement refusals.

Delegate agency transition

In the event that as a result of this RFP process there is a change in the delegate agency providing the services outlined in this RFP, the new delegate agency will be expected to take part in transition planning and a transition process. If applicable, transition planning will start soon after award letters are sent. The transition process will be designed to limit the disruption of services for people experiencing housing crises, partner agencies that rely on efficient placement services, and all other groups and systems that rely on the critical services outlined above.

Work site requirements

DFSS can provide office space for the selected respondent at its Garfield Community Service Center located at 10 S. Kedzie. The selected respondent can enter into a lease agreement with the Department of Fleet and Facility Management (2FM). Non-profit entities will not be charged rent but will be responsible for a pro-rated portion of operating costs based on the square footage of the leasehold in relation to the 10 S. Kedzie Avenue building; the cost includes utilities, telecommunications, custodial, security, engineering services, landscaping, pest control, and other associated costs. Respondent staff will have access to an on-site office space which seats up to 35 people and is currently furnished with desks, chairs, City of Chicago furnished phone & computer system, etc. The respondent is free to use any existing furniture but will be responsible for purchasing and/or providing any additional furniture, the purchase of which will not be considered as an allowable cost under this contract. The respondent must receive prior permission from DFSS and 2FM before performing any significant re-configuring/construction of the space.

If interested, the respondent or subcontracted provider(s) can also propose alternative worksites for components of this scope of service that do not require coverage at 10 S. Kedzie. Requirements of an alternative worksite would include public accessibility to request shelter on a 24/7 basis as well as a climate-controlled space to wait for shelter placement, consistent phone/internet access, adequate workstations for employees and space for vehicle fleet parking.

Technology requirements

If the respondent or subcontracted provider(s) chooses to operate transportation dispatch out of 10 S. Kedzie Avenue, DFSS can provide computers, printers, internet access and configuration, and access to all specific databases necessary for the selected respondent to complete the outlined tasks. Currently, computers are Dell Optiplex 7470 with a Windows 10 Operating System; Office Suite products will not be provided to the respondent.

Staffing Requirements

Respondents and subcontracted providers are ultimately responsible for proposing the number and qualifications of staff they feel will be needed to support this program, but DFSS recommendations based on best practices and prior learnings are below.

- DFSS recommends the program includes staff with robust backgrounds in human services and experience with trauma-informed care of the clinical issues often seen in the target population including mental health and substance use.
- The proposed staffing model should provide 24 hours a day, 7 days a week coverage and include staff that can adequately manage the fleet of vehicles, operations, service provision, data collection and communication with and service to families and individuals that are in crisis.
- The proposed staffing plan should explain how the applicant would account for differences in demand and need over various shifts and should address how staff will respond to the various needs of this program consecutively.
 - Applicants should think strategically about not only what positions they will need to operate this program, but how those positions will operate together. Applicants should explain how they would strategically deploy teams based not only on immediate needs but also location, request type, or other factors.

DFSS recommends respondents or subcontracted providers include an explicit plan for how they will staff up to meet the following types and desired levels of staff positions, as well as any other positions they deem necessary to this program:

In-Office Staff:

- Supervisory Staff: To oversee staff, address emergencies and maintain consistent communication with necessary stakeholders.
 - DFSS recommends at least 1 supervisory staff on site each shift.
- Dispatch Staff: To collaborate with the necessary partners to ensure proper service connections, communicate with requestors to finalize case details, dispatch teams to transport requestors to their final destinations, and secure case outcomes for data entry from teams in the field.
 - DFSS recommends staffing or subcontracting for at least 1 overnight dispatcher and 2 dispatch employees for day and evening shifts.
- Intake Support Staff: To create walk-in requests at 10 S Kedzie, make comfort calls (which provide updates on placement to open case requestors), and communicate with the necessary partners regarding bed availability or connections to necessary resources in order to complete cases.
 - DFSS recommends staffing or subcontracting for at least 1 overnight intake support staff and 3 intake support staff on the day and evening shifts.
- Data Specialists: To ensure timely and complete Salesforce close outs for all requests and ensure that both the Salesforce and HMIS data entry is completed for this program.
 - DFSS recommends staffing or subcontracting for at least 1 dedicated data staff per shift.

In the Field Staff:

- Vehicle Drivers: To ensure adequate transportation coverage across the full City and the ability to respond to all request types in a timely and fair and consistent manner.
- Transportation Intake Staff: To assist in completing all request types, collecting necessary intake information from individuals or families being served, and to relay the necessary case outcomes back to the in-office dispatcher.
 - DFSS recommends staffing adequate to ensure the operation of at least 2 vehicles overnight and at least 5 vehicles during the day and evening shifts.
 - It is best practice to send at least 1 driver and 1 intake staff out together per vehicle.

DFSS Recommended Staff Breakdown:

* The awarded delegate or their subcontracted provider(s) should continually assess staffing patterns and responsibilities to see if staffing or position type needs to change over time. **It may be necessary to increase, decrease or change staffing positions or responsibilities based on the various program shifts and at different times of the year (weekday versus weekend, seasonal changes, emergency heat/cold, etc.).** Applicants should include information in their response as to how they will address the potential need to adjust staffing patterns or responsibilities and how they will utilize program data to guide these potential shifts.

- 1st shift (Overnight) - at least 8 staff
 - In-Office: 1 supervisor, 1 dispatch, 1 intake support, 1 data specialist
 - In the Field: 2 vehicles of staff (2 drivers + 2 transportation intake staff)
- 2nd shift (Day) - at least 18 staff
 - In-Office: 1 supervisor for placements, 1 supervisor with clinical training for senior well-being checks/crisis response, 2 dispatch, 3 intake support, 1 data specialist
 - In the Field: 5 vehicles of staff (5 drivers + 5 transportation intake staff)
 - 2 teams conducting senior well-being checks/crisis response and 3 teams conducting placements.
- 3rd shift (Evening) - at least 18 staff

- In-Office: 1 supervisor for placements, 1 supervisor with clinical training for senior well-being checks/crisis response, 2 dispatch, 3 intake support, 1 data specialist
- In the Field: 5 vehicles of staff (5 drivers + 5 transportation intake staff)
 - 2 teams conducting senior well-being checks/crisis response and 3 teams conducting placements.

Severe Weather Staffing Needs

The awarded delegate will need a severe weather staffing plan. During severe weather situations, staffing augmentation will be necessary to meet the increased needs of Chicagoans experiencing extreme heat or cold. Along with continuing day-to-day operations in a timely manner, delegates will have to respond to the below additional tasks in severe weather. The awarded delegate will need to ensure they have the staffing and strategy in place to meet these needs.

- **Transportation in extreme weather:** Support the City’s response to extreme weather events as requested by DFSS (e.g. increase staffing to provide additional transportation for residents to City and non-City operated warming and cooling centers, and to engage unsheltered residents).

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client’s next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 75% of shelter placement requests that end in shelter placement are completed within 20 hours (from notification by 311 of shelter request to drop-off of client at shelter) and the remaining 25% within 24 hours.
- 75% of well-being checks will be completed within 20 hours (from notification by 311 to case closure) and the remaining 25% within 24 hours.
- 75% of other transportation requests will be completed within 24 hours and the remaining 25% within 36 hours.
- The selected respondent is expected to complete and close 90% of the 311 City Service Requests within 24 hours and the remaining within 48 hours.

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 100% of shelter requests in Salesforce will be closed out after an outcome is identified or if there has been no contact with a client for at least 24 hours.
- 80% of all shifts are fully staffed allowing for full vehicle utilization, based on the staffing laid out in the staffing requirements section of this RFP.
- 80% of open shelter requests receive a Comfort Call

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Homeless Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

As stated earlier in this RFP, DFSS is exploring options for shelter bed tracking systems. The awarded agency would need to be the steward of this tracker and ensure that all participating agencies are meeting bed reporting requirements and be proactive in alerting DFSS when downward trends begins or assistance with partner participation is needed.

Upon contract award, the delegate agency will be required to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS. The Centralized Shelter Intake, Transportation and Crisis Response delegate will submit monthly and quarterly reports to the DFSS Homeless Services Division.

Respondents must demonstrate their ability to accurately collect, maintain, and report on clients served, demographic characteristics, services provided, and outcomes met. The selected respondent will be required to enter data into the following information systems on a daily basis and DFSS will provide training for these systems, if necessary:

- Salesforce - 311 City Service Database
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

Insurance

Respondent, if selected, shall register with the City's online insurance certificate portal using the designated email registration link provided below. Respondent shall provide a current and valid email address for both

the contractor and the contractor’s insurance agent or provider. The Selected Respondent is responsible for ensuring the submission of a certificate of insurance (COI) through the City’s online insurance certificate portal prior to award of a contract.

A Respondent selected for contract negotiation and award who fails to fulfill the requirement to register and submit a COI through the City’s online insurance certificate portal may be deemed nonresponsive and the City may choose to instead engage a different Respondent for contract negotiation. If a Respondent is unable to register and submit the COI through the City’s online insurance certificate portal and instead submits a printed insurance certificate prior to contract award, the City may accept a paper COI provided that written justification is provided explaining the Respondent’s good faith efforts to comply with the terms of this section and the reasons why the submission could not be completed. Instructions for registering and submitting COIs are available at the following URL: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/COI>

F. Application guidance for respondents

DFSS intends to make one award for this Centralized Shelter Intake contract. Respondents must submit a budget as part of their application that reflects their true estimated costs for operating this program.

Respondents proposing to subcontract services must include signed agreements or letters of support from all entities with whom they propose to subcontract. Respondents that propose to subcontract services should explain in their applications which program requirements they plan to provide and which will be provided by subcontracted providers.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum of 10% percent in-kind match**. Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to one additional year with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that this award will be roughly \$4,950,000 annually. DFSS anticipates funding one agency with the option for that agency to subcontract services. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), City Corporate, and Illinois Department of Human Services Emergency and Transitional Housing (IDHS ETH) funds, and may also be funded through other city, state, federal, and local funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the grant(s) must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received:	1
Projects funded:	1
Total funding:	\$3,448,000

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum of 10% percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • Please describe how your leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the populations you serve • The Respondent has a strong understanding of the community’s shelter provider landscape and has a plan in place to develop or strengthen relationships with those partners. 	<p>15</p>
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has a sufficient staffing pattern and clearly explains how this will be sufficient to serve the number of clients proposed. Explanation is provided for any differences between the DFSS recommended staffing pattern and the proposed staffing pattern. • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has adequate data collection and management practices • The Respondent has a sufficient staffing plan and protocol for extreme weather events. 	<p>25</p>
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has a clear strategy for balancing the multiple services and required program activities of this project. • The Respondent includes information about how they will work with DFSS, the City of Chicago, and the State of Illinois as we work to create one coordinated crisis response system for all Chicagoans regardless of length of time in the City or State. There is an effective strategy for serving non-English speaking program participants in their program design and delivery. • The Respondent has a coordination plan in place when shelters or other partner agencies are facing operational challenges or are non-responsive. • The Respondent’s proposed program seeks regular feedback on service provision from clients and implement changes based on that feedback into service delivery. • The respondent as a clear strategy for the necessary transportation logistics required for this program to be successful. 	<p>30</p>
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key participant and performance data 	<p>20</p>

<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	<p>10</p>
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Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure system-level needs are met including the ability of the respondent to adequately provide contracted services to the entire geographic area of the City of Chicago

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Homeless Street Outreach (RFP# 53655)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

Respondents are strongly encouraged to submit all questions and comments related to the RFP via e-mail. For answers to program-related questions, please contact:

Jeremy Nichols, Project Manager, Homeless Services Division

Phone: 312-746-5670

Email: Jeremy.Nichlos@cityofchicago.org

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Homeless Services Division seeks to fund homeless street outreach services for vulnerable Chicagoans who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Through this RFP, DFSS seeks delegates who can provide intensive, case-management-driven and housing-focused street outreach which supports people who are overcoming an array of barriers associated with experiencing homelessness. Street outreach delegates play a key role in supporting vulnerable Chicagoans as they encounter Chicago's homelessness response system. The primary goal of these services is to build a positive connection with vulnerable individuals and encourage movement to more stable situations, such as shelter and, ultimately, permanent housing.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The Homeless Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning/coordination efforts. The Homeless Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant (All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System, other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the city towards the ultimate aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago.

B. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The goal of homeless street outreach is to provide geographically specific and specialized street outreach services for Chicagoans experiencing homelessness, resulting in an increase in the number of individuals who are engaged, assessed, receiving case management, and successfully transitioning to more stable housing. DFSS seeks to fund programs that engage individuals who might not seek out services, have multiple barriers to maintaining stable housing, and/or have experienced long-term homelessness.

Well-resourced and coordinated street outreach programs contribute to an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. While effective engagement services will meet immediate and basic needs of participants, truly successful programs will engage participants in a meaningful way that increases their ability to access housing and shelter resources. Projects funded through this RFP will have to provide clear and consistent plans to address the delivery of mental, behavioral, and physical health services or provide linkages to such services. Being able to address participants who might display symptoms of severe and persistent mental health disorders and have strategies for ongoing engagement despite the barriers present is a best practice.

DFSS believes that effective and coordinated street outreach services will not only meet immediate needs but also, through strategies such as active case management, person-centered approaches to crisis intervention, and trauma-informed care principles, will support long-term outcomes such as:

- Participants will have increased opportunities to access shelter
- Participants will access permanent housing
- Participants will access supports through case management that will:
 - Lead to better physical and mental health outcomes
 - Help connect participants to community resources

DFSS asks that street outreach programs develop service delivery approaches that integrate the Chicago CoC's Community Standards and nationally recognized, evidence-based best practices and strategies. See links embedded from nationally recognized entities specializing in each best practice for more information or look through the Chicago CoC's Community Standards at <https://allchicago.org/continuum-of-care/standards-and-monitoring/> for brief overviews of each best practice.

- [A Housing First Approach](#)
- [Harm Reduction Strategies](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Care](#)
- [Inclusion of Input from Person\(s\) of Lived Experience \(PLE\)](#)

Current state and priorities for improvement

The Point-In-Time Count is one way to estimate the number of Chicagoans experiencing homelessness each year and gather information about who in the City is experiencing homelessness. HUD estimates that, on any given night, more than half a million people across the nation are sleeping in shelters and unsheltered places not meant for human habitation. Chicago's 2024 Point-In-Time Count (PIT) – held on January 25th, 2024 – estimated that 18,836 Chicago residents were experiencing homelessness on the night of the Count. Of those, over 1,600 individuals were residing on the street or other areas not meant for human habitation.

Black or African American households are disproportionately impacted by homelessness in Chicago: Black or African American individuals make up roughly 30% of the city of Chicago's total population but made up over 60% of the unsheltered population estimated in the 2024 PIT Count.

Each year, delegate agencies and DFSS' Homeless Outreach and Prevention teams engage in an average of roughly 11,000 service encounters.

Living in public spaces and places not intended for human habitation presents a variety of risks that include exposure to the elements, lack of sanitation and sanitary conditions, loss of personal documents and belongings, and even violence. Effective street outreach services connect with people who might not otherwise seek assistance or come to the attention of the homeless service system and ensure that people's basic needs are met while supporting them along pathways toward housing stability.

Many of the people served by the programs identified through this RFP are also experiencing chronic homelessness, meaning they have experienced homelessness for at least a year — or repeatedly — while struggling with a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability. Many also experience multiple barriers to stable housing. Under this RFP, successful programs must have strategies in place to address these barriers. Barriers include, but are not limited to, substance use, mental illness, justice involvement, and a lack of trust in community and systems.

Additionally, homelessness is not illegal, and forcing or mandating residents to access shelter is not a best practice approach to bringing people indoors. A successful program must develop an engagement strategy that supports and encourages people to understand the value of moving into available shelter or housing options. This can look like supporting a client through the Centralized Shelter Intake process, assisting with access permanent housing through CES, or using diversion strategies to reunite households with friends or family.

Through this RFP, DFSS seeks to fund agencies that propose strategies that continue this momentum – for example, equipping staff with technology and training them to complete assessments in real time while working in the field or providing agency transport to ensure frontline staff can adequately support the needs of their clients via transportation to necessary medical, housing and other benefit appointments. Programs funded through this RFP play a key role in ensuring that even the most vulnerable person living on the street or in shelter can be successfully matched to a housing provider and have access to the support needed to help them stay connected and address barriers as they navigate their way to a successful housing placement. While DFSS recognizes there are many approaches to street outreach, **DFSS seeks to fund programs that demonstrate commitment to sustained engagement leading to behavior change and successful system navigation over light touch encounters focused on immediate needs.**

- Current System Improvements: Outreach Operational Increases

In response to delegate feedback around staffing capacity, DFSS advocated for and received a \$1 million increase in annual City funding for outreach staff and operations, beginning in 2023. This funding increase reflects the Homeless Services Division's priority to promote systemic improvements that will raise wages and benefits for all frontline staff. This funding helped address the increasing operational needs reported by

current delegates and helped retain qualified and experienced team members and recruit new staff for currently open positions. **DFSS seeks to fund agencies that can commit to supporting their workforce with a compensation rate of at least \$23/hour for front line outreach staff and a focus on developing a pay scale for staff beyond this \$23 baseline, including increasing other staff pay, overtime pay, or retention bonuses.**

- Priorities for Improvement: Unsheltered Homeless Initiative and Increased System Coordination

DFSS is a co-partner and lead of multiple strategic initiatives to decrease unsheltered homelessness, including the Chicago Continuum of Care’s Unsheltered Homeless Initiative (UHI) which has been supported by the CoC’s award of resources under the HUD CoC Supplemental to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness (Special NOFO). With the Special NOFO resources serving as the basis for the UHI, there has been increased coordination around homeless street outreach and other programs that serve unsheltered individuals and families. In addition to funding agencies with strong individual programs, DFSS seeks prospective applicants who are committed to being a part of a fully coordinated and holistic street outreach model where, following direction from DFSS, they provide support to the City’s existing encampment strategies, assist in responding to aldermanic requests, work with the City and Continuum staff to plan and support housing events including Accelerated Moving Events (AMEs) and other housing events. AMEs and other housing events work to expedite and improve the process of moving from homelessness into housing. These one- or two-day events allow groups to complete several steps of the housing process at once, including: enrolling with a housing provider, viewing available units, completing applications with onsite assistance, and selecting furniture from the Chicago Furniture Bank.

- Priorities for Improvement: Extreme Weather Coordination and Support

DFSS also supports the Office of Emergency Management and Communication (OEMC) in coordinating extreme weather resources and responses for Chicagoans experiencing homelessness. When capacity allows, DFSS has been able to provide funding increase to cover the costs associated with outreach teams flexing or increasing hours to expand coverage during extreme weather events. As part of this work, DFSS is seeking to fund delegate agencies that build in extreme weather contingencies and service delivery flexibility into their program model to ensure that the community areas they cover are properly supported.

- Priorities for Improvement: Geographic Specification

Since 2021, DFSS has coordinated with its existing outreach providers to assign geographic areas to avoid service duplication and provide clear points of contact for unsheltered service provision. Successful street outreach teams can focus on specific geographic areas, ensure that they have the capacity to develop deep housing-focused relationships with residents experiencing unsheltered homelessness. DFSS plans to continue this strategy with this RFP.

DFSS is requesting prospective applicants to identify geographic regions within the city that they believe their agency is especially well suited to provide services in. Regions that can be selected include (please also see maps in Appendix and table below that gives the geographic boundaries of each area):

Region	Geographic Boundaries
Northwest Side	City Limits to the West, Western Ave to the East, City Limits to the North, North Ave to the South
Northeast Side	Western Ave to the West, Lakefront to the East, City Limits to the North, North Ave to the South
Central Business District (Downtown)	I90/94 Expressway to the West, Lakefront to the East, North Ave to the North, Cermak Rd to the South
South Side	City Limits to the West, Lakefront to the East, W. 26 th St. till Chicago River and

	then 18 th Street to the North), 79th St to the South
Far South Side	City Limits to the West, City Limits to the East, 79th St to the North, City Limits to the South
West Side	Austin Blvd to the West, I90/94 to the East, North Ave to the North, W. 26 th St. to the South

Examples of reasons an agency could provide for why their agency is well suited to a region include, but not limited to:

- Existing relationships with a geographic region’s encampment residents,
- Agency resources already based in the geographic service area

Awarded applicants that are assigned a specific region will be expected to develop a comprehensive environmental scan of the area. This can include but is not limited to creating a list of existing encampments, a “by-name” list of the residents of those encampments, and a list of available resources and other key stakeholders within this geographic region to connect encampment residents too. Throughout the lifespan of this contract, awarded agencies will be expected to proactively assess changes in unsheltered homelessness within their assigned region and remain in frequent communication with DFSS about identified trends or other changes over time.

Awarded agencies that are assigned a specific region will be expected to attend geographic specific case conferencing/coordination meetings led by DFSS on a monthly basis to ensure issues and concerns around encampment are addressed as quickly as possible and upcoming housing resources are strategically targeted and ensure all Chicagoans experiencing unsheltered homelessness are assessed for those opportunities.

DFSS will consider funding for outreach projects that are not required to operate within the specific geographic areas listed above if they fall within the following categories:

- CTA Red Line Outreach (must include evening and overnight outreach shifts)
- CTA Blue Line Outreach (must include evening and overnight outreach shifts)
- 24/7 O’Hare Outreach,
- Citywide Overnight,
- Citywide Youth,
- Citywide Specialty Outreach
 - Includes projects focused on a specific population or service model (including but not limited to projects focused on benefits advocacy, non-English Language specific Outreach or additional public transportation-focused outreach that fall outside of Blue and/or Red line or 24/7 O’Hare Outreach)

Target Population

The target population for street outreach is people experiencing literal homelessness.

Services provided through this RFP must be delivered in a way that is respectful and supportive to all individuals and households served, including:

- A variety of ethnic populations
- Individuals on Sex Offender Registry
- Non or limited English speakers
- LGBTQ+
- Veterans
- People with disabilities

- Survivors of gender-based violence
- People with substance use disorders
- People experiencing mental or behavioral health concerns
- Self-identified family structures
- Unhoused newcomers (not born in the US and arrived within the year)
- People with varying levels of documentation
- Youth and older adults

Additionally, DFSS seeks applications for engagement service programs that specialize in supporting youth. As defined by the CoC, youth are unaccompanied individuals or heads of household age 14 up to their 25th birthday. For youth programming, a young person may be precariously housed or “couch surfing” (meaning they are securing housing on a night-by-night basis, with no secure place to stay on a regular basis) in addition to experiencing literal homelessness or living on the street. This population requires specialized programming that incorporates positive youth development, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and harm reduction (Please see [Chicago Youth Sector Housing Program Model Design](https://allchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Chicago-Youth-Sector-Program-Model-Design.pdf) for additional explanation and complete list of core philosophies and values: <https://allchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Chicago-Youth-Sector-Program-Model-Design.pdf>).

C. Program activities and requirements

Program Requirements:

- Programs should provide client-centered services that meet clients where they are, both in terms of their level of need and geography.
- Programs must participate in the DFSS led encampment strategy that canvasses areas of the city to offer individuals experiencing homelessness access to shelter placement and other facilities (e.g. in-person substance use treatment) and transportation to these facilities as requested by DFSS.
- Programs must assist participants matched through CES to gain documentation and schedule and follow through on appointments as well as provide a warm hand off to housing providers.
- Programs must have a staffing plan that ensures that outreach staff are not in the field alone and are at least providing services in a dyad model.
- Programs must address how they will serve non-English speaking program participants in their program design and delivery.
- Programs must have at least 1 dyad engaging in outreach services in the field at a minimum of 4 days a week.
- Programs not specializing in one target group or providing previously approved specialty service must provide services throughout their assigned region.
- Provide support to DFSS Homeless Outreach and Prevention team as requested (ex: encampment strategies, aldermanic requests, Accelerated Moving Event (AME) planning and support)
- Programs must participate in community feedback sessions around the development of CoC Community Standards and other best practices and operate in line with those standards and guidelines once finalized.
- Programs serving a specific region must participate in monthly geographic specific case conferencing/coordination meetings.
- Program serving a specific region must develop a comprehensive environmental scan of their assigned region. This can include but not limited to creating a list of existing encampments and a “by-name” list of the residents of those encampments.
- Programs must engage in Chicago Continuum’s Unsheltered Homelessness Initiative coordination efforts.

- Programs must have activities to develop trust with their target population in order to engage them into formal, coordinated services that will culminate in a permanent housing placement or more stable housing.
- Programs must have activities that build individual connections and develop trust to provide people with the support they need to navigate complex processes and systems that have the potential to act as barriers that block the path to successfully moving to more stable or permanent housing.
- Programs must conduct initial assessments with clients that cover physical, psychological, and housing needs.
- Programs must provide connections to benefits and linkages to other community resources (i.e. physical and mental healthcare and substance use disorder treatment).
- Programs should develop cross sector relationships with non-homeless specific sectors that the unsheltered population might engage with or use for sheltering purposes, hospitals/Emergency Rooms for example, to develop strategies for engagement and communication.
- Programs are encouraged to tailor the design of their teams and approach to specialize in the provision of, or access to, special services such as medical and mental health care and substance use treatment.
- Providers must implement a service delivery model that incorporates tenets of harm reduction, trauma informed care, and strengths-based practices. For more information on these best practices, please see <https://allchicago.org/continuum-of-care/standards-and-monitoring/>
- Programs must ensure staff are trained in de-escalation, conflict mediation, and crisis intervention as well as community accountability approaches to preventing, interrupting, and transforming violence to promote long-term engagement.
- Programs must ensure staff are trained to appropriately serve people experiencing mental illness, chronic health issues, disability, or substance use disorders.
- Programs must dedicate adequate staff capacity to allow staff to accompany participants as needed through housing, benefits, and healthcare referral processes with the goal of confirming successful connections and ensuring participants are receiving appropriate services.
- Provider must provide access to the CES assessment for housing.
- Recognizing that locating individuals is often an initial barrier to housing for this mobile population, programs must develop strategies to stay connected to participants and act as a link between the participant and the systems and agencies that provide housing and shelter.
- Programs must not exceed 25 clients enrolled in case management services per staff member (1:25) and a program that specializes in serving youth must not exceed 20 clients per staff member (1:20).
- Programs are required to maintain client data in Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and adhere to the [Outreach](https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us/articles/360027271211-Outreach-Workflow) workflow (<https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us/articles/360027271211-Outreach-Workflow>) or [Drop-in Center Workflow](https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us/articles/360034360531-Drop-In-Center-Workflow) (<https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us/articles/360034360531-Drop-In-Center-Workflow>).
- Programs must participate in DFSS, City of Chicago, or State of Illinois led work on continuing the implementation of the One System Initiative.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;

- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client’s next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of annual outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- General population programs
 - 50% of encounters will result in HMIS enrollment and engagement in case management
 - 75% of participants receiving case management will connect to support systems
 - 45% of participants will move to more stable or permanent housing (family, friends, longer-term shelter/housing programs, or permanent housing)
- Youth intentional programs
 - 50% of participants will engage in case management
 - 75% of participants receiving case management will connect to support systems
 - 15% of participants will move to more stable or permanent housing (family, friends, longer-term shelter/housing programs, or permanent housing)

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 100% completion and on-time submission of required Hotspot Reporting delivered to DFSS staff
- 75% of all clients enrolled in HMIS will receive a CES Assessment
- 50% of all clients receiving case management will obtain vital documentation (IDs, Birth Certificate, SS card)

Performance measures and benchmarks are subject to change throughout the course of the contract to further align with finalized CoC Community Standards.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants’ progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS’ commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, Homeless Services seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting

contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Homeless Services Division delegate agencies, with the exception of domestic violence organizations, must use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and produce required reports. All Chicago administers Chicago CoC's HMIS. For more information about accessing HMIS and training, please visit the HMIS Help Desk at <https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us>. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dgs/InformationTechnology/ISTP.pdf>.

Insurance

Respondent, if selected, shall register with the City's online insurance certificate portal using the designated email registration link provided below. Respondent shall provide a current and valid email address for both the contractor and the contractor's insurance agent or provider. The Selected Respondent is responsible for ensuring the submission of a certificate of insurance (COI) through the City's online insurance certificate portal prior to award of a contract.

A Respondent selected for contract negotiation and award who fails to fulfill the requirement to register and submit a COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal may be deemed nonresponsive and the City may choose to instead engage a different Respondent for contract negotiation. If a Respondent is unable to register and submit the COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal and instead submits a printed insurance certificate prior to contract award, the City may accept a paper COI provided that written justification is provided explaining the Respondent's good faith efforts to comply with the terms of this section and the reasons why the submission could not be completed. Instructions for registering and submitting COIs are available at the following URL: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/COI>

F. Application guidance for respondents

DFSS seeks to assemble a portfolio of homeless street outreach services that meet the needs of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, both by region and specialized need. Respondents should apply indicating the type of proposed program from the list below:

- Street Outreach
 - Regions
 - Northwest Side
 - Northeast Side
 - Central Business District (Downtown)
 - South Side
 - Far South Side
 - West Side
 - Other
 - CTA Blue Line Outreach (must include evening and overnight)
 - CTA Red Line Outreach (must include evening and overnight)
 - 24/7 O'Hare Outreach,
 - Citywide
 - Citywide – Overnight

- Citywide – Youth-dedicated
- Citywide – Specialty

Respondents must submit a separate application for each program proposed in a category above. For example, an agency applying to operate street outreach programs serving residents on the Northwest side and residents on the Northeast side would need to submit two separate applications. This information will help DFSS understand, compare, and select the right mix of delegates as part of a broader portfolio of services.

DFSS will evaluate all applications to ensure that the entire geographic area of the city is fully staffed with the appropriate outreach resources. For data on unsheltered homelessness in different areas of the city, respondents may refer to the Appendix to review the 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count (Table A-3 Survey and Tally Observation Response Location p. 37) If a respondent is selected to provide outreach to two or more regions/specialties, DFSS reserves the right to issue one contract for those services in order to decrease administrative burden for the applicant. If DFSS does not receive a viable application for a region/specialty or identifies a new region/specialty to be served, DFSS reserves the right to allow respondents deemed qualified under this RFP to submit proposals before offering the opportunity to other parties.

DFSS reserves all rights not expressly stated in this RFP, including making no awards, awarding partial funding, or increasing funding based on budget availability, and negotiating with any Respondent regarding the funding amount and other items of any contract resulting from this RFP. DFSS may also reach out to any Respondents with clarifying questions about their applications if needed.

Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$57,000 to \$1,311,000 depending on the size of their proposed program. We anticipate funding 13-15 projects. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), City Corporate, Department of Aviation, and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) funds, and may also be funded through other city, state, federal, and local funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the grant(s) must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received: 11
Projects funded: 10
Range of funding: \$80,000-650,000 (per year)
Total funding: \$2,794,230 (per year)

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10 percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide, and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group. The Respondent’s answer demonstrates how the organization has developed mechanisms to solicit client and community feedback that informs service delivery • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	<p>15</p>
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight and management • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has policies and procedures in place to safely collect and store client level data • The Respondent has a proposed pay scale for front line staff that supports the Homeless Services Division’s priority of providing competitive wages for front line staff 	<p>15</p>
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and retaining program participants especially those experiencing chronic homelessness (including rules/regulations that reduce barriers to participation) • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services or linkages that directly tie to Program Requirements. Respondent also partners with non-homeless sectors that people experiencing unsheltered homelessness might engage with. • The Respondent has an effective strategy for serving non-English speaking program participants in their program design and delivery. • The Respondent clearly explains reasoning behind requested geographic service area and including strengths and challenges of serving the area. • The Respondent has an effective strategy for responding to extreme weather conditions that prioritizes vulnerable clients and their staff’s safety. This strategy clearly addresses how they will alter service delivery and address extreme weather challenges. • The Respondent’s proposed program reflects the core values of Chicago’s homeless services continuum including housing first approach, harm reduction, trauma informed care, and use of culturally competent, non-discriminatory, developmentally appropriate practices 	<p>35</p>

<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent can disaggregate data to identify disparities in outcomes between different subgroups of their clients • The Respondent can propose additional metrics, outside those listed in the RFP, that can track participants progress within their program <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	20
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	15

Basis of Award

DFSS will evaluate applications by score within each street outreach subarea below:

- Regions
 - Northwest Side
 - Northeast Side
 - Central Business District (Downtown)
 - South Side
 - Far South Side
 - West Side
- Other
 - CTA Blue Line Outreach (must include evening and overnight)
 - CTA Red Line Outreach (must include evening and overnight)
 - 24/7 O’Hare Outreach,
- Citywide
 - Citywide – Overnight
 - Citywide – Youth-dedicated
 - Citywide – Specialty

DFSS will consider how all projects fit together to achieve a comprehensive, citywide system of care that supports the DFSS Homeless Services Division strategic priorities and aligns with standards set forth by federal funding partners.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Drop-in Centers (RFP# 53654)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

Zuri Soughat, Project Manager, Homeless Services Division

Phone: 312-743-1257

Email: Zuri.Soughat@cityofchicago.org

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

Through the Drop-In Centers RFP, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) seeks operators for Drop-in Centers serving individuals or families experiencing homelessness in the city of Chicago. Drop-In Centers play a key role in meeting the basic needs of vulnerable Chicagoans and connecting people to Chicago's homeless services system. The primary goal of drop-in services is to build a positive connection with vulnerable individuals, provide a stable place or physical anchor in the community, meet basic needs and encourage movement via case management to more stable situations, such as shelter and, ultimately, permanent housing.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The Homeless Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of)

homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning/coordination efforts. The Homeless Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant (All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System, other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the city towards the ultimate aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago.

B. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

Drop-in Centers are spaces open during the day (or non-standard business hours) where people experiencing homelessness can access case management, resources (like food, Wi-Fi, showers, laundry), and connection to other community services. The goal of this RFP is to ensure that there are physical spaces serving the entire geography of Chicago that are available to people experiencing homelessness. Prospective guests should be able to easily access these sites and be connected with an array of services that result in increased engagement, housing assessments, case management and successful exits to stable housing. DFSS seeks to fund programs that engage individuals who might not seek out services, have multiple barriers to maintaining stable housing, and/or have experienced long-term homelessness.

While effective Drop-in Centers will meet immediate and basic needs of participants, truly successful programs will engage participants in a meaningful way that increases their ability to access housing, employment and shelter resources. Projects funded through this RFP will have to provide clear and consistent plans to address the delivery of mental, behavioral, and physical health services or provide linkages to such services. Being able to address participants who might display symptoms of severe and persistent mental health disorders and have strategies for ongoing engagement despite the barriers present is a best practice among any homeless response system program model.

Successful Drop-in Centers will have the following effects on clients and the wider crisis response system:

- Impact those experiencing homelessness or housing instability by giving them a physical site for daily necessities such as - but not limited to - access to computers, showers, laundry, nutritious meals, a mailing address and pro-social community.
- Impact the wider "system front door" by creating an access point to the broader homeless response system that is person-centered, is welcoming and respectful, and can facilitate connections to shelter and housing resources.
- Impact those experiencing unsheltered homelessness who are seeking a warming or cooling center in weather emergencies or who are looking for relief from the elements throughout the year.
- Impact program participants with increased opportunities to access shelter or stable living arrangement.
- Impact the lives of program participants by providing them with access to quality case management that leads to better physical and mental health outcomes while fostering their connection to important community resources

DFSS believes that effective and coordinated engagement services will not only meet immediate needs but also, through strategies such as active case management, Person Centered Approaches to crisis intervention, and Trauma Informed Care principles: DFSS asks that Drop-in Centers develop service delivery approaches that integrate the Chicago CoC's Community Standards and nationally recognized, evidence-based best practices and strategies. See links embedded from nationally recognized entities specializing in each best practice for more information or look through the Chicago CoC's Community Standards at <https://allchicago.org/continuum-of-care/standards-and-monitoring/> for brief overviews of each best practice.

- [A Housing First Approach](#)
- [Harm Reduction Strategies](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Care](#)
- [Inclusion of Input from Person\(s\) of Lived Experience \(PLE\)](#)

Current state and priorities for improvement

The Point-In-Time Count is one way to estimate the number of Chicagoans experiencing homelessness each year and gather information about who in the city is experiencing homelessness. HUD estimates that, on any given night, more than half a million people across the nation are sleeping in shelters and unsheltered places not meant for human habitation. Chicago’s 2024 Point-In-Time Count (PIT) – held on January 25th, 2024 – estimated that 18,836 Chicago residents were experiencing homelessness on the night of the Count. Of those, over 1,600 individuals were residing on the street or other areas not meant for human habitation.

Black or African American households are disproportionately impacted by homelessness in Chicago: Black or African American individuals make up roughly 30% of the city of Chicago’s total population but made up over 60% of the unsheltered population estimated in the 2024 PIT Count.

Homelessness is not illegal, and forcing or mandating residents to access shelter, housing or other supportive services is not a best practice approach to bringing people indoors. A successful program must develop an engagement strategy that supports and encourages people to understand the value of moving into available shelter or housing options.

DFSS recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all model for Drop-in Centers and believes successful drop-ins will tailor their service delivery model to the specific needs of their community and target population. In addition, **DFSS seeks to fund programs that demonstrate commitment to sustained engagement leading to behavior change and successful system navigation over light touch encounters focused on immediate needs.**

- *Priorities for Improvement: Unsheltered Homeless Initiative and Increased System Coordination*

DFSS is a co-partner and lead of multiple strategic initiatives to decrease unsheltered homelessness, including the Chicago Continuum of Care’s Unsheltered Homeless Initiative (UHI) which has been supported by the CoC’s recent award of new resources under the HUD CoC Supplemental to Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness (Special NOFO). With the Special NOFO resources serving as the basis for the UHI, there has been increased coordination around homeless Street outreach and other programs that serve unsheltered individuals and families. In addition to funding agencies with strong individual programs, DFSS seeks prospective applicants to participate and provide support to housing initiatives and local encampment coordination efforts.

- *Priorities for Improvement: Expanding Access to Services*

DFSS acknowledges that resources to address homelessness in Chicago have not always been evenly distributed, particularly in neighborhoods that have experienced long-term disinvestment. Areas with high homeless populations often lack the necessary services and support systems to meet the demand. To address this, DFSS is focusing on more evenly distributing resources across the city. We are seeking drop-in centers that will expand their services into under-resourced communities, ensuring that all neighborhoods—especially those with high concentrations of homelessness—have access to essential resources. Applicants are asked to clearly identify the community area they intend to serve in their proposals.

- *Priorities for Improvement: Extreme Weather Emergency Response and Coordination*

DFSS also supports the City of Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communication in coordinating extreme weather resources and responses for Chicagoans experiencing homelessness. When capacity allows, DFSS has been able to provide a funding to cover the costs associated with keeping a site open for extended hours during extreme weather. As part of this work, DFSS is seeking to fund delegate agencies that would be able to flex site hours or increase days they are open to the public to ensure that Chicago residents experiencing homelessness have safe options during extreme weather.

Target Population

The target population for Drop-in Centers includes youth, families, individuals, and veterans who are experiencing literal homelessness, in unsheltered or sheltered locations, or experiencing housing instability.

Services provided through this RFP must be delivered in a way that is respectful and supportive to all individuals and households served, including:

- A variety of cultural and ethnic populations
- Non or limited English speakers
- People identifying as LGBTQ+
- People with disabilities
- Veterans
- People with low-incomes or who are unemployed
- People experiencing mental or behavioral health concerns
- Survivors of gender-based violence
- Unhoused newcomers (not born in the US and arrived within the year)
- People with varying levels of documentation
- Youth and older adults
- Families including single parents

Additionally, DFSS seeks applications for Drop-in Centers that specialize in supporting youth. As defined by the CoC, youth are unaccompanied individuals or heads of household age 18 up to their 25th birthday. For youth programming, a young person may be precariously housed or “couch surfing” (meaning they are securing housing on a night-by-night basis, with no secure place to stay on a regular basis) in addition to experiencing literal homelessness or living on the street. This population requires specialized programming that incorporates positive youth development, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and harm reduction (Please see [Chicago Youth Sector Housing Program Model Design](#) for additional explanation and complete list of core philosophies and values: <https://allchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Chicago-Youth-Sector-Program-Model-Design.pdf>).

C. Program activities and requirements

Program Requirements:

- Programs must provide safe daytime or evening spaces that meet the needs of households experiencing homelessness, such as access to food, laundry, showers, resting space, personal storage, and child-friendly space.
 - Programs must be able to operate at minimum 5 days a week, additional points will be awarded to programs that can offer 6-7 days a week.
 - Awarded delegate agencies will be required to develop staffing plans that address needed capacity required to adequately serve their target population and staff their physical site.
- Programs must have activities for engaging new clients who could benefit from their services.

- Programs must have activities to develop trust with their target population in order to engage them into formal, coordinated services that will culminate in a permanent housing placement or more stable housing.
- Programs must have activities that build individual connections and develop trust to provide people with the support they need to navigate complex processes and systems that have the potential to act as barriers that block the path to successfully moving to more stable or permanent housing.
- Programs must conduct initial assessments with clients that cover physical, psychological, and housing needs.
- Programs should provide client-centered services that meet clients where they are, both in terms of their level of need and geography.
- Programs must provide connections to benefits and linkages to other community resources (i.e. physical and mental healthcare and substance use disorder treatment).
- Programs should develop cross sector relationships with non-homeless specific sectors that the unsheltered population might engage with or use for sheltering purposes, Hospitals/Emergency Rooms for example, to develop strategies for engagement and communication.
- Programs are encouraged to tailor the design of their teams and approach to specialize in the provision of, or access to, special services such as medical and mental health care and substance use treatment.
- Providers must implement a service delivery model that incorporates tenets of harm reduction, trauma informed care, and strengths-based practices. For more information on these best practices, please view the CoC's Community Standards at <https://allchicago.org/continuum-of-care/standards-and-monitoring/>
- Programs must ensure staff are trained in de-escalation, conflict mediation, and crisis intervention as well as community accountability approaches to preventing, interrupting, and transforming violence to promote long-term engagement.
- Programs must ensure staff are trained to appropriately serve people experiencing mental illness, chronic health issues, disability, or substance use disorders.
- Programs must dedicate adequate staff capacity to allow staff to accompany participants as needed through housing, benefits, and healthcare referral processes with the goal of confirming successful connections and ensuring participants are receiving appropriate services.
- Provider must provide access to the CES assessment for housing by maintaining staff who are Skilled Assessors
- Drop-in Center programs funded through this RFP are required to complete Coordinated Entry System (CES) assessments with their program participants and pursue other available housing pathways for their clients (Housing Authority waitlists, Statewide Referral Network, etc).
- Recognizing that locating individuals is often an initial barrier to housing for this mobile population, programs must develop strategies to stay connected to participants and act as a link between the participant and the systems and agencies that provide housing and shelter.
- Programs must not exceed 25 clients enrolled in case management services per staff member (1:25) and a program that specializes in serving youth must not exceed 20 clients per staff member (1:20).
- Programs are required to maintain client data in Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and adhere to the [Drop-in Center Workflow](https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us/articles/360034360531-Drop-In-Center-Workflow) (<https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us/articles/360034360531-Drop-In-Center-Workflow>).
- Provide support to DFSS Homeless Outreach and Prevention team as requested (ex: encampment strategies, Aldermanic requests, AME planning and support)
- Participate in DFSS, City of Chicago, or State of Illinois led work on continuing the implementation of the One System Initiative.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of annual outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- General population programs
 - 100% of visitors will receive basic services to meet immediate needs (e.g. food, access to warming center)
 - 50% of participants will engage in case management
 - 40% of participants move to more stable housing (family, friends, longer-term shelter/housing programs, or permanent housing)
 - 20% engaged in case management will exit to permanent housing
- Youth intentional programs
 - 80% of participants will receive a comprehensive assessment and engage in services
 - 25% of participants will engage in services to move to more stable housing
 - 50% of participants will participate in leadership development and community-building activities

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 75% of all Clients enrolled in case management will receive a CES Assessment
- 50% of all clients enrolled in case management will attain vital documentation (IDs, Birth Certificate, SS card)

Performance measures and benchmarks are subject to change throughout the course of the contract to align with CoC Community Standards.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Homeless Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Homeless Services Division delegate agencies, with the exception of domestic violence organizations, must use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and produce required reports. All Chicago administers Chicago CoC's HMIS. For more information about accessing HMIS and training, please visit the HMIS Help Desk at <https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us>. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dgs/InformationTechnology/ISTP.pdf>.

Insurance

Respondent, if selected, shall register with the City's online insurance certificate portal using the designated email registration link provided below. Respondent shall provide a current and valid email address for both the contractor and the contractor's insurance agent or provider. The Selected Respondent is responsible for ensuring the submission of a certificate of insurance (COI) through the City's online insurance certificate portal prior to award of a contract.

A Respondent selected for contract negotiation and award who fails to fulfill the requirement to register and submit a COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal may be deemed nonresponsive and the City may choose to instead engage a different Respondent for contract negotiation. If a Respondent is unable to register and submit the COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal and instead submits a printed insurance certificate prior to contract award, the City may accept a paper COI provided that written justification is provided explaining the Respondent's good faith efforts to comply with the terms of this section and the reasons why the submission could not be completed. Instructions for registering and submitting COIs are available at the following URL: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/COI>

F. Application guidance for respondents

Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional

years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$60,000 to \$350,000 depending on the size of their proposed program. DFSS anticipates funding 8 to 10 agencies. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through City, state, and federal funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the grant(s) must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received:	12
Projects funded:	10
Range of funding:	\$66,150 - \$330,000
Total funding:	\$1,817,800

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This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10 percent in-kind match**.

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B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

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recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

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C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • Please describe how your leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the populations you serve 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and program delivery. Respondent has a plan in place to support and manage staff as well as quickly address staff turnover • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has policies and procedures in place to safely collect and store client level data • Agency has a proposed pay scale for frontline staff that pays a minimum of \$23 an hour. The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has identified a physical site for the project 	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly describes their programs and services and explains how their physical site and geographic location supports the target population effectively. • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and retaining program participants especially those experiencing chronic homelessness (including rules/regulations that reduce barriers to participation) • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population. • The Respondent has an effective strategy for serving non-English speaking program participants in their program design and delivery. • The Respondent’s proposed program reflects the core values of Chicago’s homeless services continuum including housing first approach, harm reduction, trauma informed care, and use of culturally competent, non-discriminatory, developmentally appropriate practices 	30

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has a strategy and plans adapting their space during extreme weather 	
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent can disaggregate data to identify disparities in outcomes between different subgroups of their clients. • The Respondent can propose additional metrics, outside those listed in the RFP, that can track participants progress within their program <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	20
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program and manage the proposed site • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	15

Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and the ability to serve specific sub-populations as outlined in the language above. Youth and adult drop-in applications will be scored in separate categories to ensure that both populations’ specific needs are adequately addressed.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process. This may include site visits and/or requiring respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City **assumes** no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application. Additionally, applicants should specify the geographic area or community that will be served and how they plan to meet the unique needs of that area. Applications that do not address geographic areas may be deemed incomplete.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Shelters (RFP# 10121)

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Homeless Services Division seeks applications for shelter programs that make up an integral part of Chicago's homeless services system. These programs will support individuals and families experiencing homelessness in moving to appropriate and stable permanent housing while providing them a safe, accessible place to stay in the interim. DFSS is seeking applicants to meet the shelter needs of single individuals, couples, families, youth, those fleeing domestic violence, and other populations with specialized needs.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The Homeless Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system

planning/coordination efforts. The Homeless Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant (All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System, other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the city towards the ultimate aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago.

B. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

DFSS is seeking providers to operate shelter programs that will support individuals and families experiencing homelessness in moving to appropriate and stable permanent housing while providing a safe, accessible place for them to stay in the interim. Shelters will achieve this goal by assisting households in navigating appropriate housing options and connecting clients to community resources that will help them obtain and maintain housing through building income and addressing any variety of language, physical, mental, emotional, and other needs they may have. Shelters will receive referrals through 311, managed by the DFSS-funded Centralized Shelter Intake delegate agency.

Shelter providers should also recognize that each client's case is unique, and in turn, each client's path to housing will look different. Respondents must have a clear plan to reduce barriers to entering their shelter, to provide immediate shelter access to those who need it, and to manage a safe shelter that provides voluntary supportive services and connects individuals to permanent housing in the way that best suits them. Policies and procedures within the shelters should put the client and their self-determination first and should integrate understanding of the ways in which a client's prior trauma and experiences may impact their readiness and willingness to engage in services. All clients should be encouraged and supported to participate in services both in-house and through established partner referrals.

DFSS asks that providers create shelter services, programs and delivery approaches that integrate the Chicago CoC's Community Standards and nationally recognized, evidence-based best practices and strategies for sheltering. See links embedded from nationally recognized entities specializing in each best practice for more information, or look through the Chicago CoC's Community Standards at <https://allchicago.org/continuum-of-care/standards-and-monitoring/> for brief overviews of each best practice.

- [A Housing First Approach](#)
- [Harm Reduction Strategies](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Care](#)
- [Inclusion of Input from Person\(s\) of Lived Experience \(PLE\)](#)
- [Safe and Appropriate Diversion and Reintegration of Supports,](#)
- [On-Site Health Care Access,](#)
- [Positive Youth Development](#)

Current state and priorities for improvement

Current State – Homelessness in Chicago:

The Point-In-Time (PIT) Count is one method for estimating the number of Chicagoans experiencing homelessness each year. Chicago's 2024 PIT Count, held on January 25, 2024, estimated that 18,836 Chicago residents were experiencing homelessness on that night. Of those, about 17,202 individuals were residing in sheltered locations – 3,523 of whom were Non-New Arrivals and 13,679 were New Arrivals – while just over 1,600 individuals were living on the street or in other areas not meant for human habitation.

Of those counted as experiencing homelessness during the 2024 Chicago PIT Count, 7,948 were individuals in households without children, while 10,874 were individuals in households with children (3,038 families). A total of 1,458 unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 were counted.

As seen in historic PIT results, Black or African American households are disproportionately impacted by homelessness in Chicago: Black or African American individuals make up roughly 30% of the city of Chicago’s total population but made up over 72% of the Non-New Arrivals counted as experiencing homelessness in the 2024 PIT Count. This is reflective of concerning national trends that showcase how systemic racism and historic disinvestment have affected primarily Black and African American communities and continue to affect them today.

In addition to PIT data, another way that DFSS understands the level of need for shelter in Chicago is through the city’s 311 requests for shelter. These requests reflect the call volume that 311 receives regarding individuals or families seeking shelter over a period of time. These requests are not de-duplicated at a unique individual or family level and therefore should not be mistaken as the number of people seeking shelter. It should be noted that those numbers include re-requests by the same person or family over time if an original call did not end in placement. With that said, they are an important indicator of demand for shelter beds in the system, and since 2020, there has been an increase in the number of calls for shelter made through the City of Chicago’s 311 system.

Year	Count of Shelter Requests Opened*
2020	35,258
2021	38,816
2022	51,637
2023	43,106
2024	40,446

*Note: Does not include requests marked as Seeking Asylum in 2022, 2023 or 2024. Only includes requests made through the 311 system. Does not include requests from those who may have requested shelter through any process outside 311.

Current State - Shelter in Chicago:

In 2024, community partners, City and State officials, and people with lived expertise began meeting as part of the One System Initiative, to create an equitable, integrated system to serve anyone experiencing homelessness regardless of how long they have been in the United States. Through a series of intentional meetings, recommendations were drafted and finalized for a comprehensive homeless system with a focus on the following areas: shelter access, community integration, data needs, provider and services coordination, shelter, and training.

On October 21, 2024, Mayor Brandon Johnson announced the end of the New Arrival mission and the transition to one, unified shelter system to begin on January 1, 2025. This transition folded roughly 3,800 beds from the New Arrivals mission into the regular homeless shelter system.

Currently, there are appropriately 7,400 publicly funded shelter beds in operation in Chicago. See breakdown by household type served below:

Household Type	Number of beds	% of total beds
Families with children	5,371	72%
Individuals – Men	1293	17%
Individuals – Women	429	6%
Individuals – Unspecified	347	5%

*158 of these beds are seasonal only (109 men beds and 49 unspecified)

Within this portfolio, DFSS supports shelter programs that specialize in serving specific populations cutting across the above household types as well. These shelter programs provide differentiated services due to safety considerations and/or service needs of the populations they serve.

Specialization	Number of beds	% of DFSS-funded beds
Domestic violence	156*	2.3%
Youth-dedicated (under age 25)	163	2.4%
Medical respite	64	.09%

*does not include newly awarded GBV beds.

There continues to be a gap between bed availability and demand for shelter. The largest gaps in supply in Chicago’s shelter system continue to be single men and women beds. **While DFSS seeks providers willing to serve all populations through this RFP, we wish to emphasize the current need for beds for single men and women shelters and shelters that can accommodate intact families.**

Priorities for Improvement

Across the current system, DFSS has identified key areas to prioritize improvement with providers in the coming shelter cycle. DFSS believes that a focus on and improvement in these areas will lead to a stronger shelter system that gets clients in the door when they need safe, temporary accommodations, connects them to the necessary services and resources to obtain and maintain stable housing, and gets them connected to available, affordable housing to divert them from homelessness and its adverse effects as quickly as possible.

Scoring of respondent’s applications for this RFP will be impacted by how they can articulate their plans to integrate the services and strategies necessary to address these areas for improvement in their day-to-day operations and long-term strategic planning with clients.

Priorities for improvement within the shelter system include:

- *Expanding access to shelter*
- *Decreasing length of stay*
- *Improving re-housing outcomes*
- *Ensuring equitable access to services and outcomes for all populations served.*

Priority for improvement: Expanding access to shelter

Although the share of individuals experiencing homelessness who stay in shelter varies by season and by night, the 2024 PIT Count estimated that 18,836 Chicago residents were experiencing homelessness on that night. The count identified about 17,202 individuals residing in sheltered locations and just over 1,600 residing on the street or other areas not meant for human habitation.

Through this RFP, DFSS seeks to maximize the number of beds available to serve people experiencing homelessness. Proposed projects should identify facilities with the necessary space and amenities to meet the physical and service needs of the intended target population. DFSS seeks providers who can maximize efficiency of proposed space to support the greatest number of individuals while maintaining client safety.

Alongside increasing beds, DFSS seeks to expand access by reducing barriers to entry and stays within current beds in accordance with the Chicago CoC’s Community Standards and the trauma-informed, harm-reduction, client-centered, and housing first values referenced in the RFP above. DFSS seeks providers who can balance the need to provide a physically and emotionally safe space for all clients with the ability to recognize and

respond to the unique needs of each client. Providers should develop policies and practices that integrate client self-determination and attempt to mitigate harm while allowing clients to still make their own choices. DFSS encourages all providers to use as low-barrier of an approach as possible – in alignment with the policies and practices described above, while still maintaining appropriate safety precautions to protect clients, staff, volunteers, and neighbors.

To build on the current system and expand access to shelter, DFSS is interested in:

- **Working with shelter providers to decrease the severity of punitive measures that can keep individuals from staying in or re-accessing available shelter beds.** Shelters should have policies that, whenever possible, balance keeping those on site safe with decreasing discharges and barriers to entry for extended periods of time (e.g. non-violent rule infractions). Providers should ensure staff are trained and supported to de-escalate conflicts and prevent discharge whenever possible.
- **Expanding the number of shelter beds in the system following a low-barrier shelter model to connect more clients experiencing unsheltered homelessness to shelter and services.** Low-barrier shelters implement strategies and practices like removing curfews, accommodating pets, accommodating couples, and/or accepting clients under the influence of drugs or alcohol. These reductions in barriers should be balanced with adequate staffing and services to maintain a safe environment.
- **Continuing to collaborate with programs on shelter infrastructure improvements and movement towards non-congregate shelter spaces that operate 24/7 when possible,** thereby increasing the quality of shelter offered in the system.
- **Continuing to increase access to family shelter spaces that prioritize family preservation,** thereby recognizing unique family compositions, and allowing all family members to stay together in safe shelter.
- **Working with shelters to improve access for LGBTQ+ clients,** by designing specialized service delivery and arrangements to maintain a safe and welcoming space and provide privacy where needed whenever possible.
- **Continuing to work with shelters to ensure adherence to providing reasonable accommodations for clients with disabilities.** Reasonable accommodations are adjustments to rules, policies, or services so that a person with a disability has equal opportunity to use the shelter, such as allowing a person to be accompanied by their service animal, modifying kitchen access policies for people with medical conditions that may require access to food, modifying sleeping arrangements, or providing refrigeration for certain types of medication.
- **Improving real-time tracking and accountability to bed utilization.** DFSS seeks partners who can provide accurate and timely data on bed availability to ensure clients requesting shelter can access open beds at any time. DFSS is interested in working with shelter programs and the delegate agency managing centralized shelter intake to improve real-time bed tracking, ideally migrating bed tracking to a real-time online system.

Priority for improvement: Decreasing length of stay

DFSS recognizes that this client outcome can be affected by several factors beyond the control of shelter providers, notably the limited availability of mainstream affordable and appropriate housing, limited CoC housing resources, and barriers to housing faced by the target population such as lack of employment or previous justice involvement, and also that average client outcomes belie a wide range of client experiences in shelter. While a large segment of individuals and families stay for only a few days or weeks, average length of stay is driven up by a small but meaningful segment of “long-stayers” who may need creative strategies and additional supports to help them transition to housing.

In 2024, the average stay for a family in a DFSS-funded shelter was 137 days across family programs. For a

single individual, the average stay in shelter was 101 days across singles programs. For clients in DFSS-funded youth programs, the average stay 50 days across programs.

Understanding the current reality of stays and the barriers to housing opportunities for clients, DFSS seeks to continue working with shelter providers to reduce the average length of stay in shelter and increase the percent of households exiting to a safe, permanent destination. DFSS wants to improve the “flow” from shelter to housing to minimize the time individuals and families experience homelessness as well as ensure movement that facilitates timely availability of shelter beds for those in crisis.

To achieve this goal, DFSS is interested in continuing work with providers on the following areas:

- **Increasing opportunities for diversion and reconnection or re-establishment of client support systems.** Providers should work to mitigate the exposure individuals and families have to the adverse effects of experiencing homelessness. One way they can do this is by assisting individuals and families with reconnecting or re-establishing supports that may provide them social support or allow them to be diverted from the shelter system back to safe and stable living situations with friends or family.
- **Approaching length of stay in shelter with an individualized approach.** While the goal of the program is to minimize the length of time a family or individual experiences homelessness, we do not want households to be “kicked out” or discharged from shelter after a designated time and further destabilized. DFSS is interested in continuing to work with shelters to learn about creative, effective approaches to supporting movement among the long-stayer population.
- **Strengthening partnerships with the broader homeless services and social services sector.** DFSS is interested in working with shelter providers that can operate as informed and connected members of the broader homeless services and social services sector to meet client needs. Specifically, DFSS seeks shelter programs that maintain and leverage active connections, whether formal or informal, to community-based resources and services to help clients overcome barriers to obtaining or maintaining housing.
- **Developing opportunities for continued support and client input after shelter stay(s).** Transitioning from shelter to housing can be an exciting but difficult time for individuals and families. Ensuring that warm hand-offs are made between shelter and housing providers or that client’s moving into their own housing have access to the supports and resources they need to succeed is instrumental to this transition and avoiding returns to shelter. In addition to resources, moving into housing can be an isolating experience for those used to living in community. Incorporating opportunities for clients to stay in touch or involved with programming or the organization if desired is beneficial.

Priority for improvement: Improving rehousing outcomes

Since 2019, DFSS has worked in partnership with delegate agencies and the Continuum of Care to focus shelter services towards achieving client and program outcomes, such as exits to stable and permanent housing and decreasing time from shelter referral to housing, based on national best practices.

In 2024, an average 32% of family households exiting DFSS-funded shelters exited to a documented permanent destination. For single individuals exiting DFSS-funded shelters, an average of 11% of households exited to a documented permanent housing destination. For youth clients exiting DFSS-funded programs, an average of 6% exited to a documented permanent housing destination.

To improve rehousing outcomes and return the shelter system to the safe but short-term situation it is meant to be along one’s housing journey, DFSS is interested in working with providers on:

- **Orienting shelter messaging, staffing, and services towards housing.** DFSS seeks programs that will focus on moving clients into stable and appropriate housing as rapidly as possible – in accordance

with Housing First best practices - rather than focus on “fixing” or “healing” clients in preparation for housing.

- **Increasing client choice in housing opportunities.** Ensuring that clients are ready for housing and that they can access housing opportunities relevant to their desires and needs is one way we can bolster the likelihood that the client will remain in housing and not return to the system. Recognizing the limitations on housing supply and affordability, DFSS and providers can continue to work on expanding access to varied housing opportunities that meet unique client needs and interests.
- **Increasing access to varied pathways for housing opportunities.** Shelter providers should be enrolling their clients in the Coordinated Entry System as soon as possible. They should also support clients in housing navigation and search outside the CES system – recognizing that by connecting clients to local resources and housing pathways they may have additional opportunities to move from the system.
- **Tracking client outcomes and focusing on continuous improvement.** DFSS seeks agencies who will engage with DFSS and peers to use data to understand performance and improve practice. DFSS is interested in working with shelter programs to identify and respond to any inequities in client services or outcomes, such as identifying the percent of clients assessed for the Coordinated Entry System (CES) by race and testing new practices to respond to any disparities.
- **Access to services that outline pathways towards self sufficiency.** Shelter providers should understand and be able to connect their clients to appropriate services, providing pathways towards self-sufficiency for all of the population served, including those from varying backgrounds, family types, family sizes and cultures. Resources are varied, look different from one client to the next, these services can include: legal services, increasing income, substance-use support and other resources that remove barriers to self-sufficiency

Target Population

The target population for shelters is households that are experiencing literal homelessness in accordance with the federal Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) definition: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1928/hearth-defining-homeless-final-rule/>). This can include households consisting of unaccompanied youth, one single adult, multiple single adults, or one or more adults with children.

The population experiencing homelessness in Chicago also disproportionately includes individuals in the following groups who can face particularly high barriers to accessing services and housing:

- Persons with limited English proficiency; (in recent years, Spanish, French and Polish speakers have been most common)
- Persons on the Sex Offender Registry (who cannot be served at many locations)
- Persons with disabilities;
- Persons with justice-involved backgrounds; and
- Persons who identify as LGBTQ+
- People who identify as Latin American Indigenous People
- Survivors of gender-based violence
- Recent immigrants to the United States

Previously, DFSS has invested in shelter providers who have successfully served specific sub-populations of those experiencing homelessness in Chicago as well – expanding access to certain groups that may have distinct needs on their personal and housing journeys. See below for a few examples of successes:

- Since 2018, DFSS has funded a low-barrier shelter for clients entering from the street or encampments – allowing couples to stay together, allowing pets, accepting people who are

intoxicated, and removing curfews – and has seen success in sheltering clients who have previously declined shelter and connecting them to housing and supportive services.

- In past RFP cycles, DFSS has invested in and facilitated the expansion of comprehensive and developmentally appropriate low-threshold, low-demand youth shelters. Youth-specific shelter providers have worked with DFSS and a network of youth drop-in centers to reduce barriers to accessing safe spaces at night and during the day, and as a result, more young people have been able to be connected with housing and services.
- DV providers in the system offer specialized confidential services that allow survivors and their families access to safe, stable shelter and case management services tailored to meet their identified emotional, physical, social and legal needs.
- Currently, DFSS funds one provider that serves medically vulnerable individuals and one provider that serves individuals previously impacted by the prison system. Both of these are groups with particular re-entry and housing navigation needs that these providers have specialized expertise and resources to address.

DFSS will consider which populations providers can serve when assembling an overall portfolio of shelter services. DFSS is interested in programs that demonstrate an understanding of the unique needs of the client population(s) they seek to serve and present compelling evidence that their proposed program will have a meaningful and observable impact on outcomes for those target populations.

C. Program activities and requirements

1. Requirements for All Shelters

DFSS seeks proposals from qualified agencies to provide shelter services appropriate for the populations above. All shelter programs must deliver the following services, which reflect the essential elements defined in the Chicago CoC Program Model Chart:

- Provide a safe environment to people of all backgrounds with a place to sleep free of charge and with a low barrier to entry.
 - DFSS will prioritize respondents who will hire staff with the appropriate staffing qualifications to best serve the target population in need such as having licensed clinical social workers (LCSW) and/or those with experience working with the target population.
 - Staffing should support meeting residents' language needs. DFSS encourages hiring day-to-day shelter staff with Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese language skills to meet the language access needs of the target population.
- Provide basic needs like meals or kitchen access, showers and toiletries, and limited storage.
- Engage in diversion efforts through coordination with system-wide diversion efforts or by use of creative, problem-solving conversations at shelter entry to empower persons facing imminent homelessness to avoid shelter and return immediately to housing.
- Provide connection to housing options by supporting clients in completing the CES housing assessment (either directly or through referral) and supporting clients in identifying and navigating other housing options (either directly or through referral), e.g., working with clients to create housing plans, search for affordable and appropriate units, complete housing applications, and navigate the move-in process.
- Provide on-site case management services to ensure clients are linked to services and community resources that will help clients obtain or maintain housing, e.g., building income, building independent living skills, developing education/career path, developing language proficiency, addressing a variety of physical, mental, emotional, and other needs that may not be provided by agency.

- Clients should be assessed at entry into shelter and case managers should create individualized service plans to help them identify their unique needs and track progress towards their personal goals.
- Case managers should be on site and must have a strong and individualized service plan for engaging clients and ensuring service needs are met. Case management should ensure clients are linked to services and community resources that will help them obtain or maintain housing, (e.g., building independent living skills, accessing childcare, legal services including immigration legal, developing education/career path, addressing a variety of physical, mental, emotional, and other needs). Selected agency will be responsible for utilizing their own case management system to collect, store, and report on case management activities, referrals, and resident progress.
- If proposing a hotel/motel style shelter, provider must have a plan for addressing challenges of operating a hotel/motel program (i.e. individuals in hotel/motel programs can sometimes feel isolated and thus may have a difficulty engaging in services).
- Act as active partners with health care providers to offer on-site primary and behavioral health care services to meet the needs of residents.
- Programs must have a staffing to guest ratio of at least 1:30.

Additionally, all shelter services, programs, and delivery approaches should reflect the Chicago CoC's **core values**, particularly those below. Ability of the applicant to integrate these core values into their proposed shelter policies, procedures and practices will be integral to success with this RFP. (For more information, please reference the Chicago CoC's Community Standards here: <https://allchicago.org/continuum-care/standards-and-monitoring>.)

- **Housing First Approach:** Align shelter criteria, policies, and practices with a Housing First approach so that anyone experiencing homelessness can access shelter without pre-requisites. Integrate client choice in programming, make services voluntary, and assist clients in accessing permanent housing options (directly or through linkages) as quickly as possible.
- **Harm Reduction:** Support individuals' right to self-determination regarding substance use and engage in practical and proactive strategies to reduce any harm that participants may face through all aspects of the program. Shelters should eliminate sobriety or other behavioral requirements that can be barriers to accessing shelter (e.g. prior non-violent rule infractions), and ensure staff are trained and supported to de-escalate conflicts and prevent discharge when possible.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Shelter leadership should understand the wide impact of trauma on participants and staff members should be trained to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients. Policies, procedures, and practices should integrate knowledge about trauma and its impact, support client choice and control, and create physical and emotional safety on site.
- **Inclusion of Person(s) of Lived Experience (PLE) input:** Providers should solicit PLE input on a regular basis to inform service delivery and engage in continuous improvement of programming and procedures. Staff and leadership can do this through a variety of mechanisms, such as collection and integration of client feedback, hiring and promotion of PLE, engaging with advisory councils, and integrating PLE into leadership roles in the organization.

All Shelter types should meet the following Program Requirements and Regulations:

Federal and CoC Requirements

- Comply with the HEARTH Act, see [Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act - HUD Exchange](#).

- Agencies are responsible for learning about any revisions or updates to the legislation throughout the contract and revising policies and procedures as necessary.
- Adhere to the program services as defined by the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) in the Program Models Chart [Program-Model-Chart-01.28.pdf \(allchicago.org\)](#) as well as its Essential Elements for the appropriate program model, see [Standards and Monitoring - All Chicago](#).
 - Agencies are responsible for awareness and adherence to the most recent version of the Program Models Chart.
- Participate in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) and follow CES Policies and Procedures as detailed for the appropriate program model, see <https://allchicago.org/coordinated-entry-system/>.

Health and Safety

- Must ensure facilities comply with applicable local building, fire, environmental, health, and safety standards and regulations which apply to the safe operation of the site(s).
- Must maintain minimum safety, sanitation, and privacy standards at shelter facilities/site(s), [24 CFR 576.403 - Shelter and housing standards. \(govregs.com\)](#)
- Must submit the Quarterly Bed Bug Certification to DFSS.
- Must protect clients and reduce the spread of infectious diseases through the implementation of CDPH guidance and public health orders issued by CDPH.
- All Delegate Agencies that handle food must have appropriate staff with a food handler certificate.

Provision of Appropriate Service to Clients

- Must ensure language access for non-English speaking residents either through staffing or other means.
- Must inform participants of their rights, responsibilities, and expectations upon intake into shelter.
- Must not discriminate based on race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, or family composition.
- Must provide placement and accommodation in accordance with the individual's gender identity.
- Must not require clients participate in any religious services or other forms of religious expression.
- Must provide reasonable accommodations for disabilities.
- Must make all programming client-centered and voluntary for participants.

Programmatic Written Requirements

- Must have written policies and procedures for intake, client grievance, client discharge, and how conflicts and other crises will be addressed and resolved.
 - Programs must submit current or proposed disciplinary policies regarding discharges or bans from their site to DFSS for review. These policies and procedures should comply with DFSS and CoC values. DFSS is committed to working with providers to ensure written policies and procedures match system values and goals.
- Must notify the DFSS program manager in writing of any changes to staff, facility, facility location, scope of services, or bed capacity.

Participation in System Activities, if Requested

- Must participate in DFSS Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts including associated activities and reporting requirements.

- Must conduct Yearly Public Health and Fire inspections in collaboration with DFSS and other appropriate entities.
- Must assist DFSS in responding to extreme weather emergencies.
- Must participate in systems-level coordination and data and quality assurance meetings on a bi-weekly, monthly, and/or quarterly basis, to be determined and scheduled by DFSS as needed.

Daily Bed Reporting & Utilization

- Must report bed availability and occupancy rates daily to the Centralized Shelter Intake delegate as laid out in the reporting requirements section below.
- Must report bed availability to DFSS as requested.
- Must demonstrate ability to maintain high utilization rates throughout the program. Provider must have a detailed plan that identifies changes and issues with utilization rates as well as a plan to improve utilization rates should they fall below expected threshold (see Performance Measure p.14)
- Must inform DFSS program manager in writing of any changes of bed capacity.

Amenities and Proposed Facility & Programming

- Must have the appropriate space and amenities to serve intended population.
- Must be able to utilize space efficiently to serve the greatest number of households possible while adhering to safety standards.
- Must be able to provide in-house services while seeking to expand or improve services available to target population in a client-comprehensive way.
- Must have the ability to address conflict or potential emotional or mental health crises in order to maintain a safe environment while adhering to CoC values.

Comply and Keep Records on File, as Applicable

- All providers excluding DV agencies should retain client records in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

2. Additional Requirements by Household Type and Specialization

Shelters serving families with children

- Must practice family preservation.
 - Must have written standards for eligibility that promote access to program services for all families, regardless of the age of children, family composition, or marital status.
 - All Agencies designated to serve families with children under 18 shall not deny admission to any family based on the age of any child under age 18, family composition, or the marital status of the adults in the family. Families with children who are 18 years of age or older and are still enrolled in and attending high school should not be separated.
 - Families served must consist of one or more dependent children in the legal custody of one or more adults who work cooperatively to care for the children. This definition includes two-parent and one-parent families, including those with same-sex partners, families with intergenerational and/or extended family members, unmarried couples with children, families that contain adults who are not the biological parents of the children, and other family configurations.

- Must ensure inclusion and accessibility for young co-parenting families and couples as needed.
- Must have programs open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Must have staffing sufficient to cover basic operations, ensure safety, and provide effective case management, considering family size and needs.
 - DFSS recommends a minimum staff to client ratio of 1:30 for family shelter programs.
- Must meet the needs of children including appropriate connections to care and education (e.g., children over five are attending school, children under five are connected to appropriate developmental screenings, early childhood education programs, and other childcare resources).
- Must comply with the Illinois Child Abuse and Reporting Act.
 - Employees shall complete the Mandated Status Form.
 - Delegates shall require background checks for staff and volunteers prior to interaction.
- Must ensure staff are trained to screen and identify higher-need families with long histories of homelessness to potentially refer to the Frequent User Service Engagement (FUSE) program as needed.
 - Eligibility: Families referred must include at least one 18+ parent(s) with 1 or more children, be residing in a Chicago shelter, have entries in at least 3 shelters over the past year in HMIS, and be at risk of abrupt discharge from shelter.
 - Eligible families can be referred to FUSE by filling out the referral form and sending it to DFSS and the FUSE delegate.
- Must have the ability to maximize space, by efficiently utilizing beds or doubling up families when demand calls for it.

Shelters serving individuals

- Must ensure staff are trained and supported to de-escalate conflicts and prevent discharge whenever possible.
- Must provide high-quality case management focused on housing placements and overcoming barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing.
- Must have staffing sufficient to cover basic operations, ensure safety, and provide effective case management - taking into account the population served and their specific needs.
- Must have programs operating 7 days a week, with a desire for 24-hour access to services and shelter space where possible.
- Must offer right of return for clients to all or a large percentage of beds.
- Must eliminate total sobriety or other behavioral requirements that can be barriers to accessing shelter (e.g. prior non-violent rule infractions) where possible.

Shelters specializing in serving youth (ages 18-24 or 14-24)

- Must provide unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness with temporary shelter intended to resolve an immediate experience of homelessness while providing services that address basic needs and connections to other supportive services without precondition and minimal requirements to stay.
- Must not require preconditions such as sobriety, income, medication compliance, or any other barrier to entry or ability to reside in the program.
- Must provide or connect to a flexible array of supportive services with a clear purpose to bridge participants to longer-term housing options while keeping youth participants safe and engaged.
- Must be welcoming and easy to access.
- Must ensure staff are trained in positive youth development and have experience in working with vulnerable youth (and where applicable, their families).

- More information can be found on the Chicago CoC's Program Model Chart at: <https://allchicago.org/continuum-care/standards-andmonitoring>.
- Must participate in CES Integration Team meetings to ensure seamless coordination with other system programs.
- If serving youth under 18, youth shelters must comply with relevant licensing/regulatory guidelines.
 - Youth under 18 years old must be connected to a Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS) provider.
- All Delegate Agencies that work and interact with children must comply with the Illinois Child Abuse and Reporting Act.
 - Employees shall complete the Mandated Status Form.
 - Delegates shall require background checks for staff and volunteers prior to interaction.

Shelters specializing in serving survivors of domestic violence

- Must provide crisis and domestic violence counseling that includes information on the cycle of violence, safety planning and assessment services, and legal advocacy for orders of protection as needed.
- Must have a safe, undisclosed location for all services.
- Must ensure every person providing services to program participants or supervising program staff have a minimum of 40-hour domestic violence training from an accredited training institute or complete this training within 90 days of the contract start date.
- Must ensure confidentiality under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act (IDVA).
- Must keep records of clients in a confidential database that can be utilized to complete any reporting requested by DFSS.

Shelters specializing in serving medically vulnerable clients or other clients with specialized needs

- Must remain in compliance with DFSS rules and regulations surrounding Coordinated Shelter Intake and Entry processes. While specialized shelters may have a more specific target population, they must still take referrals from the Centralized Shelter Intake delegate.
- Must have special or more robust supports not provided widely by the general shelter system relevant to the specific sub-population they intend to serve.
- Must ensure staff are specially trained to address the needs of the intended population.
- Must provide additional services in support of, not at the expense of, a focus on housing placement.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

DFSS is committed to moving beyond measuring how many people received services, to focusing on whether Chicagoans are better off after receiving services. As part of this outcome-oriented approach, DFSS has implemented a strategic framework that guides how the Department measures, reports, and reviews priorities, and outcomes to drive contracting, decision-making, and greater collaboration. The DFSS Homeless Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate with delegate agencies to enhance contract management, improve results, and adjust program delivery and policy based on learning what works.

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance indicators for all shelter types that may include, but are not limited to:

- Percent of participants who exit shelter to a more stable housing destination
- Percent of participants who exit shelter to a permanent housing destination
- Percent of participants who maintain or increase income (including employment income or benefits)
- Percent of participants with complete CES assessments

Program performance along these metrics will be assessed relative to the Program Model Chart threshold and challenge levels below, as well as the performance of peer programs (i.e., those serving similar subpopulations). Programs should consider the "threshold" level a baseline or minimum expectation and should consider the "challenge" level a hard but attainable goal given current knowledge, capabilities, and resources.

Indicators	Threshold	Challenge
Exits to More Stable + Permanent Housing	30%	-
Exits to Permanent Housing, only	-	<u>27%</u>
Maintain or increase income (employment income or benefits)	40%	52%
Completed CES Assessments	40%	<u>60%</u>

For shelters specifically serving survivors of domestic violence, there are two additional performance indicators tracked in DFSS quarterly and annual reporting. The expectation is that 100% of households served by DV shelters will receive these services as outlined in the DV-specific program requirements section above. The two DV-specific additional outcomes tracked in reporting are:

- Percent of households that learn about safety planning
- Percent of households that learn about the cycle of violence

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

Output	Youth	Singles	Families	DV
Utilization of funded shelter beds**	Current Avg: ~88% Target: 100%	Current Avg: ~92% Target: 100%	*Current Avg: ~75% Target: 80%	Current Avg: 98% Target: 100%
Average length of stay in shelter	Varies dependent on client circumstance and housing availability. DFSS will monitor average length of stay reported across programs and subpopulations to identify			

	cases where additional context and supports may be needed.
Number of participants enrolled	Varies depending on program size and capacity. DFSS will monitor the number of participants served against the anticipated number of clients to be served annually listed in the organization’s scope of services on a quarterly basis. Ideally Q1 25+%, Q2 50+%, Q3 75+% and Q4 meeting or exceeding scope expectations.

* Utilization targets are set with the caveat that demand remains above the supply available. Family utilization HMIS reporting is based on beds not rooms. Expectation is 100% room utilization though not all beds may be filled due to family size.

DFSS is also interested in understanding client satisfaction with programming and the ways that providers integrate client input and feedback into programming. To monitor and recognize this, DFSS may request additional information from providers on:

- How client input is being collected
- Results of client feedback surveys
- Results of client exit interviews or surveys

Within this framework, DFSS is focused on continuous improvement against these metrics. We remain committed to working with delegate agencies to monitor performance against these indicators, including establishing relevant baselines or benchmarks and sharing data with delegate agencies to assess and understand our progress. DFSS expects that performance by these metrics will vary by population served, and DFSS will continue to work with the delegate community to understand the factors influencing performance and to set appropriate performance expectations based on specific programs and populations. DFSS will also monitor the above metrics by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other characteristics as appropriate to track equity in outcomes and outputs.

DFSS plans to track performance throughout the term of the contract and will use this information (including absolute and relative performance on metrics and improvement over time) to inform future funding decisions. DFSS therefore may add metrics in contracts as we continue to refine our approach to understanding and managing performance in upcoming contracts and over the years to come.

E. Contract Management and Data Reporting Requirements

Active Contract Management

As part of DFSS’ commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Homeless Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Periodic meetings may take place, as scheduled by DFSS with reasonable notice to the Delegate Agency. The meetings will utilize program data, reporting and other relevant information to actively manage the Delegate Agency's performance and progress towards goals set in the Scope of Service. During these meetings, Agencies are encouraged to raise any concerns or challenges they are having in serving their target population.

Meetings shall include, at least, the DFSS Division Director or designee, and the Delegate Agency’s Chief Executive Officer or designee. Each party may be represented by additional representatives as such party

deems appropriate. DFSS may request the attendance of additional parties as it deems appropriate. Representatives from the Agency will attend all meetings as requested by DFSS. Meetings may take place individually or jointly with other Delegate Agencies.

Delegate Database Requirements

- Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at: <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dgs/InformationTechnology/ISTP.pdf>
- Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases.
- Homeless Services Division delegate agencies, except for domestic violence organizations, must use HMIS to track data and produce required reports.
 - All Chicago administers Chicago CoC's HMIS. Current HMIS information is available through Chicago's HMIS Dashboards at: <https://allchicago.org/how-we-are-ending-homelessness/data-analytics/hmis/chicagos-dashboard-to-end-homelessness/>.
 - For more information about accessing HMIS and training, please visit: [Data Analytics - All Chicago](#). Programs are expected to comply with the Chicago's HMIS Data Standards at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/hmis/hmis-data-standards/>.
- DV organizations must maintain confidential client records and be able to pull necessary DFSS report data utilizing a comparable database to HMIS.

Delegate Reporting Requirements:

Upon contract award, all delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. Major reporting requirements include the below:

- **Quarterly and Annual Reporting to DFSS:**
 - For all shelters, excluding DV-specific shelters, client-level data must be entered into HMIS in accordance with the COC's [HMIS policies](#) for this program model.
 - Quarterly and annual reports must be pulled from HMIS, reviewed by the delegate and submitted in the format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.
 - DV shelters are **not** required to enter data into HMIS but must use a compatible data system.
 - For DV programs that submit data in InfoNet, shelters must provide DFSS authorization to generate reports that include both project-specific and DV program-wide service data.
- **Daily Data Reporting Requirements:**
 - Delegate Agencies operating DFSS-funded shelters are required to report their available and occupied bed count three times daily to the Centralized Shelter Intake, Transportation and Crisis Response delegate.
 - Beds should be reported at the start of the three daily shifts: 12AM-8AM, 8AM-4PM, and 4PM-12AM unless otherwise requested.
 - Beyond reporting beds, providers must remain in contact with the Centralized Shelter Intake, Transportation and Crisis Response delegate to collaborate on bed placements and transportation throughout the day.
 - Training and further instructions on this reporting process will be distributed to those awarded shelter program funding from DFSS.

Uses of data

DFSS intends to utilize Delegate Agency performance data, including updates from active contract management meetings, with the goals of:

- a) Monitoring performance progress, highlighting accomplishments, and identifying areas for improvement.
- b) Engaging in collaborative continual improvement processes regarding the outcomes and operations of delegates.
- c) Developing system-wide strategies that improve service delivery and coordination between program models.
- d) Discussing challenges and successes pertaining to program goals, performance measures, and requirements to be adhered to by the Delegate Agency.

Insurance

Respondent, if selected, shall register with the City's online insurance certificate portal using the designated email registration link provided below. Respondent shall provide a current and valid email address for both the contractor and the contractor's insurance agent or provider. The Selected Respondent is responsible for ensuring the submission of a certificate of insurance (COI) through the City's online insurance certificate portal prior to award of a contract.

A Respondent selected for contract negotiation and award who fails to fulfill the requirement to register and submit a COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal may be deemed nonresponsive and the City may choose to instead engage a different Respondent for contract negotiation. If a Respondent is unable to register and submit the COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal and instead submits a printed insurance certificate prior to contract award, the City may accept a paper COI provided that written justification is provided explaining the Respondent's good faith efforts to comply with the terms of this section and the reasons why the submission could not be completed. Instructions for registering and submitting COIs are available at the following URL: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/COI>

F. Application guidance for respondents

DFSS is interested in assembling a portfolio of shelter services that meet the needs of the variety of populations experiencing homelessness. Respondents should apply indicating the client population to be served from the list below. Respondents should indicate a "specialization" if the program is dedicated to serving a specific population that has unique safety or service needs and provides staffing and services tailored to meet those needs (e.g. staff members receive specialized training to serve the specific population).

Shelter application population categories:

- General population – Families with children OR families with children and individuals
- General population – Individuals
- Domestic violence specialization – Families or individuals
- Youth specialization (age 18-24 or 14-24) – Families or individuals
- Medically vulnerable specialization – Families or individuals
- Other specialization (please explain)

Respondents must submit a separate application for each population category they are applying to serve. For example, an agency applying to operate one shelter program for families with children and one shelter program for single men must submit two separate applications.

However, if an agency is applying to operate multiple shelter programs within a population category, they may submit one application for all programs serving that population. For example, an agency applying to operate two shelter programs specializing in serving youth may apply under one application.

Funding decisions will be made within population categories, and funding rates may vary between categories.

Within each category, DFSS will evaluate responses based on the strength of the proposal to serve the intended client population as well as by geographic region of the city (North, West, and South Sides) and the ability and strength of proposal to serve sub-populations within the above groups (e.g., frequently unsheltered clients, women, clients identifying as LGBTQ+, clients with limited English proficiency, clients on the Sex Offender Registry, seniors, and persons with disabilities). DFSS will evaluate applications and award funding based on the number of shelter beds proposed at each site, the shelter configuration and amenities on site, and the respondent’s ability to speak to how they will cover the anticipated costs for the site.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. We anticipate that each award will be between \$100,000 - \$4,100,000 depending on the size and scope of the proposed program(s). DFSS anticipates funding about 30 agencies.

The Respondent is required to incur and pay expenses before seeking reimbursement from the City. However, advances for costs will be considered according to the City’s advance payment policy. Respondents will need to indicate in their application whether they wish to exercise this option.

For additional information about the City's advance payment policy, see the attached Delegate Agency Request for Advance Mobilization Payment Form which has been uploaded as an attachment in the RFP’s application. This form is attached for information only, and applicants should not complete the form at this time.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), City Corporate, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Illinois Department of Human Services Emergency and Transitional Housing (IDHS ETH), and Department of Aviation funds, and may also be funded through other city, state, federal, and local funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the City, state and federal funds must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received:	36
Applications funded:	33
Range of funding:	\$80,590 - \$2,302,799
Total funding:	\$20,601,543

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public, all units of government and sister agencies. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10 percent in-kind match**. Administrative costs will be capped at 15 percent or agency’s federally approved indirect rate if applicable per application.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondent provides detailed evidence/examples that demonstrate an understanding of the defining characteristics of the population they plan to serve, and is specific on both the strengths/assets and challenges/needs of that group. • Respondent describes specific competencies developed to better serve target population, as well as how they would grow services or staff skills as needed. • The Respondent’s Leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves. • Respondent describes specific mechanisms by which feedback is incorporated into service delivery. 	<p>15</p>

<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondent provides a full list of essential positions, personnel in the areas mentioned and qualifications for each position (LCSW); ties those positions directly into service delivery for the client population; and speaks in detail about the hiring, onboarding, and integration of new staff into the organization for this program. It is clear from the response that staffing ratios are at least 1:30. • Respondent describes a robust infrastructure around fiscal monitoring for their organization, which might include a dedicated staff person, regular audits, internal reporting, and other controls. • Respondent clearly describes how they would enact all four priority improvement areas into their day-to-day and long-term operations. Applicant is able to speak to these priorities in their current operations or can identify areas for improvement in their current operations where these priorities can be incorporated. 	<p>15</p>
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and aligns with the CoC’s Core Values • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and addressing the needs of program participants and keeping clients aligned with the goals of individual growth and movement towards safe and stable situations • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way • Respondent details the ways in which program would address conflict or times of high client need on site, with the goal of retaining clients on site. Response aligns with the discharge and ban policy submitted with their attachments and explains how these policies align with COC values while also ensuring safety on site. Ban policy is fair and aligned with City and COC values. • Respondent details the layout and amenities available in the proposed facility and how they would utilize these spaces to serve clients, including layout and number of families/individuals served per room or unit. Respondent details what spaces would be used for types of programming to be offered. Response speaks to all programs, if applicable. 	<p>30</p>
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to identify problems in service delivery and inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has experience in disaggregating data to identify disparities between different subgroups in their program delivery and outcomes • The Respondent has an understanding of the importance of high bed utilization and how to achieve, track, and maintain it • Respondent describes how they ensure data is collected, entered and stored in an accurate and secure manner. If HMIS user, agency describes their process for HMIS data entry. If not HMIS user, agency describes their process in comparable system. 	<p>30</p>

<p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may also use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database).</i></p>	
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work. 	<p>10</p>

Basis of Award

DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above. Proposals will be evaluated against other proposals for the same target population (i.e. proposals for shelter programs serving families with children will be evaluated against other proposals for shelter programs serving families with children.) Funding awards may vary based on size of program, sub-population served, shelter specialization, shelter configuration (e.g. non-congregate vs congregate settings), geography, hours of operation, and the respondent’s ability to speak to how they will meet anticipated costs. Priority may be given to applicants proposing 24-hour operations.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Permanent Supportive Housing Support Services including Safe Havens (RFP# 10125)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Permanent Supportive Housing Support Services including Safe Havens (PSHSS) RFP seeks applications from organizations that have experience providing wrap-around services for persons who formerly experienced homelessness and now reside in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs across Chicago. PSHSS aims to help households maintain residential stability in permanent housing.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources, assists, and support a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high-quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services – one that moves the department beyond measuring *how many* people receive services, to focus on how Chicagoans *leave better off* after receiving services. To achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes and use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund. For more information on DFSS's commitment to outcomes, please visit: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/department-strategic-framework.html

Division Priorities

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Homeless Services Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people

who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning/coordination efforts. The Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant (All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System, other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the city towards the ultimate aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago.

B. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The goal of PSHSS is to help individuals and families who were formerly experiencing homelessness maintain residential stability in permanent housing. PSHSS achieves this goal by providing wrap-around supportive services for persons who are residing in PSH or Safe Haven facilities. PSHSS wrap-around supportive services with no time limits break the cycle of housing instability by providing participants who have a hard time maintaining housing with support to improve their well-being. Supportive services are a critical component of the PSH and Safe Haven housing models – to “meet clients where they are,” services should be tailored to each client’s unique situation. These comprehensive services include connecting clients to essential physical and mental health services, employment services, access to benefits, and other community services as appropriate.

PSH is a nationally recognized and evidence-based model, and a core part of adopting a Housing First approach within the homeless services system across the country (Rog, Marshall, Dougherty, Preethy, George, 2014). Local data from a permanent housing intervention for high need clients demonstrates the impact of these types of programs: Clients housed through the Flexible Housing Pool (FHP) program during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 demonstrated a 22% relative risk reduction in jail registrations, a 19% relative risk reduction in emergency department visits, and a 33% relative risk reduction in incurring inpatient days between 2019 and 2021 (Hinami, MD MS, Doshi, MBA, & Trick, MD, January 2023). Coupled with this, FHP successfully housed a cohort that is 78% Black/ African American clients. FHP’s retention in housing at 12 months was 94% (Hinami, MD MS, Doshi, MBA, & Trick, MD, January 2023).

Simply put, people in supportive housing live more stable and productive lives. The benefits of providing PSH also demonstrate significant public health and safety systems cost savings. PSH programs across the CoC system have performed well in recent years.

Current state and priorities for improvement

PSH programs require supportive services tailored to a client’s unique situation to provide a platform for persons to improve their well-being while they are achieving housing stability. DFSS seeks to partner with agencies to support PSHSS programs that can meet the needs of multiple sub-populations. DFSS currently funds the two following program types:

PSH Support Services: “traditional” PSH programs in which supportive services are provided in different housing settings for clients formerly experiencing homelessness who need them to remain housed. The PSHSS RFP funds the supportive services but not the rental subsidies for PSH units.

Safe Havens: special, open-stay, on-demand, and service-enriched programs for a more specific sub-population: people who experienced chronic homelessness, hard-to-engage persons with severe mental illness or dual disorders (substance abuse disorder/mental illness). Participants have been living unsheltered and are not currently engaged in housing or systems of care and have been previously unwilling or unable to participate in services.

DFSS-funded PSH programs served 1,163 clients in 538 households in 2024. The percentage of clients actively engaged in case management through PSH initiatives averages between 88% and 93%. This statistic highlights the broad reach and accessibility of these programs, indicating a substantial impact on the target population. The range of services offered within the framework of PSH ensures that a significant portion of individuals and families in need are receiving the assistance required to break the cycle of homelessness. The emphasis on client-centered approaches ensures that the unique needs of each individual or household are taken into consideration, fostering a supportive environment that goes beyond mere housing provision.

As the numbers reflect, PSH is a pivotal component in the broader strategy to combat homelessness. By combining housing stability with tailored support services, these initiatives contribute not only to immediate relief but also to the long-term well-being of individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness.

DFSS will not fund new initiatives through this RFP. Funding through this RFP is categorized as follows:

- **Ongoing Special Initiatives:** DFSS is the primary social service funder for City-led homeless-dedicated special initiatives. Typically, DFSS funds the supportive services in homeless-dedicated special initiative programs and the subsidy is funded by another source (e.g., Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund (CLIHTF), Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), Chicago's CoC). Current special initiative programs funded in this category include:
 - Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative (CLIHTF): Supportive services specifically targeted to veterans who are experiencing homelessness
 - Frequent Users Service Engagement (FUSE) (CHA): Supports families with multiple shelter stays or at risk of discharge from shelter programs. **Please note that due to a reduction in funding from CHA for supportive services, FUSE programs should apply only for services to support remaining households still in housing (no new households).**
 - CPS Families in Transition (FIT) (CLIHTF): Supports families in the Chicago Public School Students in Temporary Living Situations Program at select schools
 - Homeward Bound and Chronic Homeless Pilot (CLIHTF, CHA, and CoC): Supports unsheltered individuals who were residing in public spaces
 - CoC Supportive Housing Initiative Programs (CoC): Permanent supportive housing programs (excluding LTRA programs) that were funded under Chicago's original Plan to End Homelessness
 - Transition-age Youth (TAY) (CHA): A non-time-limited, specialized age- and service-appropriate version of PSH for youth with complex needs. Otherwise, similar to adult PSH, these programs target youth (ages 18-24 at time of entry) who experience multiple barriers to housing and are unable to maintain housing stability without intensive supportive services. **Please note that due to a reduction in funding from CHA for supportive services, Transition- age Youth programs should apply only for services to support remaining households still in housing (no new households).**
 - Youth PSH programs: Supportive services to youth ages 18-25 living in PSH programs with subsidies provided by other sources such as CoC or other CHA subsidies
- **Safe Havens:** This program model is meant to serve chronically homeless, hard-to-engage persons with severe mental illness and other chronic conditions that impair the ability to achieve housing stability. Persons residing in Safe Havens have been living unsheltered and may have previously been unwilling or unable to participate in services. DFSS seeks Respondents to provide safe and non-intrusive living environments in which skilled staff members work to engage persons in housing and needed services. Safe Havens have no limit on length of stay.

PSH programs previously funded as Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Long-Term

Rental Assistance (LTRA) Programs will not be funded through this RFP, as previewed in the 2021 CDGA RFP. DFSS served as the original grantee for the HUD LTRA PSH funding and granted out to delegate agencies. At that time, HUD required 100% service match for LTRA funds, so DFSS funded the services as match. In 2009, with the passage of the HEARTH Act, HUD reduced the service match to 25%. In 2016, DFSS transferred grants directly to the delegate agencies and continued to fund a portion of the service match for some of these programs. In the 2021 RFP, DFSS began reducing funds through a funding cap with the longer-term goal of no longer funding services for LTRA programs as we align funding for the PSH portfolio to only City-led special initiatives.

Target Population

The general target population for PSH Support Services includes individuals, youth, and/or families who:

- Meet Category 1 and 4 of the HUD homeless definition. For more information on the HUD Homeless Categories, please visit: [Homeless Definition](#)
 - CPS FIT additionally targets families enrolled in the CPS Students in Temporary Living Situations Program and may include families living doubled up
 - Ending Veterans Homelessness Initiative additionally targets veterans
 - Youth PSH targets youth who are unaccompanied individuals or heads of household age 14 up to their 25th birthday at time of program entry
- Have chronic health conditions (e.g., mental illness, substance use, HIV/AIDS)
- Experience a disability and long-term homelessness
 - Typically cycle in and out of a variety of crisis services, including hospital emergency departments and inpatient stays, psychiatric centers, jails, and prisons

The target population for Safe Havens includes individuals who:

- Have severe mental illness (and may have co-occurring disabilities)
- Have been previously unable or unwilling to participate in supportive services
- Are literally homeless, who reside on the streets or places not meant for human habitation and have severe and persistent mental illness
- Have chronic health conditions (e.g., mental illness, substance use, HIV/AIDS)
 - Typically cycle in and out of a variety of crisis services, including hospital emergency departments and inpatient stays, psychiatric centers, jails, and prisons

C. Program Requirements

All PSHSS programs including Safe Havens shall serve all households experiencing homelessness referred by the Chicago CoC's Coordinated Entry System (CES) according to the CoC's prioritization approach (unless a referral source is otherwise specified in the resulting contract with DFSS).

PSH Support Services: Ongoing Special Initiatives

DFSS seeks Respondents to provide traditional PSHSS at Ongoing Special Initiatives. Respondents must be able to deliver the following core program services and activities:

- Clients must reside in a PSH program
- Provide wrap-around comprehensive services through individualized case management and linkages to other service providers
 - Programs serving youth require specialized programming that incorporates positive youth development, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and harm reduction (see [Chicago Youth Sector Housing Program Model Design](#) for additional explanation and complete list of core philosophies and values).
- Ensure individualized service plans address housing goals and prioritize housing retention

- Ensure connection to a source(s) of income and health care benefits, substance abuse, and/or mental health treatment, as applicable
- Case management may be offered on-site at the housing unit or at a community-based location
- Services must not be time limited
- Take referrals from CES
- Promote focus on connections to mainstream resources or Medicaid billing for eligible clients
- Create linkages to other agencies and programs providing supplementary services that meet client needs
- Solicit feedback from participating households and incorporate feedback into services as appropriate
- Attend DFSS monthly or bimonthly PSH provider meetings virtually and/or in person
- Engage in periodic site visits conducted by DFSS and other designated personnel within the DFSS framework
- Desirable staff requirements include demonstrated experience providing case management and housing stability services to highly vulnerable households experiencing homelessness
- Incorporate tenets of Housing First, Harm Reduction, Trauma-Informed Care, and strengths-based practices (for more information on these Best Practices, please reference the Chicago Continuum of Care's Community Standards here: [CoC Program Standards](#))

Safe Havens

For Safe Havens, Respondents must demonstrate the ability to deliver, at a minimum, all of the following services:

- Engage hard to-reach homeless persons
- Maintain flexible admissions criteria to ensure that there are sufficient programs accepting the following populations: persons actively using substances, persons who are medication non-compliant, and persons with disabilities or other special needs
- Track and document reasons why clients leave the program without remaining in housing
- Maintain 24-hour staffed site coverage seven days a week
- Provide daily living services (i.e. meals, transportation)
- Provide pre-housing tenancy supports such as conducting a screening and assessment of housing preferences and/or barriers related to successful tenancy
- Provide wrap-around comprehensive services through individualized case management and linkages to other service providers
- Ensure individualized service plans address housing goals and prioritize housing stability
- Create linkages to other agencies and programs providing supplementary services that meet client needs
- Refer and enroll clients in public benefits and employment services
- Take referrals from the CES
- Desirable staff requirements include demonstrated experience providing case management and housing stability services to highly vulnerable households experiencing homelessness
- Solicit feedback from participating households and incorporate feedback into services as appropriate
- Incorporate tenets of Housing First, Harm Reduction, Trauma-Informed Care, and strengths-based practices. (For more information on these Best Practices, please reference the Chicago Continuum of Care's Community Standards here: <https://allchicago.org/continuum-care/standards-and-monitoring>)
- Attend DFSS periodic provider meetings virtually and/or in person
- Engage in periodic site visits conducted by DFSS and other designated personnel within the DFSS framework

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients.
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

Ongoing Special Initiatives

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance indicators that may include, but is not limited to:

- 85% of households will remain permanently housed for 12 months
- 65% of households will assume a lease or maintain other permanent, stable housing upon exit
- 35% of households with a source of reportable income at program entry will increase their income

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 70% of households will maintain/increase benefits, employment, or a combination of both
- 80% of households will maintain or acquire health insurance

Per the CoC Community standards, DFSS will also set the following Challenge performance indicators, which are hard to achieve but attainable given current knowledge, capabilities, and resources of the community:

- 96% of households will remain permanently housed for 12 months
- 80% of households will assume a lease or maintain other permanent, stable housing upon exit
- 90% of households will maintain or acquire health insurance

Safe Havens

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance indicators that may include, but are not limited to:

- 80% of households remain permanently housed for 12 months
- 60% of households will exit to appropriate housing/level of care

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 100% of households will attain their basic needs for shelter, food, and safety
- 80% of households will be engaged in supportive services as indicated by an assessment of clients' needs and goals

- 33% of households will maintain/increase benefits, employment, or a combination of both

Per the CoC Community standards, DFSS will also set the following performance Challenge indicators, which are hard to achieve but attainable given current knowledge, capabilities and resources of the community:

- 93% of households remain permanently housed for 12 months
- 71% of households will exit to appropriate housing/level of care
- 50% of households will maintain/increase benefits, employment, or a combination of both

DFSS will also monitor the above metrics by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other characteristics as appropriate to track outcomes and outputs.

The specific targets above were established by the CoC for these types of programs. As the CoC adapts changes to program model performance, DFSS reserves the right to change performance metrics to maintain alignment with the CoC.

Within this framework, DFSS is focused on continuous improvement against these metrics in pursuit of meeting or exceeding those targets over time. We are committed to working with delegate agencies to monitor performance against these indicators, including establishing relevant baselines or benchmarks and sharing data with delegate agencies to assess and understand our progress. DFSS expects that performance by these metrics will vary by sub-population served, and DFSS will continue to work with the delegate community to understand the factors influencing performance and to set appropriate performance expectations based on specific programs and sub-populations.

DFSS plans to track performance throughout the term of the contract and will use this information (including absolute and relative performance on metrics and improvement over time) to inform future funding decisions. DFSS therefore may add metrics as we continue to refine our approach to understanding and managing performance in upcoming contracts and over the years to come.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Homeless Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Homeless Services Division delegate agencies, with the exception of domestic violence organizations, must use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and produce required reports. All Chicago administers Chicago CoC's HMIS. For more information about accessing HMIS and training, please visit the HMIS Help Desk at <https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us>. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located

at <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dgs/InformationTechnology/ISTP.pdf>

F. Application guidance for respondents

Respondent should indicate which program category they are applying under: Ongoing Special Initiatives or Safe Havens.

DFSS requires that agencies submit separate applications for each proposed program. For example, an agency administering an Ongoing Special Initiatives project and a Safe Havens project must submit two separate applications. Additionally, an agency administering a Families in Transition program and an Ending Veterans Homelessness Initiative program must submit two separate applications.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum of 10% percent in-kind match**. Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. We anticipate that each award will be between \$30,500 and \$620,000 depending on the size of their proposed program. DFSS anticipates funding 17 programs. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant, City Corporate, and Chicago Housing Authority funds, and may also be funded through other city, state, federal, and local funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the funding source must be met.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received:	27
Projects funded:	22
Range of funding:	\$13,000 - \$620,000 (per year)
Total funding:	\$3,102,472 (per year)

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

DFSS will not fund new initiatives through this RFP. Respondents must propose a Safe Haven project or propose a Permanent Supportive Housing Supportive Services program that serves clients through one of the following ongoing special initiatives:

- Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative
- Frequent Users Service Engagement
- CPS Families in Transition
- Homeward Bound and Chronic Homeless Pilot
- CoC Supportive Housing Initiative Programs
- Transition-age Youth
- Youth PSH programs

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum of 10% percent in-kind match**. Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the city will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight and management • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has secure data collection and management practices, along with adequate processes for quality assurance and timely data entry 	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and retaining program participants (including rules/regulations that reduce barriers to participation) • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way 	23
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to identify problems in service delivery and inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has experience disaggregating data to identify disparities in outcomes between different subgroups of their clients • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key participant and performance data <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	25
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program prior to reimbursement 	17

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests given the nature of the program proposed. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan 	
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Basis of Award

DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Rapid Re-housing Program Coordinator (RFP# 10122)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

Through the Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Program Coordinator RFP, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) seeks an organization to coordinate the administration of financial assistance and provide RRH services to individuals and families across Chicago who are experiencing homelessness so that they may transition into permanent housing.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Homeless Services Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning/coordination efforts. The Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant

(All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System (CES), other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the city with the aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago.

B. Program goals

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) is a program designed to assist households experiencing homelessness to secure permanent housing quickly and achieve stability. The services offered by RRH include housing identification, case management, stabilization services, and short and/or medium-term rental assistance as needed. RRH is a critical component of the CoC's Housing First approach, and it is designed to be deployed and delivered quickly. The goal of wrap-around support services is to help prevent returns to homelessness or housing instability. DFSS seeks a Program Coordinator to coordinate the administration of rental assistance and RRH services to households served.

Goals

RRH is a Housing First intervention that aims to resolve a household's housing crisis by moving them into permanent housing as quickly as possible. Support services are coupled with financial assistance to help households achieve independence and housing stability. The program's objectives are as follows:

- Help households identify and move into safe and suitable permanent housing quickly, ideally within 30 days of enrollment.
- Promote housing stability and economic self-sufficiency through progressive engagement and utilizing a strength-based case management approach.
- Develop collaborative service plans tailored to meet a household's individual needs.
- Provide financial assistance, referrals, and resource linkages to help households maintain permanent housing in the long term.

Current state and priorities for improvement

In recent years, Chicago has housed many more households through Rapid Re-Housing with expanded DFSS investments of both federal COVID-relief funding and City of Chicago annual funding.

Since expanded programming began in October 2020, over 3,000 households have been housed with DFSS-funded RRH services. Based on data from October 2020 to October 2024, 72% of households housed remained in permanent housing when RRH services ended.

Key to the success of expanded investments in Rapid Re-Housing were two innovations:

- Creation of a centralized landlord recruitment and engagement system which expedited access to rental units.
- Connection of households to RRH services through Accelerated Moving Events (AMEs), one- or two-day events held at shelters or nearby encampments where households complete several steps of the housing process at once with the support of specialized staff: virtually viewing and selecting a unit, completing a housing application, and selecting a furniture package for their new home. A typical AME serves 20-30 households.

RRH has been a critical component of Chicago's response to encampments. Paired with comprehensive and coordinated street outreach services, Chicago has seen great success in uptake of RRH and retention in housing by unsheltered residents. The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that 94% of 238 encampment residents who attended an AME between November 2020 and May 2022 secured housing.

As of October 2022, 78% remained in stable housing.²¹

The top priority of any RRH Program Coordinator should be 1) to help participants identify safe and affordable assist households experiencing homelessness in sustaining permanent housing and identify potential barriers such as low income, lack of job skills, and lack of childcare that can hinder success.

DFSS additionally seeks to improve access to income through benefits and targeted employment resources for RRH households. Respondents should be able to work with participants to identify barriers and provide a plan of action by partnering with other agencies to provide additional services such as employment and benefit resources to assist families and individuals in moving into permanent housing more quickly and increasing the likelihood that they will remain housed when the program ends.

Respondents should also think about how to continue to support Accelerated Moving Events, build upon their success, and find ways to improve processes and systems that can make the AMEs more effective.

Target Population

The program seeks to serve the following populations. All the following criteria must be met for a participant to be deemed eligible for RRH Services.

- Households (individuals and families) identified from Chicago’s Coordinated Entry System (CES).
- Households who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. In accordance with Category 1 or Category 4 of the U.S. Department of Urban Development (HUD)’s Homelessness definition as defined by HUD under 24 CFR Parts 91, 582, and 583.²²
- Households below 30% of the area median income at the time of recertification.
 - See: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5079/esg-income-limits/>²³
- Households residing within the City of Chicago (HUD COC Code: IL-510). For questions concerning the Chicago City limits please refer to the following map:
 - [City of Chicago Boundaries.](#)

For more information, please refer to the HUD definitions of homelessness: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-24/subtitle-B/chapter-V/subchapter-C/part-576/subpart-A/section-576.2>

C. Program activities and requirements

DFSS seeks respondents capable of coordinating and managing RRH program services across the city of Chicago. Responsibilities of the RRH Program Coordinator, which include the opportunity to subcontract, include deploying financial assistance for on average one year, but up to 24 months; providing housing relocation and stabilization services; and conducting data collection, evaluation, and other administrative activities required to implement the program.

²¹ See the City of Chicago’s Office of Inspector General 2023 *Audit of the Department of Family Support Services Outreach to Encampments of People Experiencing Homelessness* pg. 22. <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Audit-of-DFSS-Outreach-to-Encampments-of-People-Experiencing-Homelessness.pdf>

²² For clarification regarding Category 1 see: [CoC and ESG Homeless Eligibility - Category 1: Literally Homeless - HUD Exchange](#). For additional information about Category 4 see: [CoC and ESG Homeless Eligibility - Category 4: Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence - HUD Exchange](#). To view the full federal registers please follow the link and references the sections listed under CFR 24: [2011-30942.pdf \(govinfo.gov\)](#)

²³ It should be noted that HUD updates their income requirements annually. Respondents are responsible for updating this and making changes across sub-recipients whenever updated. To receive updates about this, and general program updates, the Program Coordinator should subscribe to the HUD Exchange Newsletter: [Subscribe to HUD Exchange Mailing Lists - HUD Exchange](#)

While being an effective administrator is critical for this program’s success, the RRH Program Coordinator is also responsible for setting a tone of unwavering commitment to serving those most vulnerable with care and dignity. Respondents to this RFP should incorporate the following philosophical cornerstones into their proposals and identify ways they plan to train, equip, and evaluate staff, landlords, and community partners to ensure these requirements are emphasized:

- The coordinator must offer services tailored to the individual household's needs with a focus on housing stability.
- A core component of RRH is client choice. Program staff must respect a household's ability to self-determine and participate in services voluntarily.
- Services should employ the principles of harm reduction and progressive engagement with the goal of Housing First.
- Service must be trauma-informed; guided by a person-centered and strength-based approach.
- The coordinator agrees to administer supportive services regardless of gender, legal history, ability/disability, age, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, housing, status, or any other protected class.

These points align with many of the core principles outlined in the Chicago Continuum of Care Community Standards. Respondents should review this document and describe how they plan to incorporate these principles (and others) into their service model. CoC Community Standards: [IL-510 Community Standards](#)

Subcontracted Provider Requirements:

The selected Coordinator may award subcontracts to help provide direct services (see the Program Elements section below for a more comprehensive list of what services can be subcontracted). Secondary providers are expected to meet the same requirements and standards outlined throughout this RFP. If proposing to subcontract services, Respondents must demonstrate their capacity to coordinate and manage providers across the city. Respondents must also outline their strategy for monitoring performance and reviewing subcontractor’s work on an annual basis to ensure the highest quality of service is being maintained.

Program Elements:

Respondents should review the RRH Written Standards of the Chicago CoC found at <https://allchicago.org/continuum-of-care/standards-and-monitoring/> and reflect these standards in their program design. The Program Coordinator should also be aware of the unique and various needs participants may need their assistance with. For example, services for survivors of [gender-based violence](#) should include crisis counseling, safety planning and assessment, and legal advocacy for Orders of Protection and other forms of legal protections. Being able to identify participants’ unique needs and developing policy responses to help address them is a crucial part of this role.

The key elements of the RRH Program Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- **Client referral:** Selected Respondents must take eligible client referrals from the CES or the current CoC-aligned referral process to ensure that RRH services are accessible in all 77 Chicago Community Areas.
- **Eligibility review:** RRH providers confirm eligibility at the time of referral through an assessment. Income eligibility is determined based on area median income, current living situation, and ability to obtain subsequent housing options without assistance.
- **Housing location, application, and placement services:**
 - Conduct housing search and placement.
 - Evaluate housing needs, and preferences, and implement a housing barrier assessment to ensure that housing location, cost, and safety are best suited to help a household keep permanent housing.
 - Lease negotiation

- Implement a Rent Reasonableness policy/procedure in accordance with HUD standards regarding Fair Market Rent: [Fair Market Rents \(40th PERCENTILE RENTS\) | HUD USER](#)
- Recruit landlords
- Coordinate application and move process with property management/landlord and program participants.
- Provide housing portfolios and landlord engagement strategies.
- Ensure coordination of services with outreach and shelter program staff to jointly support eligible clients applying for and getting into housing.
- Provide a fair
- Develop partners and referrals to provide participants declining or transitioning from RRH with alternative housing options (besides market rate rent) including but not limited to diversion, assisted living, subsidized housing, and shared housing.
- **Housing inspection services:** Any unit which a RRH recipient is newly occupying must be inspected (ideally in-person or virtually if needed) to meet habitability standards, in-person inspected to meet lead-based paint requirements, and any other local requirements.
 - Ensure the process to conduct inspections happens in the timeliest manner possible to reduce the likelihood of units being rented to other tenants.
 - Respondents should review the ESG Habitability Standards published by HUD and incorporate these best practices into their program procedures. See: [ESG Emergency Shelter and Permanent Housing Standards \(hudexchange.info\)](#)
- **Housing stability case management:** RRH staff should develop a Housing Stability Plan with the participant to determine goals and objectives and how best to provide case management services to a household.
 - RRH staff must provide a minimum of monthly case management sessions (remote or in-person) unless the participant's circumstances meet the requirements of federal legislation of domestic violence and following best practices, more frequent case management sessions if indicated by housing plans and housing stabilization needs.
 - Housing Plans should focus first on solving a participant's housing crisis and then refocus on housing stabilization.
 - Goals set should be client-led, time-limited, and achievable. The following are some examples of housing stability goals:
 - Obtain/maintain permanent housing
 - Obtain/maintain employment
 - Obtain income (non-employment SSI/SSDI, TANF, VA Benefits, etc.)
 - Obtain non-cash benefits (SNAP, Medicare, Medicaid, childcare, debt relief, LIHEAP, tuition reimbursement, etc.)
 - Improve physical health/obtain medical services
 - Improve mental health wellbeing/obtain mental health treatment
 - Budgeting/improving credit history/improve financial literacy
 - Obtain legal representation
 - RRH staff should record case notes and progress updates.
 - RRH staff should provide landlord-tenant mediation and tenancy supports.
- **Recertification:** At a minimum, every household must be recertified for services annually (no later than one year from the date of program entry). The Program Coordinator may require this more frequently if they believe it will help foster better housing outcomes and ensure resources are targeting the most vulnerable.
 - Requirements:
 - The program participant does not have an annual income that exceeds 30% of the median family income for the area.

- The participant lacks sufficient resources and support networks necessary to retain housing without ongoing RRH assistance.
- **Adhere to the Core Values of the CoC:** This includes housing first approach, harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and use of culturally competent, non-discriminatory, developmentally appropriate practices. This also includes the Data Quality Standards for any provider inputting information into HMIS. For more information, please review the CoC Community Standards: [IL-510 Community Standards](#); [2023 Data Quality Process Overview](#);
- **Client & Landlord Feedback:** Identify a strategy for systematically collecting client and landlord feedback about the program, e.g. a client satisfaction survey before discharging participants to collect quantitative and qualitative data about the program. Respondents should also think of ways to capture landlord responses to determine how better to engage them and keep them engaged and share these ideas within their proposal.
- **Discharge & Follow-up services:** As required by the HUD Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program, the RRH Program Coordinator will be responsible for assessing housing stability when services end for the client. Participants should be informed well in advance before being discharged from services, whether they've exhausted their time limit or are no longer requiring services. Respondents should outline ways in which discharges will be conducted as well as what sort of follow-up will occur.
- **Financial assistance administration:** The selected agency will be required to administer financial assistance. Financial assistance should be coordinated in alignment with a participant's service plan and should be provided as a short to medium-term intervention to help them achieve housing stability. The following participant expenses are allowable so long as they are paid to a third-party vendor (under no circumstance can a payment be made directly to a participant).
 - Rental Assistance (0-24 months)
 - Rental arrears (One-time payment up to 6 months of rent in arrears)
 (Note: Any combination of the above types, so long as the total amount of assistance does not exceed 24 months).
 - Application fees, ID costs, and furniture bank access fees
 - Security Deposits (no more than 2 month's rent)
 - Last month's Rent (applies to 24-month cap)
 - Utility Deposits (when required by a utility company)
 - Utility Payments (up to 24 months of payments per service, including up to 6 months of arrears)
 - Moving Costs (e.g. truck rental, moving company, up to 3 months of storage).
 - Household supplies (sheets, cooking supplies, basic household needs, Program Coordinator will need to list eligible items on budget)
 - Transportation assistance (Ventra passes)
- **Client assistance and financial forecasting:** Have a system to forecast financial assistance expenditures for clients based on budgeted amount.
- **Subcontracting process:** Selected Respondents may subcontract the provision of the following services: housing location, housing inspection, and/or housing stability case management. These sub-contracted agencies must be identified in the application. Respondents must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar contractual document between the Coordinator and subrecipient including services provided, budget, and a monitoring plan which should include a review schedule and a process to follow up on monitoring findings.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and

tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients.
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- Average of 81 days or fewer from program match to housing move-in²⁴
- 73% of participants that exit, exit to permanent housing destinations
- 25% of households increase income since program entry (i.e., earned income and/or benefits)
- 5% of participants or fewer return to homelessness within 6 months of exiting to permanent housing; 9% or fewer within 12 months; 10% or fewer within 24 months
- 92% of participants have health insurance

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 100% of participants housed in a project with a Coordinated Entry (CE) referral¹
- 94% of households with coordinated entry (CE) referrals are responded to within the established timeframe to update need status in HMIS
- Percentage of units that are occupied out of the number of total units

DFSS will also monitor the above metrics by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other characteristics as appropriate to track outcomes and outputs.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

Within this framework, DFSS is focused on continuous improvement against these metrics in pursuit of meeting or exceeding those targets over time. We are committed to working with delegate agencies to monitor performance against these indicators, including establishing relevant baselines or benchmarks and sharing data with delegate agencies to assess and understand our progress. DFSS expects that performance by these metrics will vary by sub-population served, and DFSS will continue to work with the delegate to understand factors influencing performance and to set appropriate performance expectations based on specific programs and sub-populations.

²⁴ Time from matched to housed is only measured for projects that are required to use Coordinated Entry

DFSS plans to track performance throughout the term of the contract and will use this information (including absolute and relative performance on metrics and improvement over time) to inform future funding decisions. DFSS therefore may add metrics in contracts as we continue to refine our approach to understanding and managing performance in upcoming contracts and over the years to come.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, Homeless Services seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Homeless Services Division delegate agencies, with the exception of domestic violence organizations, must use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and produce required quarterly HMIS reports and monthly RRH program reports. All Chicago administers Chicago CoC's HMIS. For more information about accessing HMIS and training, please visit the HMIS Help Desk at <https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us>. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dgs/InformationTechnology/ISTP.pdf>

Insurance

Respondent, if selected, shall register with the City's online insurance certificate portal using the designated email registration link provided below. Respondent shall provide a current and valid email address for both the contractor and the contractor's insurance agent or provider. The Selected Respondent is responsible for ensuring the submission of a certificate of insurance (COI) through the City's online insurance certificate portal prior to award of a contract.

A Respondent selected for contract negotiation and award who fails to fulfill the requirement to register and submit a COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal may be deemed nonresponsive and the City may choose to instead engage a different Respondent for contract negotiation. If a Respondent is unable to register and submit the COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal and instead submits a printed insurance certificate prior to contract award, the City may accept a paper COI provided that written justification is provided explaining the Respondent's good faith efforts to comply with the terms of this section and the reasons why the submission could not be completed. Instructions for registering and submitting COIs are available at the following URL: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/COI>

F. Application guidance for respondents

Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

DFSS seeks one lead delegate agency to serve as the RRH Program Coordinator. The RRH Program Coordinator will have the ability to subcontract with other agencies that will be identified as subcontractors. Respondent may subcontract the provision of the following services: housing location, housing inspection, and/or housing stability case management. Respondents should establish Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or letters of support with potential sub-contractors through this application process. It should be noted that subcontractors are expected to adhere to the same report standards, data quality, and privacy policies as the lead agency.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. DFSS anticipates funding one agency with an annual award between \$24,000,000 and \$30,000,000 depending on the size of their proposed program. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS and funded through City funds, including Homeshare and Corporate funds, and federal funds, including the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and HUD’s ESG guidelines must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Year of prior RFP:	2021
Applications received:	1
Projects funded:	1
Range of funding:	\$2,880,598
Total funding:	\$2,880,598

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public, all units of government and sister agencies. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10% percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide, and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The respondent has developed specific capabilities and/or infrastructure to better serve intended target populations, and the Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and/or directly engages the communities it serves 	<p>10</p>
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and administration. • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has adequate systems for collecting, protecting, and sharing program data and participant outcomes. • The Respondent has a detailed and thorough quality assurance plan to ensure program staff and subcontractors can maintain fidelity to program rules. 	<p>20</p>

<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing the needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and retaining program participants (including rules/regulations that reduce barriers to participation) • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way • The Respondent has a plan for collecting landlord and participant feedback, as well as grievance procedures, to evaluate the program’s efficacy and implement changes when needed. • Respondent provides an example of the client's entry into the program, achieving housing, and progression towards self-sufficiency, or housing independence. Plan is clear, concise, and achievable - outlines a proven strategy for recruit landlords and unhoused individuals and families. A timeline should be outlined for when, on average, households will be housed. 	<p>25</p>
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes to track and report key participant and performance data • The Respondent has experience disaggregating data in order to identify program disparities and ensure services are provided fairly to all participants. 	<p>25</p>
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has adequate cash flow and capacity to expend funds prior to reimbursement. • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	<p>20</p>

Basis of award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Rental Assistance Program Manager (RFP# 10130)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

Cameron Kinch, Project Manager, Homeless Services Division

Phone: 312-746-8756

Email: Cameron.kinch@cityofchicago.org

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

Through the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) Manager RFP, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) seeks an organization to administer and oversee financial assistance including rent, utility, and security deposit payments; monitor program expenditures; and perform housing habitability inspections on behalf of households approved through the DFSS Rental Assistance Program. The organization will provide these services for DFSS RAP in conjunction with the DFSS Community Service Centers (CSCs). The DFSS CSCs provide direct services to clients including case management, assistance completing benefit eligibility paperwork, submitting rental assistance payment requests, requesting housing habitability inspections, and other services. The RAP Manager is responsible for the financial administration and housing inspections to support overall program operations of RAP.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The Homeless Services Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning/coordination efforts. The Homeless Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant (All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System, other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the City towards the ultimate aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago.

B. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The goal of the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) is to reduce the number of individuals and families who experience homelessness by quickly providing those at risk of losing their current rental housing with short-term financial assistance through DFSS' network of six Community Service Centers (CSCs).

The role of the RAP Manager is to administer and oversee financial assistance including rent, utility, and security deposit payments; monitor program expenditures; and perform housing habitability inspections on behalf of households approved through the DFSS RAP. The selected Respondent will provide these services in conjunction with the DFSS CSCs. The CSCs will provide direct services to clients (including case management and help completing benefit eligibility paperwork, submitting rental assistance payment requests, requesting the housing habitability inspections, which can be performed virtually with the exception of lead based inspections that must be performed in-person, and other services), while the RAP Manager will work directly with property owners/managers to conduct housing inspections and provide them with direct payments once a property has passed inspection.

Best Practices

A 2021 research study done on Chicago's DFSS Rental Assistance Program found that to successfully operate an emergency rental assistance program for priority populations, it is important to consider the amount of time it takes to process an application.²⁵ The selected Respondent should seek to streamline the total duration of time it takes for application processing because if it takes too long for an application for emergency rental assistance to be processed and ultimately for funds to be disbursed, residents may not receive support in time to prevent evictions. The Program Manager for the Rental Assistance Program might consider exploring ways to reduce any required approval layers for faster, and more effective application handling and exploring easy ways to implement digital solutions for increased efficiency.

Current state and priorities for improvement

Rental assistance programs are extremely vital for preventing individuals and families from experiencing homelessness. Recent data from the Census Household Pulse Survey showed that more than 5.7 million adults in households with children — or about 21% — are behind on rent. This number is even higher for Black households, with nearly 30% of Black renters with children behind on rent²⁶. Studies show that housing instability and homelessness exert long-term adverse physiological, academic, and economic effects on families and children. Yet despite the great need for housing assistance in the United States, only 1-in-4 families who are eligible for rental assistance receive it.

²⁵

https://govlab.hks.harvard.edu/files/govlabs/files/emergency_rental_assistance_lessons_from_chicago_technical_guide.pdf

²⁶ <https://campaignforchildren.org/resources/fact-sheet/policy-brief-child-youth-and-family-homelessness-in-the-united-states-undercounted-misunderstood/>

Locally, a recent study from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago found that 3.8 million young adults ages 18-to-25 have little or no confidence in their household's ability to pay next month's rent. This same study found that Hispanic young adults were roughly twice as likely and Black youth were nearly three times as likely as their White peers to report little or no confidence in their ability to pay next month's rent²⁷.

DFSS RAP helps residents currently residing in rental units pay their rent and/or arrears due to the household facing eviction because of income loss or other eligible emergencies. RAP assistance can include payment of future rent or rent arrears to prevent eviction and/or security deposits in cases of fire, flood or foreclosure. Depending upon funding availability, the RAP application will be available year-round at any of Chicago's six Community Service Centers (CSCs): the Englewood Community Service Center, the Garfield Community Service Center, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Center, the North Area Community Service Center, the South Chicago Community Service Center, and the Trina Davila Community Service Center. The six CSCs provide direct service to clients including case management, assistance completing benefit eligibility paperwork or assistance with submitting rental assistance payment requests, requesting housing inspections, etc.

In coordination with the DFSS CSCs mentioned above, from August 2020 through September 2024, the DFSS Rental Assistance Program (RAP) provided over \$17M in financial assistance to roughly 3,300 households who had been identified as at risk of losing their permanent housing.

Priorities for the coming contract period include improving real-time reporting on the fiscal management of financial assistance, which includes monitoring of funding balance, monthly and weekly reporting of financial assistance to clients, and the completion of virtual and/or in-person housing habitability inspections in a timely manner. DFSS must receive accurate and timely reporting to ensure that funds are expended within budget parameters.

Target Population

The target population for RAP includes individuals or families residing within the City of Chicago who meet the following qualifications:

- The person is at risk of homelessness, including people fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence
- The person has no subsequent residence
- The person is lacking financial resources and support networks to obtain or maintain their housing

C. Program activities and requirements

The RAP Manager coordinates with the DFSS CSCs to deliver rental assistance to households in need of support through timely check payments to property owners/managers. The RAP Manager will monitor the approved applications downloaded from the RAP Portal provided by the DFSS CSC staff where households are assessed and, if eligible, enrolled into the program by CSC staff; ensure that the unit associated with the rental assistance meets HUD habitability standards, and quickly distribute financial assistance to ensure clients maintain permanent housing.

The RAP Manager is expected to:

- Conduct housing inspections (and if needed, with at least one staff member who's fluent in Spanish), which includes performing virtual habitability standards/in-person lead screening on all rental units

²⁷ <https://campaignforchildren.org/resources/fact-sheet/policy-brief-child-youth-and-family-homelessness-in-the-united-states-undercounted-misunderstood/>

within three to five business days of receiving request from DFSS CSCs in accordance with [HUD Habitability Standards](#).

- Distribute financial assistance payments to property owners/managers or their agents. These payments must be made within five days of receiving a request from DFSS CSCs and the property passing inspection.
- Monitor fiscal activity of RAP funds, which includes ensuring expenditures do not go over the program budget and providing monthly reports by CSC and for the program overall.
- Coordinate with the CSCs regarding scheduling housing inspections, submitting the financial assistance requests, and coordinating with landlords to resolve payment issues.
- Obtain service-related feedback from landlords and ensure it is incorporated into service delivery.
- Utilize the RAP Portal for performing required tasks such as uploading documentation of housing inspections and supporting documentation; retrieving requests from DFSS' CSCs and participating in RAP Portal training as needed.
- Work proactively with DFSS to collaborate and improve upon program service coordination efforts through site visits (if applicable), monthly meetings, and more.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance indicators that may include, but are not limited to:

- 100% of third-party payments to property owners or their agents will be made within five business days of a unit passing a habitability inspection.
- 100% of habitability inspections requests will be performed within five business days of receipt from DFSS
- 100% of all assisted units meet HUD habitability standards prior to providing rental assistance

In addition to the metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, Homeless Services seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Homeless Services Division delegate agencies, with the exception of domestic violence organizations, must use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and produce required reports. All Chicago administers Chicago CoC's HMIS. For more information about accessing HMIS and training, please visit the HMIS Help Desk at <https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us>. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dgs/InformationTechnology/ISTP.pdf>

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F. Application guidance for respondents

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Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent’s performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$400,000 to \$800,000 depending on the size of their proposed program. DFSS anticipates funding one agency. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through a combination of City, State and Federal funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the grants must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent’s contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received: 2
Projects funded: 1
Range of funding: \$401,929
Total funding: \$401,929

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public, all units of government and sister agencies. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10 percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide, and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The respondent has developed specific capabilities and/or infrastructure to better serve intended target populations, and the Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent identifies adequate essential personnel to devote to the work, describes appropriate staffing patterns and their qualifications in the context of clients to be served (including administering financial assistance, monitoring expenditures, and conducting housing inspections), and has a compelling strategy to fill these positions in a timely manner • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has secure data collection and management practices, along with adequate processes for quality assurance and timely data entry 	25
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly articulates how their agency will collaborate with DFSS Community Service Centers to execute the program. • The Respondent has an effective approach to processing applications for assistance and administering financial assistance in a timely manner • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field (e.g., financial assistance administration, housing habitability inspections) 	25
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to identify problems in service delivery and inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent can disaggregate data to identify disparities in outcomes between different subgroups of their clients 	25

<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program prior to reimbursement • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests given the nature of the program proposed. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan 	<p>10</p>
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Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Youth Transitional Housing (RFP# 10129)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

Angel Ajani, Project Coordinator

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) seeks applicants to operate Youth Transitional Housing programs who have experience operating developmentally appropriate housing and support services that transition young people (up to their 25th birthday) to stable housing. Transitional Housing programs provide time-limited supportive housing (up to 24 months) to help youth acquire the skills and supports that enable their long-term success living independently. Focuses of the transitional housing model include life skills development and sustained school attendance and/or employment.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and supports a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services – one that moves the department beyond measuring *how many* people receive services, to focus on how Chicagoans *leave better off* after receiving services. To achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund. For more information on DFSS's commitment to outcomes, please visit: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/department-strategic-framework.html

Division Priorities

The DFSS Homeless Services Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning/coordination efforts. The Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant (All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System (CES), other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the city with the aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago.

B. Program goals

The goal of Youth Transitional Housing is to quickly house young people (up to their 25th birthday) experiencing housing instability while providing the developmentally appropriate support needed for them to remain stably housed and build a foundation for success in the future. Support services and connection to benefits, education and employment support, legal aid, leadership opportunities, and links to physical and mental health care are integral to the success of Youth Transitional Housing programs.

Goals

Youth Transitional Housing is part of a broader system that aims to house and connect youth to needed supports as quickly as possible. In 2019, the Chicago CoC's Youth Sector and Youth Action Board (YAB), with the support of a national consultant, created the Chicago Youth Sector Housing Program Model Design. This document outlines mutually agreed upon philosophies and values, an array of housing models needed in Chicago, and aspirational program standards critical to increasing system effectiveness.

Through this RFP, the DFSS Homeless Services Division offers funding opportunities for developmentally appropriate transitional housing programs designed for youth (up to their 25th birthday). The transitional housing model is a medium-term housing intervention that includes embedded supportive services, concluding with connections and warm hand-off transitions to permanent/stable housing. Transitional housing programs empower youth toward achieving self-sufficiency and housing.

Via the [Chicago Youth Sector Housing Program Model Design](#), the CoC's former Youth Sector identified Authentic Youth Collaboration as a core philosophy of model programs within their design, staffing structure, organizational structure, and program policies. DFSS recognizes the value of truly local expertise of young people with lived experience and encourages applicants to provide thorough explanations of how they implement youth collaboration across the board.

Current state and priorities for improvement

In 2024, the Chicago Continuum of Care was awarded \$15 million in federal funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP) will bring together Federal, State, and local officials, community service providers and youth with lived experience, to devise a comprehensive and strategic plan for ending youth homelessness. During this funding proposal, the Youth Action Board (YAB) identified several issues they hope this funding and programs like Youth Transitional Housing will aim to address in 2025 and beyond.

Two frequently named barriers to housing placement include (a) difficulty locating clients and (b) declining the housing offered. Delays in filing and beds create inefficiencies in the homeless services system and, more importantly, negatively impact young people by extending their time in unstable housing situations. Successful programs will have systems that quickly transition youth into appropriately matched housing placements while also working with the YHDP to instill system wide best practices. This may include building landlord relationships in advance of receiving a client, actively participating in System Integration Team (SIT)

meetings, and using youths' own preferred communication methods to ongoingly connect with them (e.g., social media, texting).

Best practices

DFSS encourages the following best practices to be incorporated into Transitional Housing program proposals:

- **Variety of housing configurations:** Possible housing types include congregate housing with overnight staff (especially for youth under 18 or youth who find structure helpful), clustered units with or without a supervisor on-site, or scattered site apartments or shared units in which a youth may hold the lease.
- **Individualized and flexible service delivery:** Intensity, duration, and array of services are low-barrier, customized and unique to each transitional housing program and youth population. Programs use positive youth development focusing on skills-building, leadership and community involvement. Programs have low- or no-barriers to enter and stay in the program for up to 24 months.
- **Vulnerable populations:** Provide specialized services and community supports for vulnerable sub-groups, such as pregnant and parenting youth, youth with mental and/or behavioral health needs, youth fleeing domestic violence or trafficking situations, transition-aged youth, those leaving juvenile justice, and LGBTQ youth.
- **Forge community connections:** While in the program, youth are provided with services such as health and mental health services, support groups, life skills training, substance misuse treatment, employment, vocational, and educational services. Programs facilitate intentional and trusted community and also connect youth with community-based services that they can remain connected to once they leave the program.
- **Exit planning:** Requires formal partnerships with housing search staff and permanent housing providers and begins early to support a transition to independent living as soon as a youth can make an informed choice and feels ready. Many programs also provide aftercare case management for up to six months upon exit from the program.
- **Guiding principles of the Youth Transitional Housing Model recognized by HUD:**
 - Use Positive Youth Development and developmentally appropriate services
 - Focus on education, employment opportunities and income supports
 - Encourage peer support and building trusted community
 - Case management toward transition to permanent housing
 - Involve youth in creating house rules, program design, and planning activities
 - Support transition to independence with adult mentors

Target Population

The target population to be served is unaccompanied or parenting youth who currently experience housing instability. The target age range can be as young as age 14 up to the young person's 25th birthday at time of enrollment. Unaccompanied refers to young people experiencing housing instability who are not being cared for as minors within a larger family structure.

Through this RFP, DFSS is seeking transitional housing programs that can serve the broadest range of households that meet the CoC's definition of youth. To that end, preference will be given to programs with the least restrictive eligibility requirements.

Ideally, a young person would be eligible for all youth programming until their 25th birthday. This means that a young person can be enrolled into a program until their 25th birthday and that the 'clock starts' on a young person's time-limited programming at enrollment. DFSS recognizes and supports all existing state and federal requirement and restrictions for serving minors.

DFSS also recognizes that supporting pregnant and parenting youth requires specialized programming, case management, and housing unit capacity. For this RFP, DFSS is seeking programs that provide empowering resources for parents of all genders.

Additional information on youth experiencing homelessness is available from a [2016 study by Chapin Hall](#) which interviewed 215 young people aged 13-25 experiencing homelessness across five U.S. counties, including Cook County, Illinois. Key findings from Cook County youth include:

- Parental Loss: 45% of youth attributed their homelessness to the death of a parent or caregiver.
- Demographics: 60% of interviewed youth were African American, reflecting a disproportionate impact on Black youth in the area.
- Adverse Experiences: 40% had been physically harmed, and more than half with child welfare histories linked their homelessness to foster care experiences.
- Family Homelessness: Nearly 25% had experienced family homelessness.
- LGBTQA and Foster Youth: These groups, along with those with juvenile justice histories, reported higher levels of adversity.
- Age and Independence: Many youth became homeless at 18 when they were expected to be financially independent, marking a high-risk transition.
- Education: While 70% attained a high school diploma or GED, they often had to choose between education and unstable housing or low-wage jobs.

C. Program activities and requirements

DFSS seeks to fund Transitional Housing programs that help to transition youth into stable/permanent housing.

Program design must include the following basic elements:

- **Individualized Housing Stability Plan:** Case managers work with youth to outline stability goals that take into consideration developmental needs and are action-item driven. Providers will utilize positive youth development practices focusing on skills-building, leadership, and community involvement. The stability plan will include creating connections to longer term stable housing options and supportive services. Supportive services can be administered in-house or through linkages. Supportive services should be provided in a way that is voluntary and appropriate to the needs and preferences of the participants. Supportive services include but are not limited to:
 - Linkages to medical care, mental health care, substance use disorder treatments, legal assistants, and connection to benefits
 - Supports for education, employment, and community connection
 - Specialized services for pregnant and/or parenting heads-of-households, including parenting skills and supports, empowering resources for parents of all genders, and support for children. Youth Transitional Housing Programs should explicitly provide the following for every youth-led family:
 - Developmental screenings of all dependent children ages 0-5, with automatic linkage to Early Intervention if they screen positive for developmental delays
 - Early childhood program and/or school enrollment for all children in youths' custody
- **Housing supports:**
 - Scattered site programs: include housing location, tenant rights education and landlord relationship support, furniture and start up resources, and connection to food resources
 - Project-based programs: include adequate staff and support to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week

- **Active Contract Management (ACM) with DFSS**

- Awardees will engage in ongoing collaboration and communication with DFSS throughout the term of the funding contract. This includes Active Contract Management (ACM) activities with DFSS and Youth Transitional Housing Program Managers. Active Contract Management includes reviewing program data, identifying gaps in service and program quality, discussing program challenges, and determining steps to improve outcomes for youth.

Programs must also meet the following requirements:

- Programs must follow [Coordinated Entry System \(CES\) policies](#) and procedures for program referrals.
- Programs must provide 24-hour, on-call or on-site access to staff support.
- Programs must have the capacity to provide virtual case management in situations where meeting in-person is not possible.
- Programs serving youth under the age of 18 must comply with State licensing and regulatory guidelines and youth must be connected to a Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS) provider.
- Programs must maintain a staff-to-client ratio of one case manager to 15 clients.

Successful programs will also incorporate the following best practices:

- Fully resourced to connect young people to a robust variety of services.
- Include strategies to provide a safe and supportive environment for young people who are disproportionately impacted by homelessness in Chicago.
- Elevate youth choice and self-determination: This means respecting youth as the experts of their own lives and experiences. Program staff should educate and equip youth with the tools that each youth needs to make decisions around their housing stability options.
- Follow a Housing First philosophy: [Housing First Checklist](#)
- Incorporate best practices for engaging youth, including positive youth development, trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and harm reduction (See [Chicago Youth Sector Housing Program Model Design](#) for additional explanation and complete list of core philosophies and values).
- Ensure coordination with the community's CES. Programs shall participate in all relevant CES activities, including active participation in system and service coordination meetings (e.g. Youth Transitional Housing System Integration Team (TH SIT) meetings). Participation in these activities includes keeping community partners updated regarding real-time changes to eligibility, timely updates on the progress of participants matched to housing, housing first practices of screening in eligible participants, and prioritizing housing based on community-wide standards, funding, and capacity.

Service coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies that improve coordination across service delivery silos, to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, DFSS has identified several coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and

successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support around implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving outcome goals for this RFP and to assess programs' effectiveness, DFSS will monitor performance indicators that may include, but are not limited to:

- 70% of participants will exit to stable housing
- 50% of participants without a source of reportable income will report an increase in cash benefits or income

DFSS also intends to track quality of life outcomes for participants that may include, but are not limited to:

- 50% of participants will exit with employment
- 50% of participants will exit with a high school diploma or will be enrolled in an educational program (high school, GED prep classes, vocational training, college)
- Reduction to the average number of days between referral and placement (45 days or less per [CoC Protocols](#))

Metrics and targets are in line with the CoC's community standards available at <https://allchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Chicago-CoC-Community-Standarads-Updated-November-2024.pdf>.

DFSS will also monitor the above metrics by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other characteristics as appropriate to track outcomes and outputs. DFSS is especially interested in reviewing the program performance with a lens focusing on LGBTQ youth and youth of color.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

DFSS is focused on continuous improvement of program metrics. We are committed to working with delegate agencies to monitor performance against these indicators, including establishing relevant baselines or benchmarks and sharing data with delegate agencies to assess and understand our progress.

DFSS expects that performance may vary per sub-population served. DFSS will continue to work with the delegate community to understand factors influencing performance and to set appropriate performance expectations based on the specifications within programs and sub-populations. DFSS will track performance throughout the term of the contract and will use this information (including absolute and relative performance on metrics and improvement over time) to inform future funding decisions.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, Homeless Services seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Homeless Services Division delegate agencies, with the exception of domestic violence organizations, must use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and produce required reports. All Chicago administers Chicago CoC's HMIS. For more information about accessing HMIS and training, please visit the HMIS Help Desk at <https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us>. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dgs/InformationTechnology/ISTP.pdf>.

Insurance

Respondent, if selected, shall register with the City's online insurance certificate portal using the designated email registration link provided below. Respondent shall provide a current and valid email address for both the contractor and the contractor's insurance agent or provider. The Selected Respondent is responsible for ensuring the submission of a certificate of insurance (COI) through the City's online insurance certificate portal prior to award of a contract.

A Respondent selected for contract negotiation and award who fails to fulfill the requirement to register and submit a COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal may be deemed nonresponsive and the City may choose to instead engage a different Respondent for contract negotiation. If a Respondent is unable to register and submit the COI through the City's online insurance certificate portal and instead submits a printed insurance certificate prior to contract award, the City may accept a paper COI provided that written justification is provided explaining the Respondent's good faith efforts to comply with the terms of this section and the reasons why the submission could not be completed. Instructions for registering and submitting COIs are available at the following URL: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/COI>

F. Application guidance for respondents

Agencies wishing to propose multiple projects must submit a separate proposal for each project. Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$40,270 - \$150,000 (per year) depending on the size of their proposed program. We anticipate funding approximately six projects. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through City Corporate funds, and may also be funded through other city, state, federal, and local funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the grant(s) must be met.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received: 7
Projects funded: 6
Range of funding: \$40,270 - \$150,000 (per year)
Total funding: \$574,900 (per year)

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10 percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgment of human rights, or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide, and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths, assets, needs and challenges • The respondent has developed specific capabilities and/or infrastructure to better serve intended target populations, and the Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent identifies adequate essential personnel to devote to the work, describes appropriate staffing patterns and their qualifications in the context of clients to be served (including program staff, program oversight, and management), and has a compelling strategy to fill these positions in a timely manner • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls 	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective and intentional approach to identifying, recruiting, and retaining program participants. • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way 	25
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to identify problems in service delivery and inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent can disaggregate data to identify disparities in outcomes between different subgroups of their clients <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	25
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program prior to reimbursement • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests given the nature of the program proposed. The proposed budget supports 	15

the proposed scope of work or work plan	
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Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography and language. DFSS will also consider how all programs fit together to achieve a comprehensive, citywide system of care that supports the DFSS Homeless Services Division strategic priorities and aligns with standards set forth by federal funding partners.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Senior Services: Case Advocacy and Support for Vulnerable Older Adults (CAS) (RFQ# 10091)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

RFP SUMMARY:

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) Senior Services Division is seeking proposals from qualified Respondents to provide face-to-face well-being assessments that verify, assess, and address the needs of vulnerable Chicagoans, 55 years of age and older, who are reported as being at-risk, and may be experiencing decline or have a presenting situation that impedes their ability to continue to live safely in their homes.

A. Organizational background

SENIOR SERVICES DIVISION:

The Senior Services Division is designated as the local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the City of Chicago. As the AAA, DFSS coordinates and funds services for older adults, prioritizing those in greatest economic and social need, those who live alone, and those at risk for institutional placement. Working in collaboration with aging network partners, the Senior Services Division's efforts are guided by:

1. Supporting older persons to live independently in their own communities and homes for as long as possible;
2. Ensuring that those who reside in institutions are treated with dignity and care; and
3. Guaranteeing that older persons have access to accurate information to participate in public policy.

Together with our service providers, we provide vital information and assistance (I&A), congregate and home delivered meal services, senior centers, fitness classes, caregiver support services, in-home services, employment training and volunteer opportunities, elder rights programs, health promotion, and access to benefits. We continually innovate and advocate for our residents so they may continue to thrive as they age in place. We value integrity and respect as well as promoting social engagement among the elderly as an antidote to dependence, social isolation, and withdrawal.

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Senior Services Division is the Senior Services Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the City of Chicago as designated by the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). It is one of thirteen Planning and Service Areas (PSAs) in the state and is part of a vast national network of services and programs that protect the rights and support the needs of seniors to help them live independently in their homes for as long as possible. As the Area Agency on Aging, the Senior Services division provides senior center programming, older adult fitness programs, recreation activities, information and assistance services, benefit counseling, ombudsman, chore services, caregiver support services, nutrition services, and senior employment programs. For further information about these and the other services offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss.

The Senior Services Division priorities include ensuring access to a variety of services to support successful aging; supporting the well-being of individuals through programs that maintain personal independence and well-being; and providing advocacy in order to ensure that the most frail and vulnerable seniors are receiving the best quality of care available and are protected from abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.

B. Program description

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

Goals of this RFP

The Case Advocacy and Support for Vulnerable Older Adults program (CAS) helps at-risk older adults address an urgent situation that impedes their ability to continue to live safely in their homes. The CAS program is a transitional service between an individual or agency that reports an older adult in need of other more formal or informal supports that assist the older adult with the need. CAS program staff provide a timely response to calls of concern, assess client needs, and address the need by mobilizing community resources.

The goals and objectives of the CAS program are as follows:

- Engage older adult and discuss their challenges and / or needs, from their perspective
- Reduce or mitigate the urgent need that is causing their inability to live safely
- Improve the physical or environmental situation

- Increase their overall well-being and support system

Current State

According to AARP, by 2030, one in every five Americans (70 million) will be over the age of 65 (US Census Bureau). The fastest growing segment are individuals 85 years of age and older who are increasingly frail and have growing economic and social needs. Additionally, nearly 90% of people over age 65 want to stay in their home for as long as possible, and 80% of older adults believe their current residence is where they will always live. It may be difficult for older adults to safely age in place as many have limited support networks available to them or are reluctant to accept needed services, thus increasing their exposure to vulnerability and risk.

Additionally, more than eight million adults age 50 and older are socially isolated. Social isolation is a growing health epidemic and linked to adverse health effects, including dementia, increased risk for hospital readmission, and increased risk of falls. The health risks of prolonged isolation are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and socially isolated older adults are at greater risk of poor health and death compared to their well-connected counterparts. A recent AARP Public Policy Institute study found that a lack of social contacts among older adults is associated with an estimated \$6.7 billion in additional federal spending annually.

Natural disasters, crises, and public health emergencies also impact the ability of older adults to age in place. New research released by the American Red Cross in January 2020 found that older adults are more vulnerable and experience more casualties after natural disasters compared to other age groups, and have characteristics that put them at greater risk of illness and death during many types of emergencies. For example, older adults may have impaired mobility, diminished sensory awareness, multiple chronic health conditions, and social and economic limitations – all of which can impair their ability to respond in emergency situations. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, older adults were identified as the population at highest risk of death due to the virus (John Hopkins University and Medical Center. 2020. Coronavirus Resource Center. Accessed at www.coronavirus.jhu.edu/data).

Priorities for Improvement

Listed below are the total number of well-being checks requested in calendar years 2019 – 2024. The total number of well-being checks has steadily increased over the last five calendar years. Given the growth in the target population for the CAS program, we anticipate a continued increase in the total number of service requests for well-being checks. Therefore, as part of an overall effort to ensure that vulnerable older adults requiring CAS assistance are identified and referred, the selected Respondent will work cooperatively with DFSS to promote the awareness of the CAS program in addition to helping identify any barriers that impede referrals to the program.

Year	Total # of Annual Referrals for CAS Well-Being Checks
2019	637
2020	796
2021	1,088
2022	1195
2023	1216
2024	860*

*2024 data lower due to refined ECM analytics

DFSS Senior Services Division uses the Enterprise Case Management (ECM) system to document CAS program activities. This assessment and reporting tool is paramount to documenting risks during case visits, and ensuring the client receives holistic interventions to help manage their situation. Overall, ECM is used to assess performance benchmarks, measure program success, and make any needed changes to the program. Similarly, through active contract management DFSS uses ECM data regarding referrals and delegate performance to analyze program metrics. Successful delegate agencies will fully adopt ECM tools, and all CAS-related staff should be fully trained in ECM.

Emergency Contingency Planning

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, special emphasis should be placed on developing contingency plans for any emergencies that require a change in usual service delivery. This can include, but is not limited to, COVID-19, an epidemic/pandemic, winter storms, tornados, heat waves, and other emergency events that may pose a challenge to service delivery. The CAS Respondent should develop policies and procedures to include sections on training, personal protective equipment (PPE), health screenings, temperature checks, and contact tracing. Policies and procedures must be in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Illinois Department of Public Health, Chicago Department of Public Health, and Federal Emergency Management Agency guidance.

For weather emergencies, mass care services, and other emergencies and disasters, CAS Respondents will be asked to support DFSS' response to a citywide emergency. The CAS Respondent is required by DFSS to be prepared in the event of emergencies to work outside of their norms to fill in the gaps with services as dictated by the emergency. It is expected, with safety precautions in place (e.g. PPE), that clients will continue to be visited in person during emergencies. Due to the nature of the CAS program, these clients are extremely vulnerable, and their situation must be verified and assessed, with recommendations made to address the situation.

Target Population

The CAS program seeks to assist Chicagoans, 55 years of age and older, who are suspected of exhibiting signs of cognitive and/or physical decline that put them at risk of losing the ability to live safely at home without needed supports. Any situation that puts a vulnerable older adult at risk can result in a service request. In general, traumatic events or later-life changes in the physical, cognitive, or mental health of older adults can lead to frailty and ultimately, without service intervention, could result in the loss of independence and a corresponding decline in quality of life.

Representative Indicators of Concern for older adults residing in unsafe living conditions, experiencing challenges with executing acts of daily living and/or a decline of quality of life, may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Living Environment
 - Animal hoarding
 - Hoarding and chronic disorganization to the degree that it impacts safety
 - Home requires significant repair and exhibiting safety hazards (e.g. exposed wiring, inadequate roofing to provide protection from the elements, mold, etc.)
 - Home infestations of insects, rodents, and other pests
 - Inadequate or spoiled food in the home
 - Lack of utilities
 - At risk of and/or notification of eviction
 - Overgrown and neglected yard
 - Unsanitary living conditions (e.g., fecal/urine smell, urine, vomit, blood, and / or feces on floor or furniture)
- Physical Functioning

- Body odor, unkempt and/or inappropriate (for season) or soiled clothing
- Difficulty with seeing, speaking, hearing, activities of daily living and / or mobility (e.g., moving around / leaving home)
- Inability to manage medications
- Insufficient medical care and / or support for serious illness or conditions
- Repeated calls to 911 for assistance with Chicago Police (CPD) or Fire Department (CFD) or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for Emergency Room visits, and/or hospital admissions
- Cognitive Decline
 - Cognitive impairment – repeats the same questions and the same stories; misplaces items often; forgets the names of close friends and family members, recent events, appointments or planned events, conversations
 - Diminished executive function – cognitive processes and mental skills that help an individual plan, monitor, and successfully execute their goals
 - Exhibiting signs of confusion and/or cognitive impairment
 - Existing and/or increased anxiety or aggression
 - Getting lost/disorientation
 - Language problems – exhibiting word finding challenges
- Socio-emotional Supports
 - Caregiver duress or inability to provide support
 - Lacks involved family members or friends
 - Needs home care assistance and does not have a paid caregiver
 - Reports being alone and / or feelings of loneliness
 - Requires assistance accessing needed community-based programs and services
 - Exhibits signs of depression or apathy

Special Populations

The selected Respondent must provide services for clients, including those with limited English proficiency, and have access to staff with specific language skills that reflect the needs of the clients served or translation services. The selected Respondent must make reasonable accommodations for clients with disabilities, including American Sign Language interpretation and/or TDD/TTY phone number or other telecommunication devices for the deaf, and accessible facilities for individuals with physical disabilities.

C. Program requirements

For this RFP, DFSS is seeking proposals to provide all the core program components listed below.

Referral Process

The Information and Referral/Assistance Service (I&A) receives requests for Well-Being Assessments from a variety of sources including, but not limited to: 311, Aldermanic offices, Police, Fire, and Buildings Departments, City of Chicago infrastructure departments, Animal Care and Control, and many others. Requests for Senior Well-being Assessments are all reported to DFSS Senior Services, which as required creates and forwards a corresponding service request to the CAS Respondent to complete the CAS Well-Being Assessment of the older adult within one to three business days, dependent on the individual case circumstance.

The CAS Respondent is expected to assign CAS staff to the CAS program during business hours five days a week. In emergency situations (weather emergency, pandemic, etc.) the CAS Respondent may need to assess older Chicagoans during weekends and holidays. The identified business phone number of the CAS Respondent and ECM should be closely monitored to receive the associated service requests. DFSS will

approve a request for CAS services in ECM, and an email will be automatically generated in ECM and sent to the CAS Respondent agency. The CAS Respondent will have a range of hours to visit the older adult as detailed below:

- One business day to complete a visit to the older adult in an emergency situation.
- Two business days to complete a visit to an older adult in an urgent situation.
- Seven business days to complete a visit to an older adult requiring a standard CAS Well-being Assessment

Guidelines for Referrals are as follows (business days from 9 am – 5 pm, Monday – Friday; excluding holidays)

Emergency Senior Referrals (visit within 24 hours of CAS team receipt):

- Lives alone, is over the age of 55, is at risk, and has no supports
- Is self-neglecting and has no supports
- Is bed-bound and has limited mobility and has little to no supports
- Shows signs of mental health issues and / or disorientation (e.g., inappropriate attire for weather, wandering, aggressive behavior, etc.) that are immediately impacting their safety or well-being; and may be posing significant risk to themselves or others
- Has not been seen or heard from by family members, friends or neighbors for several days

Urgent Senior Referrals (visit within 48 hours of receipt):

- Senior who is said to be ill and needs help, but refuses to get medical care
- At-risk of eviction
- Significant home environment changes (e.g., building issues, etc.)
- Recent health status change(s) (e.g., hospitalization, significant illness, transition from medical setting to community)

Standard Senior Referrals (visit within 168 hours of receipt):

- Senior with limited mobility and has some supports
- Has been referred to resources related no electricity, heat, gas, and / or air conditioning (and has declined shelter). This client has been seen as TBH and referred to buildings but may have additional needs and / or requires assessment follow-up.
- Presents ongoing symptoms of confusion or memory impairment while living in the community
- Has experienced a recent death in the household
- General well-being checks

Prioritization of visit is additive and may be elevated for a variety of reasons including but not limited to:

- Aldermanic / Representative requests
- CPD / CFD requests
- Nurse, social worker, or other allied health professional requests
- Repeat referrals from the community

In some emergency instances:

The CAS team may be asked to conduct immediate Senior Well Being Checks (“TBH”) in response to emergency situations and / or due to overflow to 311 resources (i.e., during weather-related or other emergencies). In these instances, existing case visit priority will be deferred.

The Chicago Police Department (CPD) and / or Fire Department (CFD) may be requested as an escort. The CAS Respondent will be responsible for calling CPD and/or CFD as a back-up when situations appear to be unsafe or further assistance gaining entry is required. DFSS will be notified of these situations by CAS

respondent as soon as possible, and no later than within 24 hours.

Post-visit, the CAS respondent will have one business day in emergency situations, two days in urgent situations, and three business days in standard assessments to enter the interaction data into ECM for standard Well-being Assessments. Case progress will be time-stamped and monitored in ECM. In some situations, DFSS may directly contact the CAS Respondent. DFSS should be notified as soon as possible if the CAS Respondent is unable to follow through on the immediate request for any reason. The CAS Respondent will triage calls to prioritize their own work plan.

Well-Being Assessment

The CAS team is responsible for conducting a Well-Being Assessment to verify, assess, and make recommendations to address the situation of the at-risk older adult.

Verify:

- Visit the home of an at-risk older adult to ensure that the resident is safe and well, including coordinating with CPD or CFD to gain access, if needed. The CAS team will make the initial face-to-face visit within one business day of receiving the service request for emergency situations, two business days for urgent situations, and seven business days for a standard CAS Well-being Assessment.
- The CAS delegate may call the client in order to alert the client of their impending visit and make arrangements for the visit. DFSS will indicate to Delegate if client is not to be contacted prior to the visit, and situations that require an in-person visit despite client refusal.
- Direct client contact is required, and in most instances, home visits should be conducted. Case workers should not rely only on proxy reports except in cases where the individual cannot speak for themselves (e.g., hospitalization, move, death, severe impairment). In the majority of cases, the case worker must observe for themselves the conditions of the client and home environment.
- The CAS team must make at least three attempts to complete the face-to-face well-being check within 168 hours (7 business days) if the initial contact is refused or not made.
- The timeframe for completion of the face-to-face visit may be narrowed depending upon the circumstances of the case. If contact was not successfully achieved, the CAS team will notify DFSS program staff for further instruction.
- The CAS team will coordinate with other community supports, as needed, to optimize the success of the home visit and complete the assessment of need.

Assess:

- This Well-Being Assessment may include but is not limited to the following:
 - Capacity assessment
 - Environmental assessment
 - Functional assessment
 - Self-neglect assessment
 - Well-being assessment
- The CAS Respondent will take the following steps to complete the Well-being Assessment:
 1. Interview the at-risk older adult and discuss the causes for concern about their safety, health, and well-being.
 2. Obtain the older adult's view and understanding of the situation and the overall impact.
 3. Establish facts to provide a description of the capabilities, capacity, and risks.

4. Utilize additional assessments at the CAS Respondent's discretion depending on the situation. These tools should be provided to DFSS by the selected Respondent prior to the start of their contract.
5. Identify the informal and formal supports the older adult has in place to assist them.
6. Discuss with the older adult any recommendations that will be made on their behalf and next steps (i.e., which agencies may be able to work on the older adult's behalf).

Recommend:

- The CAS Respondent will make needed recommendations for the older adult based on the outcome of the Senior Well-being Assessment. These recommendations include what was observed at the visit, the CAS team member activities and referrals, and recommendations for the future.
- Submit the completed assessments, case notes, and any further recommendations in the ECM system within the designated timeframe of contacting the older adult or any other party associated with the older adult's case, dependent on the priority timeframe of the referral (emergency, urgent, or standard).
- For abuse, neglect, and exploitation cases, Adult Protective Services (APS) reports should be filed immediately and DFSS notified **as soon as possible, but no less than within 24 hours of APS referral**. CAS case workers are considered mandated reporters.
- For other immediate services, notify DFSS I & A at aging@cityofchicago.org for referrals for home-delivered meals, short-term or heavy-duty chore services, etc.

Refusals

If the senior refuses the initial call to set an appointment and has either a) been designated as a must visit client (e.g., suspected cognitive impairment, behaviors that place the individual and / or others at risk, etc.) or b) is designated as a no-call visit (e.g., pending joint visit for building closure), or c) the CAS delegate is unable to contact the client to set up an appointment, the CAS team will visit the client at home. All clients who agree to visits should also be visited at home.

Should the client decline any component of the Senior Well-being Assessment and demonstrates capacity, the case record should clearly document that reasonable steps were taken to engage the client and appropriate in all circumstances. The client also has the right to decline the CAS visit except in the instances described in the paragraph above. The client may also decline the visit if their initial reason for contacting 311 or DFSS has resolved (e.g., heat has been restored).

If the older adult refuses to cooperate at any stage above, the CAS Respondent should document the refusal and outcome in ECM. Further recommendations for program referrals should also be added in the ECM Determination. DFSS may require notification of the refusal outcome.

Any senior that has a need for services and / or support and is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or self-neglect, and is unable to protect themselves from self-neglect due to their refusal to engage with services, must be prioritized for referral by the CAS Respondent to ICAS, APS, the Public Guardian and / or other relevant community partners.

After the Senior Well-being Assessment

After the CAS Respondent completes the case record in ECM, DFSS Senior Services will review the Well-being Assessment and case record including the CAS Respondent's follow-up recommendations to determine if additional referrals should be made for:

- Community-based services accessed through the City of Chicago's I&A. If the CAS Respondent recommends community-based services, they will contact I&A via email to make the referrals and note the date of referrals in the ECM Case File.
 - Intensive Case Advocacy and Support services (ICAS)
 - ICAS is available through DFSS-funded, community-based organizations for at-risk older adults having trouble living independently. This program provides assessment and intensive case management of the older person to prolong their ability to remain living independently in the community and to encourage them to accept needed community-based services.
 - If the recommendation for ICAS services is approved, ECM will assign by region and / or the DFSS program manager will approve the ICAS provider referral.
 - Adult Protective Services (APS)
 - APS referrals should be made when abuse, neglect, or exploitation is suspected, no later than within 24 hours of the visit.
 - The CAS Respondent will make the APS referral, then follow-up with the DFSS program manager and document in ECM that the APS referral was made.
 - Case closure
 - The Case closure process should be finalized by the DFSS program manager following the completion of an unfounded well-being check or if the presenting situation has been resolved.
 - Cases where three unsuccessful in-person visits have been attempted should be noted, with the attempt dates in the ECM Determination. These cases will be reviewed weekly with DFSS and closure either approved for closure or revisit protocol implemented.

DFSS may request the Respondent to conduct other activities as agreed upon.

Continuous Quality Improvement

The CAS Respondent must have timely and fully documented case records in ECM to ensure service provision and to allow the DFSS program management team an opportunity for quality assurance checks, case consultation, and the identification of gaps in services.

Technology Requirements

CAS Respondents are required to have cellphone and computer access and the ability to be contacted in emergency situations as dictated for emergency CAS service requests and associated follow-up. In addition, CAS Respondents must have computer access to use DFSS' required reporting systems.

Staffing Requirements

CAS Respondents are responsible for determining the number and qualifications of staff needed to provide CAS on a citywide basis and to see CAS clients within the identified timeframe. CAS Respondents must have staff with robust backgrounds in senior services and previous case management experience addressing issues including, but not limited to: self-neglect, frailty and the physical domains of aging, diminished capacity and mental health, assessment of functional status, and knowledge of aging and aging network programs and services.

The applicant's proposed staffing model should provide daily coverage citywide, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday – Friday with on-call availability as needed, as well as coverage that includes supervisory support sufficient to meet program deliverables and address emergency, weather-related, and other urgent CAS Well-being Assessments. The staffing level must always be sufficient to meet the demands of the assigned DFSS caseload. Sub-contracting and the use of contractors may be allowed with prior consent from DFSS to ensure service delivery. The Respondent must provide resumes and/or job descriptions for all staff positions associated with

the administration of the CAS program.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance indicators that may include, but is not limited to:

- 80% of first visits (CAS Well-being Assessment) will take place within one business day for emergency referrals, two business days for urgent referrals, and seven business days hours for standard CAS assessments. These hours are applicable on business days; including up to three visits in 120-hours, excluding weekends and holidays.
- 80% of client activity will be documented in ECM within the required timeframe.
- 80% of clients who need services will be directly referred to I&A via email and/or referred to the DFSS Program Manager for further services.

To assess progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to the following CAS team activities:

- Number of clients referred to CAS
- Number of clients who are referred to and successfully assessed by CAS
- Number of cases closed by CAS provider
- Number of referrals made.

The CAS program can be unpredictable, and targets are an estimate based on previous years data. Actual metrics will be used to continue to establish performance benchmarks and planning for the future. In addition to the output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

Within this framework, DFSS is focused on continuous improvement against these metrics in pursuit of meeting or exceeding those targets over time. We are committed to working with delegate agencies to monitor performance against these indicators, including establishing relevant baselines or benchmarks and sharing data with delegate agencies to assess and understand our progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Senior Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies, including client-level demographic, performance, and service data, and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic (such as race, ethnicity, age, and gender), performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS. The CAS provider will submit monthly reports to the DFSS Senior Services Division.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. CAS providers will be required to enter data into the City of Chicago's ECM System on a daily basis and DFSS will provide training for this system, if necessary. Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at: https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

F. Application guidance for respondents

Basis of Award

- DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: the ability to respond to and provide required services city-wide.
- Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from [January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028]. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to 2 additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. DFSS anticipates that there will be one city-wide award resulting from this RFP up to \$203,000 (per year). This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the CDBG must be met.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of selected Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received last funding cycle (2021): 1

Projects funded: 1

Total funding: \$203,000 (per year)

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public, all units of government and sister agencies. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10% percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities, competencies, and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent demonstrates how client and community feedback is incorporated to improve operations (internal and external) • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves. 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates qualified staff responsible for program oversight and supervision • The Respondent demonstrates the ability to ensure records are maintained and fiscal monitoring including operations to ensure oversight • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff, conduct background checks, and handle client complaints and / or concerns • The Respondent has a sound staffing plan that addresses unforeseen staff shortages for direct service staff to avoid service interruptions to clients 	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Respondent clearly understands challenges and critical needs facing the intended population and defines services to be provided that are appropriate to addressing their needs and achieving desired outcomes for the target population <input type="checkbox"/> The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for older adult engagement and crisis management <input type="checkbox"/> The Respondent has an effective approach for engaging all clients referred to the agency from initial referral to case closure <input type="checkbox"/> The Respondent demonstrates strong partnerships and coordination efforts with other community-based resources that can leveraged to serve the target population <input type="checkbox"/> The Respondent provides estimates of clients to be served and strategies to reach hard-to-serve clients and those with cognitive impairments <input type="checkbox"/> The Respondent demonstrates a plan to address public health and weather-related emergencies that can impact older adults and program continuity 	35
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to identify problems in service delivery and inform/improve its services or practices 	20

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has operations to track program performance, management, outcomes, and policies and practices for data analysis. • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store participant and performance data and describes how data is collected, tracked and stored as well as how data is used to support programmatic and/or organizational improvement. <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	
<p>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	10

Basis of Award

DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: the ability to respond to and provide required services city-wide.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Senior Services: Home Delivered Meals (RFP# 10101)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) is seeking proposals from qualified agencies for the provision of high quality, nutritious home delivered meals to eligible City of Chicago older adults. DFSS is seeking proposals from licensed food service establishments in good standing with applicable City of Chicago departments, who have demonstrated experience operating large scale, home delivered meal programs within the City of Chicago and/or cities of similar size. Funding will be awarded to the agency that demonstrates the capacity to:

- Administer and operate the program citywide;
- Prepare and deliver various meal types and diets into the clients' homes;
- Coordinate and manage client information, enrollment, status changes and other activity;
- Provide the associated equipment and supplies for implementing the program; and
- Demonstrate their ability to provide home delivered meals that are responsive to consumer needs and preferences, are culturally appropriate, as well as cost effective.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe,

measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

City of Chicago's Commitment to Good Food

The City of Chicago is committed to improving the health of all its residents, and to promote safe, healthy, and fair work environments for its workforce. It is recognized that the significant buying power of public institutions across the country can reform the food system, create opportunities for smaller farmers and low-income entrepreneurs to thrive.

In September 2017, the City of Chicago adopted a resolution for the implementation of Good Food Purchasing Standards. The purpose of this policy is to make Good Food (defined as “food that is healthy, affordable, fair, and sustainable”) more widely available to all communities in order to promote healthier eating habits, invest in a local, fair economy, and create more well-paying jobs along the food supply chain. The Good Food Purchasing Standards (Standards) emphasize five values: Local Economies, Environmental Sustainability, Valued Workforce, Animal Welfare, and Nutrition.

To implement this policy, the City of Chicago is following the Good Food Purchasing Program, which is a national effort that uses the purchasing power of institutional/program food procurement to create a healthier, more fair food system. DFSS is committed to working with the awarded Respondent and its funders to honor this commitment to the highest degree allowable without comprising pricing, the number of meals served, and staying in compliance with the funding source. Please see **Attachment #9: Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information, Section IIC** for more information.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Senior Services Division is the Senior Services Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the City of Chicago as designated by the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). It is one of thirteen Planning and Service Areas (PSAs) in the state and is part of a vast national network of services and programs that protect the rights and support the needs of seniors to help them live independently in their homes for as long as possible. As the Area Agency on Aging, the Senior Services division provides senior center programming, older adult fitness programs, recreation activities, information and assistance services, benefit counseling, ombudsman, chore services, caregiver support services, nutrition services, and senior employment programs. For further information about these and the other services offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss.

The Senior Services Division priorities include ensuring access to a variety of services to support successful aging; supporting the well-being of individuals through programs that maintain personal independence and well-being; and providing advocacy in order to ensure that the most frail and vulnerable seniors are receiving the best quality of care available and are protected from abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.

B. Program description

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The City of Chicago's Home Delivered Meals (HDM) program provides nutritious meals to older persons (60 years and older) who are frail and/or homebound due to illness, incapacitating disability, or are otherwise isolated. The HDM program is designed to promote the general health and well-being of older adults by addressing the problem of poor nutrition and food insecurity, while promoting recovery from illness and delaying the onset of adverse health conditions that lead to premature institutional (nursing home) placements. For older adults, proper and well-balanced nutrition is especially critical for the maintenance of

health, wellness, and independence. Home-delivered meals are often the first in-home service that an older adult receives, and the program is a primary access point for other home and community-based services.

The Home Delivered Meal program assists older adults (60 years of age and older) to live independently by promoting better health and well-being through improved nutrition, reducing isolation through program coordination with other supportive services which ultimately delay the onset of adverse health conditions that lead to premature residential placement. Additionally, Home Delivered Meals provide a routine well-being/safety check, which sometimes is the only opportunity for routine face to face contact with clients.

All meals are prepared in a licensed and inspected facility in accordance with approved diets and menus which conform to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans for eligible seniors citywide. In order to more widely address the needs of seniors in Chicago, a general healthy lifestyles diet type is served to the vast majority of the clients receiving meals. The General Healthy Lifestyle Diet provides two meals a day that includes one hot or frozen meal and one cold meal to thousands of older adults each year. Special diets, such as Vegetarian, Kosher, Ethnic meals, and Pureed meals, South Asian and East Asian are also provided to help meet the specific dietary needs arising from the health requirements, religious requirements, ethnic or cultural backgrounds of eligible individuals.

The HDM Provider is required to prepare and deliver complete, freshly prepared meals, ready to eat, or frozen prepackaged meals to be reheated to each approved individual client's home, as specified within each diet type. The preparation and delivery of the meals to clients' homes and the associated equipment and supplies is the responsibility of the Delegate Agency.

As outlined in the Older Americans Act, the purpose of this funding includes:

- **Reducing hunger and food insecurity**
 - Food insecurity affects 5.3 million older adults, or 7.3% of the older adult population in the U.S. (Feeding America, 2018).
 - Malnourished seniors have a greater likelihood of experiencing injury, illness, chronic disease, increased hospitalization visitation and duration (Wright, Vance, Sudduth, & Epps, 2015).
 - Seniors facing food insecurity consume fewer calories and nutrients as compared to their food secure counterparts (Gundersen and Ziliak, 2016).
 - Research has found a positive correlation between food insecurity and onset of depression (Feeding America & National Foundation to End Senior Hunger). However, a study completed by Kim and Frongillo (2007), found older adults receiving food assistance were less likely to be overweight and depressed than their counterparts not receiving food assistance.
 - Nationally, 55% of home delivered meal clients report that these meals make up one-half or more of their daily food intake (Administration on Community Living, 2022).
- **Reducing social isolation of older individuals**
 - A 2015 research study found that individuals receiving home delivered meals reported reduced feelings of loneliness (Thomas & Dosa, 2015).
- **Promoting the health and well-being of older individuals**
 - Nationally, 76% of home delivered meal clients report that the home delivered meal program has helped them to eat healthier (Administration on Community Living, 2022).
 - Nationally, 89% of clients report that the home delivered meals program has helped them to continue living independently (Administration on Community Living, 2022).

- **Delaying adverse health conditions**

- The provision of healthy meals and access to nutrition education, as well as other disease prevention programs are important to promoting health, modifying risk, helping to treat chronic conditions, helping to maintain functionality, and reducing health care utilization. The intent is to make community-based nutrition services available to older adults who may be at risk of losing their independence and their ability to remain in the community.
- Research has shown that home delivered meals are a cost-effective way to help keep aging adults in their own home longer, with the average annual cost of nursing homes between \$70,000-\$90,000, as compared to the annual cost of meals delivered to a client ranging from \$1,825 to \$3,285 (2013 Issue of Health Services Research).

In addition to overall program goals highlighted above, this Home Delivered Meals RFP aims to reach the following SMART goals as well:

- **By December 2027, the Home Delivered Meals delegate agency will feature at least one (1) regionally grown fruit or vegetable item per month in its meal provision.**
 - Inadequate consumption of fruits and vegetables is attributed with reduced life expectancy and higher mortality rates (Bellavia et al., 2013).
 - Locally grown produce retains higher levels of Vitamin C than conventional produce (Wunderlich et al., 2008).
- **By December 2027, the Home Delivered Meals delegate agency will increase the frequency of nutrition education distributed from twice per year to four times per year.**
 - Nutrition interventions may improve the physical and mental wellbeing of older adults (Rasheed and Woods, 2013).
- **By December 2027, the Home Delivered Meals delegate agency will increase the number of culturally inspired meals in the general diet offered from 6 to 9 meals per quarterly HDM menu.**
 - A recent study (2021) that focused on strategies to improve the reach and engagement of nutrition programs among older adults, suggests that inclusion of “taste and cultural food preferences are critically important in attracting and retaining racial, ethnic, and cultural minority populations” (Sadarangani et al., 2021).
 - Lack of ethnic menus was identified as a significant contributor to low participation rates in an elderly nutrition program (Choi and Smith, 2004).

Theories of Change

The Social Ecological Model is a theoretical model that focuses on various aspects that can affect overall health. This model focuses on the following levels: individual, interpersonal, community, and environmental levels and the interactions that occur between each level, to tailor and direct a specified intervention, for the best or most desired impact. Following the Social Ecological Model, DFSS’s Home Delivered Meal program aims to focus its intervention on the community and individual levels. At the community level, the Home Delivered Meal program aims to work with the delegate agency to make changes to their procurement and meal planning processes to prioritize utilization of more locally sourced food items and incorporate more culturally relevant meals within its home delivered meal menus. By making these system level changes, DFSS aims to improve the nutrition and variety of its meal program offerings for program participants. In tandem, the DFSS will provide nutrition education material to the delegate agency for distribution, on a quarterly basis, to increase nutritional knowledge through the discussion of healthy eating habits, portion sizes, the importance of fruits and vegetables, to impact the beliefs and attitudes of program participants with the goal of improving individual nutrition-based decision making.

Current State and Priorities for Improvement

The demand for Home Delivered Meals in Chicago remains in an upward trend since the COVID-19 pandemic began. In FY24, the HDM program served over 4 million meals to over 12,000 distinct older adults. To demonstrate the distribution of clients receiving home delivered meals across the city of Chicago, please reference **Attachment #1** of this RFP which shows the distribution of clients that received home delivered meals in FY2024. As of the first quarter of FY2025, over 1 million meals have already been served to HDM clients. The approximate breakdown of clients receiving daily, and weekly meals based on a sample client count of 9,900 active clients as of Q1 2024 is:

- Approximately 8,500 clients (85%) are enrolled in the frozen meal/cold meal program, receiving their meals once a week for three, five, or seven meal units, depending on meal program type
- Approximately 1,400 clients (15%) are enrolled in the hot meal/cold meal programs, receiving their delivery daily, Monday through Friday.

The DFSS Senior Services Division is committed to maintaining HDM meal services for its most vulnerable older adults and meeting the increasing demand for HDM while avoiding a client waiting list. To help accomplish this aim, the selected Respondent is expected to apply cost effective strategies and approaches to food purchasing to help sustain and meet the service delivery needs of the program.

Target Population

In accordance with the Older Americans Act (OAA) 306(a)(4)(A), DFSS must target services to older adults, 60 years or older, in the City of Chicago with the greatest economic and social need, low-income minority older adults, and individuals with limited English proficiency.

Client Eligibility

Individuals eligible to receive home delivered meals include:

- Individuals 60 years of age or over who are frail and/or homebound by reason of illness, incapacitating disability, impaired cognition, or are otherwise isolated;
- The spouse of the older adult, regardless of age or condition, may receive home delivered meals if determined that the receipt of the meal is in the best interest of the frail and/or homebound individual. Individuals of the same sex who are legally married may also receive a meal;
- Individuals with disabilities who are under 60, but who reside in housing facilities occupied primarily by the elderly at which congregate nutrition services are provided;
- Individuals with disabilities that reside at home with an Older Americans Act (OAA) eligible client;
- Additional eligibility criteria may be applied as defined by DFSS.

There are no income thresholds or costs to eligible recipients for home delivered meal service. However, HDM clients are invited to make a voluntary contribution toward the cost of their meals.

Special populations

The selected HDM respondent must provide services for clients, including those with limited English proficiency, and have access to staff with specific language skills that reflect the needs of the clients served or translation services. The selected Respondent may be asked to make reasonable accommodations for clients with disabilities, including American Sign Language interpretation and/or TDD/TTY phone number or other telecommunication devices for the deaf.

C. Program activities and requirements

DFSS will award one provider for Home Delivered Meals (HDM) in the City of Chicago. Home Delivered Meal respondents must be able to meet all of the requirements as set forth in this RFP including but not limited

to:

- Provide home delivered meal services to all areas of the City of Chicago.
- Provide all meal types and diets as specified.
- Work with applicable referring agencies to collect, track, implement, and manage client enrollment information and activity changes.
- Must provide in-person deliveries to client's home. UPS/USPS/FedEx/Uber are not acceptable delivery methods
- Must utilize temperature-controlled vehicles (Refrigerated/Oven/Freezer Equipped) for home delivered meal deliveries
- Obtain and/or utilize a meal delivery tracking and confirmation system for managing route operations and verifying deliveries.
- Meet all other requirements as set forth in the Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information document.
- Subcontracting may be utilized for specific meal diets and/or cuisines. Prior notification to DFSS is required.
- All meal branding must be consistent regardless of approved utilization of subcontractors for specific meal diets and/or cuisines.
- Must have office staff available to answer DFSS and client calls throughout home delivered meal program hours.

Referrals for Home Delivered Meal Services

Home Delivered Meal services referrals are received from external agencies, individuals, and DFSS. Standard and emergency referrals for older adults in need of receiving HDM are generally received through DFSS' Information and Assistant Unit (I&A) and then directed to the appropriate Care Coordination Units (CCU) or Managed Care Organizations (MCO) to conduct an in-home assessment. The CCU or MCO verifies that the eligibility requirements of the HDM program are met and directly communicates and coordinates with the HDM provider to enroll the client into the program. The HDM provider must work directly with the referring agency to initiate services and to track the client's activity within HDM.

HDM Referral Type:

- **Standard Referral:** A standard HDM referral does not involve a level of urgency or emergency.
 - For standard referrals, client enrollment must take effect the next business day or the next delivery day for the route assigned.
- **Emergency Referral:** An emergency HDM referral is completed for clients that are at imminent risk if meals are not provided.
 - These clients are presumed to be eligible before an in-home assessment is conducted and must receive their meals within 24 hours of the referral being made regardless of the meal type (Frozen or Hot) or diet (General, Vegetarian, Pureed, Kosher, South Asian, East Asian) as long as the request is submitted before 3:00 P.M., Monday through Thursday.
 - If the emergency HDM referral is received on Friday and the client has no access to food over the weekend, the meals must be delivered the same day or Monday of the next immediate week.
 - The emergency HDM referral is a short-term program that is only six weeks in duration. In order for the client to continue receiving meals, the client needs to be fully assessed by the applicable CCU/MCO.

The HDM provider must review the information as submitted on the client referral forms to ensure data is complete and work directly with the referring agency to conduct any follow-up as needed. The HDM provider is required to enter the following client-level demographic and assessment data into the client tracking system for all HDM clients which is necessary for the annual preparation and submission of the National Aging

Program Information Systems (NAPIS) Report to IDoA.

The required data fields include:

- Client name
- Address
- Phone number
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Income and poverty level
- Number of individuals in household
- Nutrition risk assessment
- Impairment with activity of daily living
- Instrumental activities
- Other data fields may be required to be entered into the client tracking system as required by DFSS and/or IDOA

Please reference the attachment of the referral form sample with the required fields highlighted in **Attachment #7: HDM Referral Form**.

Meal Requirements, Preparation, and Cycle Menus

The Home Delivered Meal provider must comply with the requirements of the program as specified in **Attachment #2: IDoA Nutrition Program Standards**. Each meal provided must follow the meal pattern developed by the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) and must comply with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Secretary of Agriculture; and provide a minimum of 33 1/3 percent of the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) as established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences allowances. All meals provided must adhere to the following:

Each meal must provide:

- ONE serving lean meat or meat alternative: 3 ounces of edible cooked meat, fish, fowl, eggs, or meat alternative;
- TWO servings vegetables: ½ cup equivalent- may serve an additional vegetable instead of fruit;
- ONE serving fruit: ½ cup equivalent- may serve an additional fruit instead of a vegetable;
- TWO servings grain, bread, or bread alternate, preferably whole grain: for example, 2 slices of whole grain or enriched bread, 1 ounce each or 1 cup cooked pasta or rice; and
- ONE serving fat free or low-fat milk or milk alternative: 1 cup equivalent.

Cycle Menus

There are four seasonal cycle menus per calendar year (e.g., winter, spring, summer, and fall). Each seasonal cycle menu for general and vegetarian diets consists of four weeks of daily food items that repeat three times within one menu cycle over a three-month period. Special diets such as Kosher, Pureed, and South Asian/East Asian meals, may consist of two weeks of daily food items that repeat six times within one cycle menu over a three-month period. A cycle menu for each respective diet must be developed and submitted by the HDM provider directly to DFSS and/or DFSS's registered dietician ***no later than six weeks prior to the beginning of the next menu cycle***.

- Each HDM diet menu must list the nutrient analysis for each meal including calories, carbohydrates, fat, and sodium content;
- Additional nutrient analysis may be required by DFSS;
- All clients must receive the approved menu items, including condiments;
- Meals must be prepared in accordance with the pre-approved seasonal menus and routinely tasted and evaluated for flavor, texture, and appearance with adjustments made as necessary;
- There may be no substitutions of the menu items unless first authorized by DFSS.
- Delegate agency should offer each quarterly menu translated in Spanish or as otherwise specified for program participants.

Nutrition Analysis software is required to ensure compliance with Older American Act, Title III Nutrition Program Standards. The HDM provider will need to have this secured prior to contract implementation and utilize an approved nutrition analysis software to furnish the appropriate information necessary for program menus prior to DFSS dietician approval. A list of available nutrition analysis software can be found here: [USDA Approved Nutrient Analysis Software | Food and Nutrition Service - https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/usda-approved-nutrient-analysis-software](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/usda-approved-nutrient-analysis-software).

The HDM provider must work with a registered dietician to develop and approve menus prior to submission. The HDM provider must also work with the DFSS Consultant Registered Dietician to ensure that any changes or recommendation needed to bring the menus into compliance with the nutritional standards set forth in this RFP are completed in a timely and appropriate manner. The registered dietician may be on staff or serve in a consultancy role.

Once the menus are approved by the DFSS dietician, the Home Delivered Meal provider must make copies of the approved menu and ensure these menus are distributed to all existing and new HDM clients based on their respective HDM diet prior to the start of the new menu cycle. All program participants must be served the approved menu, including the condiments as listed. The home delivered meal provider must notify DFSS of entrée substitutions, dates of service affected, etc. 48 hours prior to scheduled meal deliveries. Should a quarterly menu require multiple substitutions to meals listed, the delegate agency is required to reissue menu to all program participants.

The Home Delivered Meal provider should also include the following information on the bottom of every quarterly cycle menu submitted:

- Applicable nut allergen information (i.e. peanut free facility vs. nut free facility)
- Type of milk (1%) included with all meals
- Delegate agency contact information for further information regarding specific ingredient or menu questions.
- Additional information may be requested by DFSS.

Meal Types:

All HDM meals provided must be produced in a licensed and inspected facility and must be prepared in accordance with approved diets and meal types specified. In addition to the General Healthy Lifestyles Diet, which widely addresses the needs of clients enrolled in the program, special diets, such as Vegetarian, Pureed, Kosher, South Asian, and East Asian meals, are offered to meet the specific dietary needs arising from requirements related to health, religious, or ethnic or cultural backgrounds of individuals. A brief description of the meal types provided through HDM are listed below. For more information regarding the meal types, please refer to **Attachment #9: Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information, Section 1A.1-1A.2**.

The HDM meal types and diets that must be offered are listed below:

- **General Diet (frozen, cold, and hot):** Offers a variety of regular cuisine meals that include culturally and ethnically varied meals.
- **Vegetarian Diet (frozen, cold, and hot):** Offers meatless meals that include eggs, dairy, and fish/seafood.
- **Kosher Diet (frozen):** Follows Jewish dietary framework for food processing, preparation, and consumption.
- **Pureed (frozen):** Offers options for adults who have trouble swallowing. The food is blended or put through a food processor and modified to a smooth, pudding-like consistency.
- **Shelf Stable:** Meals that can be safely stored at room temperature in a sealed container or package that follow the diets listed.
- **Southern Asian Diet (frozen):** Offers Indian and Pakistani meal options.
- **Eastern Asian Diet (frozen):** Offers a blended menu that includes Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese meal options.

Hot, Frozen, and Cold Meal Types:

The majority of HDM program clients are provided two meals a day for either three, five, or seven days a week through the General and Vegetarian Diet. One meal unit is defined as consisting of one individual hot meal and one cold meal, or one frozen meal and one cold meal.

- A “hot meal” is a daily pre-packaged meal delivered hot and ready to eat.
- A “frozen meal” is a pre-packaged hot meal delivered in a frozen state to be reheated in the client’s home.
 - Specialty diets such as Kosher, Pureed, South Asian, and Eastern Asian diets provide one frozen meal for five days a week.
- The “cold meals” are refrigerated and ready to eat.

Reimbursements for meals will be made at the negotiated unit rate for each meal provided.

Shelf Stable Meals:

In preparation for weather related emergencies, civil unrest, clients missing scheduled meal deliveries due to medical appointments, or other unavoidable situations, shelf stable meals will be delivered to all active clients during designated periods throughout the year, as funding allows, to provide nutritional meals. Currently, the distributions are conducted annually or as otherwise specified for five days of meals. Shelf stable meals are a type of meal that can be safely stored at room temperature in a sealed container or package. A shelf stable meal unit consists of two complete meals for each day and are typically provided for a minimum of five days. The two meals together are considered as one unit. Shelf stable meals must be provided for all meal diets including the following special diets: South Asian, East Asian, Kosher, Vegetarian, and Pureed. These shelf stable meals provide five meals. Shelf Stable menus for all diets must be submitted to DFSS dietician and DFSS Nutrition Team for approval prior to distribution. Please refer to **Attachment #9: Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information, Section 1A.4.**

Meal Packaging:

All food must be pre-packaged according to the regulations approved by CDPH. Information on the [Chicago Food Code can be found here](#). All packaging must be firm and sectioned so that food items do not mix; capable of being tightly closed to retain heat; nonporous so that there is no seepage; disposable; built to be stacked for transporting; and each meal must be labeled with a preprinted label that states food items contained, date produced, and heating instructions for oven and microwave. The label must withstand freezing and cooking. For additional information regarding packaging, please refer **Attachment #9: Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information, Section 1C.**

Meal Delivery Protocol

The HDM provider is required to prepare and deliver complete, freshly prepared meals, ready to eat, or frozen pre-packaged meals to be reheated to each approved client's home, as specified within each diet type. The HDM provider must deliver meals to all HDM clients regardless of the address, location, or neighborhood within the City of Chicago. The meal preparation and delivery to client's homes and all required meal components is the responsibility of the HDM meal provider. Based on the current number of meals and clients served, there are approximately 125 routes and 25 vehicles providing services citywide.

Meal deliveries will be made between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M., Monday through Friday and may include weekends as deemed necessary to keep pace with program growth. Upon request from DFSS, the Home Delivered Meal provider must provide a delivery plan for approval by DFSS for all meal programs, within two weeks of notification of contract award. All meals must be delivered into the client's home. No food is to be left outside the door and must be given directly to the client. If the client does not respond, the driver must contact the HDM provider's main office while still at the address of the client to document the situation. The HDM provider must then immediately contact the client by phone. If the client does not come to the door, the HDM provider will still be reimbursed for the delivery. A notice indicating the date and time the delivery was attempted must be left by the driver at the client's location. The HDM provider must provide two-way communication devices to all drivers that will allow for immediate communication between the driver and the Home Delivered Meal provider's central office. The delegate agency must have office staff available to answer DFSS and client calls throughout home delivered meal program hours.

Meal Delivery Vehicles

Home Delivered Meals must be delivered in oven, freezer, and refrigerator-equipped vehicles. The oven, freezer, and refrigerator units in each vehicle must have continuous temperature monitoring in view of the driver to assure proper temperature control throughout delivery. Additionally, to ensure better quality control and compliance to food safety standards, meals must be delivered directly from the HDM provider's facility to the client's home. HDM delivery vehicles must be inspected, cleaned, and sanitized daily to ensure optimal food safety sanitation and temperature adherence.

Delivery Tracking System

The HDM provider must have and utilize a delivery tracking and confirmation system for managing route operations and delivery verifications.

Emergency Plans

The Home Delivered Meal provider must have emergency back-up plans for maintaining services and ensuring client well-being during weather-related and other emergency situations (equipment failure, power outages, staff shortages, flood, etc.). An "emergency" is defined as an event or series of events that place the operational capacity of an agency at risk and/or significantly disrupts client services or places clients at risk. The provider will have a continuity of operations plan. At a minimum, that plan will include a plan for back-up operations should the provider's main business location become unavailable or the ability to prepare and provide meals is interrupted.

In the event of a delivery truck breakdown, the delegate agency must notify DFSS immediately and provide the following information: time vehicle went down, route number, boundaries of the route, when the route will be resumed.

Client Notification

The Home Delivered Meals provider must also have an active client notification plan to communicate any significant service interruptions directly with affected HDM clients. Notification should occur the same day the delay/ interruption is experienced unless otherwise noted.

Client Enrollments, Activity Changes, and Status

New Client Enrollments

Referrals for new clients are sent to the Home Delivered Meal provider by CCUs, MCOs, and DFSS on a daily basis. These referrals are either standard or emergency short term (6 week), referrals. The HDM Provider will enter the information from the referral including client demographic, nutrition risk, other assessment information, and any other required data into the HDM data management software. The client will be assigned to a delivery route and will be provided with the new client enrollment packet.

Client Activity Changes and Status:

The delegate agency is responsible for completing and submitting a daily “No Answer Report” to DFSS Nutrition Team listing the HDM clients that were not available for their scheduled delivery. Clients on the “No Answer Report” require follow up to identify their status (skip, resume, or termination of services). Any changes to the status of clients – i.e., temporary suspension in service (skip), restarting services (resume), and terminations – received by the HDM provider on a daily basis, regardless of if they are submitted by CCUs, MCOs, or DFSS, will be entered into the client tracking system and the requested changes will take effect the next business day or the next scheduled delivery day for the client, unless otherwise specified in the request. Please see **Attachment #9: Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information, Section 1G3** for more details regarding client activity and status changes.

Follow-up with the CCUs and MCOs is required for proper disposition of clients enrolled in the program for both standard and emergency referrals. Standard HDM referrals require participants to be reassessed annually by CCUs and MCOs. Whereas, clients enrolled in the emergency, short term program (6 weeks) require a full assessment by the applicable CCU/MCO prior to the 6-week term to determine continued eligibility. Status and enrollment changes pursuant to this follow-up must be entered into the client tracking system.

Client Engagement and Well-Being

Each delivery presents an opportunity to engage and verify the well-being of clients enrolled in the program. As delivery drivers are expected to have consistent routes (see **Attachment #9: Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information**), relationships can develop over time with their clients. Each social encounter can be a welcome interaction for the older adult, possibly lifting their mood and identifying any unmet needs or challenges the older adult might be experiencing.

In order to help support older adults enrolled in the program to age in place, the HDM provider must have procedures for making referrals to other programs (e.g., heavy-duty chore services, respite care, or caregiver counseling services) based on client needs observed during deliveries. The driver must contact the HDM provider’s central office to inform the agency staff of the nature of the referral needed. If a life-threatening emergency, the delegate agency should direct their staff and /or drivers to immediately call 911. For any other urgent needs, the delegate agency should direct their staff and/or drivers to call 311.

Nutrition Education

The HDM provider is responsible for the distribution of DFSS provided nutrition education material on a semiannual basis, at minimum and other informational materials to older adults enrolled in the program through the meal delivery process. Drivers must be informed about the content of the information being provided to clients so they can appropriately review this information with clients.

Voluntary Contributions

As required by federal funding, all clients must be given the opportunity to voluntarily contribute toward the

cost of their meal. The HDM provider must provide each client with an envelope for their contribution that must be collected by the HDM drivers on a weekly basis. The contributions must be counted, reconciled, and recorded by the HDM provider and reported to DFSS on a weekly basis as part of the supporting documentation submitted with the weekly billing. The HDM provider is responsible for the monthly distribution of voluntary contribution reminder notifications to clients enrolled in the program. The Home Delivered Meal provider will work with DFSS to accept LINK payments as needed.

Client Satisfaction Surveys

DFSS works to solicit client feedback regularly and utilizes this feedback to inform meal provision and program improvement concurrently. The HDM provider must have procedures for obtaining the views of clients about the services they receive and involve clients in the planning and operation of the nutrition services provided. The HDM provider is responsible for copying and distributing surveys to all active clients on an annual basis, minimally. These surveys will be developed in collaboration with DFSS; however, the HDM Provider is responsible for the collection, compilation, and submission of the survey responses as directed by DFSS. The survey results will be reviewed with the delegate agency and areas of concern will be identified and improvement plans developed, as needed, to address these concerns.

DFSS Quarterly HDM Meal Sample Evaluation

To monitor the quality, taste, texture, and appearance of the HDM menu provided, DFSS will require the HDM provider to submit HDM meal samples from each diet provided, on a quarterly basis, to DFSS Central Office for evaluation. The feedback received from this evaluation will be reported back to the HDM provider to make any necessary changes to the specified menu(s) and/ or service delivery.

Complaints or Grievances

The HDM provider must have a written procedure for reviewing, handling, and resolving any complaints from clients or other individuals. Additionally, a complaint log must be kept, recording the name of the client, date, reason for dissatisfaction, and steps taken to rectify the situation by the HDM provider. All complaints, whether they are voiced in-person or over the phone, must be recorded in the client complaint log and submitted to DFSS on a monthly basis or as otherwise directed. DFSS will review the complaint logs submitted to ensure appropriate resolution and follow-up. DFSS will discuss reoccurring issues and/ trends with delegate agency to improve client satisfaction.

Staffing

The HDM provider must have sufficient staff for the preparation, delivery, and administrative functions as outlined in this RFP. Staff must possess the appropriate food service sanitation certificates in accordance with state and local public health codes. Delivery drivers are required to receive food handler training as they are responsible for temperature control and cross-contamination. The HDM provider must have a plan outlining which staff will be assigned to work with DFSS's Home Delivered Meals Program within the structure of their organization as well as the supervisory structure in place to oversee all aspects of the program. The HDM provider must have a Program Manager for the day-to-day management and administrative functions of the program with a minimum of three years of demonstrated management and supervisory experience.

Food service staff must receive training and maintain appropriate certifications in accordance with state and local public health codes. As outlined in the Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act (fG410 ILCS 625), all staff performing food handling duties, are required to receive training and certification as food handlers. Additionally, in accordance with public health codes, all staff working in the food preparation and food service area shall be under the supervision of a Person in Charge (PIC) who holds a Food Service Sanitation Manager Certificate, and who will ensure the application of hygienic techniques and safe practices

in food handling, preparation, service, and delivery are followed. Food safety in-service training, beyond the city and state requirement, should be provided for all food service personnel minimally twice a year.

HDM drivers must have the appropriate driver's license class, insurance, and a clean driving record. Drivers must be assigned to routes in a manner that maintains consistency for clients. The use of rideshare companies (e.g., Lyft, Uber) to deliver meals is not allowed. The drivers must receive training and certification as food handlers and background checks must be performed by the HDM provider as outlined below. Drivers must utilize oven, freezer, and refrigerator-equipped vehicles to deliver meals. All staff interacting with clients must have proper identification that is clearly visible by the client at all times.

Background Check Requirements:

The Respondent will comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, ordinances, policies, procedures, regulations, rules, requirements, and executive orders relating to background checks, fingerprinting, and screening procedures to ensure children and seniors safety. In connection with the Services, the selected HDM respondent will not permit any adult, whether a member of the respondent's staff or otherwise, to be involved with the services or to have direct contact with seniors if any applicable legal requirements would prohibit such adult from having such involvement or contact. Background checks are an allowable cost if it is included in the agency's budget that is submitted to DFSS and an allowable expense by the grantor.

Adults 18 and older, whether they are staff, volunteers, consultants, subcontractors, operators, individuals in family homes, or individuals used to replace or supplement staff who may have direct or indirect contact with seniors or access to their confidential information will need to complete a background check. Delegate agencies are required to administer the following types of background checks for the individuals listed above:

- a fingerprint criminal background check that searches both FBI and state databases.
- a search of the Illinois Sex Offender Registry.
- a search of the Adult Protective Services (APS) Registry, if delivering services in a senior's home; and

In addition to having records of completed checks available during DFSS monitoring visits, delegate agencies also need to have written policies on background checks that should include:

- An appeal process for individuals who dispute the findings of their background check.
- A policy to address comingling of services if your service location includes programming serves for seniors or children.
- A policy on conditional employment while an employee awaits results of their background check.

Failure to provide evidence of a background check completion may result in default and possible termination of your agreement with DFSS.

Health and Safety Compliance

The HDM provider must comply with applicable provisions of federal, state, and local laws regarding the safety and sanitary handling of food, equipment, vehicles, and supplies used in the storage, preparation, service, and delivery of meals to older adults. The HDM provider must have a written quality control system which assures that the highest possible standards of cleanliness will be maintained in compliance with CDPH codes relative to the facility as well as the handling, processing, packaging, sorting, and delivery of the food. The facility must meet health and safety regulations and submit current health inspection reports for review, including any follow up reports to indicate compliance with food safety requirements. The HDM provider must secure the services of an independent licensed laboratory to perform pathogenic organism analyses on at least four different frozen meal diets, two different cold meals, and two different hot meals on a quarterly

basis, or as requested by DFSS.

Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP)

An overview of the GFPP Standards is available in **Attachment #8a: Good Food Purchasing Program Standards for Food Service Institutions**. The HDM Provider will be required to participate in the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) and work with the GFPP Team to record and report purchases using the standard GFPP excel spreadsheet (**See Attachment #8c: GFPP Tracking Form**) or equivalent report for a representative period of time (12 months). The baseline assessment will help gain a better understanding of the food being purchased, including who the producers are and their practices, to help determine how the current spend aligns with the goals of the initiative and what actionable steps to take in order to achieve progress. Respondent will be asked in the application questions to discuss this plan.

To ensure GFPP requirements are met, upon award, DFSS will work with the successful respondent to complete a Good Food Purchasing Implementation Plan. The Good Food Purchasing Implementation Plan shall be maintained throughout the duration of the contract. Any amendments to the plan shall be submitted to the DFSS two (2) weeks prior to implementation for review and approval. The original plan and any future amendments shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. How the awarded agency will initially meet or exceed the baseline standard set forth in Attachment 8a for each Good Food Purchasing Standard value category.
 - a. The baseline standard for each value category can be found as follows:
 - i. Local Economies – Attachment #8a- Pages 19-22
 - ii. Environmental Sustainability –Attachment #8a - Pages 23-29
 - iii. Valued Workforce – Attachment #8a - Pages 30-34
 - iv. Animal Welfare – Attachment #8a – Pages 35-39
 - v. Nutrition – Attachment #8a - Pages 40-43
2. If awarded agency cannot initially provide product(s) meeting baseline standard(s), the agency shall outline a plan to improve adherence to meeting the standard(s) by the end of the first year of the contract.

In accordance with the City of Chicago’s Good Food Purchasing Policy adopted in 2017, the successful Respondent will be required to comply with the City’s Good Food Purchasing Standards at the mutually agreed upon level of participation which will not compromise pricing or number of meals provided. DFSS will work with the awarded agency to the extent possible to address any challenges encountered with the GFPP data collection and reporting.

The Good Food Purchasing Program Requirements include the following:

1. Respondent shall be required to submit an annual Food Purchasing Data Report for food products used or supplied during performance of the contract that year. The Data Report will be submitted to the Center for Good Food Purchasing for annual GFPP Assessments.
2. Both the sample and annual Food Purchasing Data Reports must include the following data fields:

Data Field	Description	Example Information
Vendor Name	Name of vendor to whom DFSS is entering into contract	<i>Sysco</i>
Farm Name	Name of farm where product was grown	<i>Driftless Organics</i>
Farm location (city and state)	Location of farm where product was grown or sourced at the city level	<i>Soldiers Grove, WI</i>
Processor/Manufacturer/Wholesaler Shipper/Broker/	Detailed information pertaining to the shipper/processor/manufacture information (any or all of these to the greatest extent possible). Any individual line item may have more than one input here, so please provide any and all growers that line item was sourced from under this contract.	<i>Russ Davis Wholesale</i>
Processing or manufacturing location (city and state)	Location where product was processed or manufactured at the city level	<i>Lacrosse, WI</i>
Brand (if applicable)	Brand name under which product is sold or marketed	<i>Driftless Organics</i>
Product Code	Unique identifying code assigned to the product	<i>35317</i>
Product Code Assignment	System to which product code belongs (ex: UPC)	<i>Internal Classification</i>
Product description	Description of the product or product name	<i>SWEET POTATOES</i>
Pack size	Size of pack in which product was purchased	<i>40# carton</i>
Quantity	Number of units that were purchased	<i>2</i>
Quantity UOM	Unit of measurement corresponding with Quantity field (i.e. CS, EA, LB)	<i>EA</i>
Net weight per quantity (in lbs.)	Weight for each unit that was purchased, in pounds	<i>40 lbs.</i>
Total weight (in lbs.)	Total weight for all units purchased	<i>80 lbs.</i>
Cost per unit (Optional) or Total Aggregated Cost	Cost per unit that was purchased	<i>\$22.40 (THIS IS JUST AN EXAMPLE)</i>
Total cost	Total cost for all units purchased	<i>\$44.80 (THIS IS JUST AN EXAMPLE)</i>

3. Upon award of contract, the agency shall disclose and provide a detailed description of any Local, State, or Federal labor and/or environmental violations for which the awardee has been cited in the last five (5) years.
4. Upon award of contract, the agency shall work with the Chicago Department of Family & Support Services, the Chicago Department of Public Health, and supporting partner organizations to review

and annually update its Good Food Purchasing Implementation Plan in order to continuously work toward a higher score under the Good Food Purchasing Standards and Scoring System.

The Good Food Purchasing Program Standards, the sample GFPP Tracking Form and the Good Food Policy Commitment are found in **Attachments #8a, #8b, and #8c, respectively.**

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

Additionally, as part of the National Aging Network, which supports the work of those who provide assistance to older Americans, delegates are also included in the overall national service coordination and partnership between federal, state, tribal and local agencies seeking to help older adults to live independently in their homes and communities. DFSS is requesting that the delegate agency utilize daily and weekly encounters with HDM clients through the meal delivery and upon program enrollment to engage them on referrals to needed resources.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

Based off of the HDM Client Satisfaction Survey:

- 100% of clients will experience reduced hunger and food insecurity due to participation in the program;
- 95% of clients will experience less isolation by interacting with the delivery driver
- 90% of clients will report their overall health and well-being has improved.
- 90% of clients will report learning health tips from nutrition education and health promotion materials provided.
- 85% or more of clients surveyed report they are pleased with quality of the meals provided.
- 95% of the client demographic and assessment data is entered into the client tracking system (Audit Report)

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

Quarterly Menu

- Number of culturally specific meals included in quarterly menu (Target=9)
- Number of locally grown fruit or vegetables included in quarterly menu (Target=3)
- Number of times the quarterly menus are submitted beyond the submission deadline (Target=0)

Food Safety

- Number of incidents of food borne illnesses (Target = 0)
- Number of quarterly pathogenic organism analyses of food samples reporting positive for Shigella, Salmonella, and Listeria (Target = 0)
- Number of critical violations cited by CDPH during routine Health Inspections (Target= 0)

Food Service Quality

- Number of HDM Entrée Substitutions (Target= Less than 3 times per month)
- Number of reported instances where client(s) receives incorrect meal diet delivery (Target=0)
- Number of reported instances where client(s) receives alternate meal from listed menu item (Target=Less than 25% of total monthly reported issues)
- Number of reported instances where client(s) receives HDM meals without proper meal labels (Target= Less than 25% of total monthly reported issues)
- Number of reported instances where client(s) receives HDM meals with inadequate meal sealing (Target= Less than 25% of total monthly reported issues)
- Number of on time quarterly HDM meal diet samples submitted to DFSS for taste tests (Target=4).

Food delivery

- Number of reported meals left outside of the client's home by the driver (Target = 0)
- Number of reported deliveries made outside of the scheduled delivery day/time, unless previously authorized by DFSS (Target = 0)
- 100% of the clients enrolled to the program as "Emergency Meals" clients receive their meal delivery within 24 hours of the request
- Number of instances where clients report not receiving quarterly menu (Target=Less than 25% of total monthly reported issues)

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, Senior Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract.

The Home Delivered Meals provider will be required to use AgingIs for client tracking, data entry, and reporting. The Home Delivered Meals provider must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS.

The HDM provider will submit weekly invoices that include a summary page listing the breakdown of the number of meals provided by meal type at the contracted unit rates. Additionally, as supporting documentation, the following reports are required to be submitted along with billing:

- Clients who received meals by “Meal Program Code,” including the number of meal units provided, the amount of the contributions collected, and the total number of clients for each program
- Shelf Stable Weekly Billing Report
- No Answer Report- Shelf Stable Meals
- Clients placed on "skip" (temporary suspension) *
- Clients “canceled” *
- Clients “terminated” *
- Clients “resumed/reinstated” *
- New clients added*
- CCU/MCO activity report

*These reports must also be submitted weekly to the CCUs/MCOs as directed by DFSS

In addition to the reports listed above that are included with the invoices submitted, the HDM provider must generate reports which include, but are not limited to, those listed below. Brief descriptions of the reports are available in the [Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information](#) document.

- Client No Answer Report
- Meals Served Report
- Clients Served Report
- Short-Term (Emergency) Program Client Report
- Submission of draft menu cycles are received by quarterly due dates
- Evidence of the submission of quarterly food samples for lab analysis by quarterly due dates

These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City’s Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

F. Application guidance for respondents

Respondents are strongly encouraged to read the following attachments listed below:

- Attachment #1: Distribution of HDM Clients Served by Zip Code
- Attachment #2: IDoA Nutrition Program Standards
- Attachment #3: Breakdown of Meals Provided by Diet
- Attachment #4: Food Specifications for Cycle Menus
- Attachment #5: Menu Planning Standards for Nutrition Providers
- Attachment #6: Sample Menu General Diet
- Attachment #7: HDM Referral Form
- Attachment #8a: Good Food Purchasing Program Standards
- Attachment #8b: Good Food Policy Commitment
- Attachment #8c: Good Food Purchasing Program Tracking Form Sample
- Attachment #9: Home Delivered Meals Supplemental Information

All RFP Respondents **MUST** complete and submit the following attachments with their application:

- Attachment #10: Home Delivered Meals Cost Proposal
- Resumes, certifications, and any special licenses for staff involved in the Home Delivered Meals Program
- Staffing chart that provides the number of line staff, supervisors, and other staff assigned to the project.
- Copy of the most current full Public Health Inspection Report for agencies

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from October 1st, 2025- December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may grant up to two extensions to this contract, each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that the award will be approximately \$17 million for the first year, which includes approximately \$15.5 million in federal and state funding through the Area Plan grant from HHS and IDOA for each fiscal year, October 1st through September 30th and \$1.8 million from the CDGA funding source as well as other funding sources made available. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding from the Area Plan as well as other funding sources. DFSS anticipates funding 1 agency. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Area Plan funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS, the ACL, and IDOA must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

Price Increases and Modifications:

Meal Unit Rates will remain the same throughout the first 12-month period of the contract term. No more than three months (by July 1st) prior to the beginning of each contract renewal for the Area Plan fiscal year (which starts in October and goes thru the following September). The agency may request an adjustment to the meal unit rates based on the average Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) as issued by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. city average, subgroup "All Items". If the price increase request is not submitted within this timeframe, the agency will not be entitled to a price adjustment for the upcoming year. The effective dates of the adjustment, if approved, will be the starting period of budget term.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received:	1
Projects funded:	1
Range of funding:	\$16 million-\$17.8 million
Total funding:	\$17.8 million
Year of Prior RFP:	2021

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public, all units of government and sister agencies that are licensed as food service establishments. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Respondents must meet the following criteria:

- Respondents must be licensed and inspected food service establishments that have experience operating a home delivered meals program preferably for older adults.
- Proposals that do not provide citywide meal delivery will not be considered.
- Only proposals with “in person” delivery systems into the client’s home will be considered (No drop ship delivery methods).

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a city contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the city will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<u>Community involvement</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group.	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves. 	
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight and management. • The Respondent demonstrates organizational expertise and capacity to operate HDM meal program. • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support the collection and accounting of voluntary client contributions. • The Respondent demonstrates capacity to provide meal diets, meal type, and meal frequency, as described. • The Respondent demonstrates capacity to provide emergency meals within the required timeframe. • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls. • The Respondent conducts regular training/ continuing education and has a consistent method to on-board new staff. • The Respondent has the facility and equipment to support program operations both routinely and during a variety of emergencies including but not limited to public health, weather, power failures, vehicular breakdowns, and employee absences. • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key client and performance data. • The Respondent identifies a nutritional analysis software program it intends to use or has outlined an alternative method of performing nutritional analysis. • The Respondent adequately describes its menu creation and approval process. 	<p>35</p>
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided that are appropriate to addressing the needs of and achieving desired outcome goals for the target population. • The Respondent’s proposed program is aligned with DFSS’ current program model for home delivered meals and the requirements as specified in the RFP, including the size of the meal preparation facility, the quality and quantity of the equipment being proposed, storage, the client enrollment and tracking process, and food delivery plan. • The Respondent demonstrates appropriate expertise, knowledge, and experience in food preparation and delivery services. • The Respondent has an effective process for identifying and addressing seniors in need of additional services and assistance. • The Respondent demonstrates adequate client service capacity. • The Respondent has an effective approach for facilitating and tracking daily HDM enrollments, client activity changes, program paperwork, and reports. • The Respondent has an effective approach for nutrition education dissemination. • The Respondent demonstrates their ability to participate and support the City of Chicago’s Good Food Purchasing Program Implementation Plan. 	<p>30</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent identifies an automated delivery confirmation technology that it will use for the purposes of tracking deliveries. • The Respondent demonstrates quality assurance processes. 	
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent demonstrates how they will meet the specific needs of the target population. • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to ensure food safety and quality control. • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to ensure HDM data entry and reporting accuracy. 	15
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent has established auditing activities and experience • The Respondent proposes reasonable meal unit rates for all meal diets and types • The cost proposal supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	15

Basis of Award

DFSS will award one delegate agency the Home Delivered Meals program contract. As discussed in the RFP, the delegate agency is able to request to subcontract for specific diets and/or cuisines, subject to DFSS' approval. In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Senior Services: Intensive Case Advocacy and Support for Vulnerable Older Adults (ICAS) (RFQ# 10133)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

Karen N. Kolb, Manager, Senior Services, DFSS

Phone: 312-743-1985

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Intensive Case Advocacy and Support (ICAS) for Vulnerable Older Adults program supports highly vulnerable older adults to live independently in their homes and communities for as long as possible. ICAS is assigned to address possible self-neglect, home safety issues and other barriers that make aging-in-community difficult as well as to mitigate future risks and defer residential placement as appropriate. The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) seeks to provide services through delegate agencies in eight regions across the city.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides services and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Senior Services Division is the Senior Services Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the City of Chicago as

designated by the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). It is one of thirteen Planning and Service Areas (PSAs) in the state and is part of a vast national network of services and programs that protect the rights and support the needs of seniors to help them live independently in their homes for as long as possible. As the Area Agency on Aging, the Senior Services division provides senior center programming, older adult fitness programs, recreation activities, information and assistance services, benefit counseling, ombudsman, chore services, caregiver support services, nutrition services, and senior employment programs.

The Senior Services Division priorities include ensuring access to a variety of services to support successful aging; supporting the well-being of individuals through programs that maintain personal independence and well-being; and providing advocacy to ensure that the most frail and vulnerable seniors are receiving the best quality of care available and are protected from abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.

B. Program description

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The Intensive Case Advocacy and Support (ICAS) for Vulnerable Older Adults program supports highly vulnerable older adults age 55 and above to live independently in their homes and communities for as long as possible. By the end of the ICAS intervention, based on the ICAS Assessment, Individual Care Plans, and delegate support, clients will show improvement in their situation in regard to the initial referral if the issue has not been completely resolved. The ICAS process includes, but is not limited to:

- Regular visits with ICAS providers to address issues identified
 - o Encounters every 30 days or less contingent on the severity of the case, which may require more frequent visits
- An Individual Care Plan developed, and progress discussed with DFSS staff during monthly case management meetings. An improvement in client situation as evidenced by:
 - o Reduction of the Risk Assessment score
 - o Accomplishment of the Individual Care Plan goals
 - o Engagement of other community partners to support client post-intervention
- Building of ongoing client relationship evidenced by chart notes and client/provider encounters.
- Reduction of the factors that are contributing to their situation, such as
 - o Mitigation of any physical and/or mental barriers that may contribute to self-neglect
 - o Support to address food insecurity
- Creation and convening of multi-disciplinary teams with relevant partners to address challenging cases and collaborate on client care and oversight

Current state and priorities for improvement

According to the 2018 American Community Survey, approximately 49% of the 465,426 seniors ages 60 and above in Chicago are living alone, including 39,250 ages 85 and above. Many older adults live independently without assistance; however, some older adults lack the ability to maintain their own safety due to physical or mental health issues – others may fall into a state of self-neglect. The ICAS program supports highly vulnerable older adults to live independently in their homes and communities for as long as possible by addressing issues and other barriers that make aging-in-community difficult. The goal also includes mitigation of future risks and deferment of residential placement as safe and appropriate. Support offered by ICAS include frequent check-ins by the ICAS provider staff and referrals to other Older Americans Act-funded services, including heavy-duty chore services, home delivered meals, homemaker services, caregiver support, benefits such as social security and Medicare, legal services and other services as deemed relevant and appropriate.

DFSS seeks delegate agencies to deliver ICAS services by providing trained workers who will conduct timely in-home face-to-face assessments of each individual’s unique needs, develop an Individual Care Plan to resolve presenting problems and support the safety and health of the client, and execute the plan by intervening and advocating on the client’s behalf. These agencies follow the client until identified supports are put in place to assist the client, the client moves into another setting, or until the client declines further assistance.

DFSS expects ICAS delegate agencies to implement a person-centered approach that respects the client’s view of the circumstances and seeks informed consent, where possible, before any interventions can be implemented. ICAS caseworkers should build a relationship with the client, encourage them to be involved and to intervene on their own behalf. Successful relationships take time to build and require many visits before improvements are seen in a client’s health, well-being, and home condition.

To reflect the multi-disciplinary challenges often faced by at-risk older adults, DFSS anticipates more collaboration between agencies in complex cases with significant risks. Delegate agencies will develop a collaborative approach for such cases to cement an Individual Care Plan that assists the client. Collaborating parties may need to move fluidly between planning, investigation, casework, and evaluation stages as the case is onboarded, progresses, and moves toward closure.

DFSS Senior Services Division utilizes the Enterprise Case Management System (ECM) to document ICAS program activities. This assessment and reporting tool is paramount to identifying risks during case visits, creating a care plan, and ensuring the client receives holistic interventions to help manage their situation. DFSS uses ECM to assist delegate agencies to identify any barriers to program participation and adopt the most effective approaches to engaging at-risk older adults. Successful delegate agencies will fully adopt ECM to document outcome-based practices on behalf of the vulnerable older adults we serve. Overall, ECM is used to assess performance benchmarks, measure program success, and make any needed changes to the program.

Target Population

ICAS targets highly vulnerable older adults (age 55 and above) who are often in greatest social and economic need, living alone in a state of self-neglect, at risk to themselves or others, or who have difficulty in managing their own care and safety. Respondents will position their application(s) for a specific ICAS Region (as defined below). Respondents must submit one application for all regions, and a separate budget per region in compliance with the City of Chicago’s eProcurement guidelines.

The target population for this RFP is individuals age 55 and above. Respondents may apply to one or more of the following eight ICAS Regions:

ICAS Region	Community Areas
ICAS Region 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edgewater • Lincoln Square • Rogers Park • Uptown • West Ridge
ICAS Region 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albany Park • Dunning • Edison Park • Forest Glen • Irving Park

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jefferson Park • North Park • Norwood Park • O'Hare • Portage Park
ICAS Region 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake View • Lincoln Park • Logan Square • Loop • Near North Side • Near South Side • Near West Side • North Center • West Town
ICAS Region 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin • Avondale • Belmont Cragin • East Garfield Park • Hermosa • Humboldt Park • Montclare • North Lawndale • South Lawndale • West Garfield Park
ICAS Region 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archer Heights • Armour Square • Bridgeport • Brighton Park • Clearing • Douglas • Fuller Park • Gage Park • Garfield Ridge • Grand Boulevard • Hyde Park • Kenwood • Lower West Side • McKinley Park • New City • Oaklawn • Washington Park

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Elsdon
ICAS Region 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicago Lawn • Englewood • Greater Grand Crossing • West Englewood • West Lawn • Woodlawn
ICAS Region 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashburn • Auburn Gresham • Avalon Park • Beverly • Burnside • Calumet Heights • Chatham • Mount Greenwood • South Chicago • South Shore • Washington Heights
ICAS Region 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Side • Hegewisch • Morgan Park • Pullman • Riverdale • Roseland • South Deering • West Pullman

Services for All Senior Populations

The selected Respondent must provide services for all senior clients, including those of various languages, with proficiency, and have access to staff with specific language skills that reflect the needs of the clients served and/or translation of services. The selected Respondent must make reasonable accommodations for clients with disabilities, including American Sign Language interpretation and/or TDD/TTY phone number or other telecommunication devices for the deaf, and accessible facilities for individuals with physical disabilities.

C. Program activities and requirements

ICAS provider agencies receive referrals for intensive case management from DFSS following an initial in-home Senior Well-being Assessment of the individual’s needs conducted by the Case Advocacy and Support (CAS) team. The ICAS providers will conduct an ICAS Assessment upon client referral.

During the entire ICAS program, the DFSS Senior Services Division and the ICAS providers must communicate throughout the process and work together to:

- Determine the needs of the client.
- Plan achievable goals and a person-centered Individual Care Plan with the client.
- Identify and engage collaborating agencies.

- Implement the Individual Care Plan.
- Provide documentation on cases within agreed upon time frames.
- Close the case upon meeting the goals of the client, or if the client is non-responsive to assistance support plan next steps.

Referral & Comprehensive Assessment

Upon referral from DFSS, the ICAS provider will:

- Visit and verify the client’s safety and need for assistance within two business days, unless an emergency referral, in which case the visit will be done within one business day.
- Conduct the ICAS Assessment and document all visits in ECM within one business day.
- Assess the capacity of the client using standardized tools to understand and track cognition and associated risks.
- Interview the client and discuss his/her safety, health, and well-being.
- Obtain the client’s view and understanding of the situation and the overall impact to their safety, health, and well-being.
- Research background information, referral history, responses, confer with collateral reports, and previous attempts and actions taken to gain a complete understanding of the older adult and any corresponding contributing factors impacting the client’s ability to live independently. This may require communication with partner entities listed at the end of this section.
- Establish the facts to provide a description of the capabilities and risks due to client’s failure to thrive.
- Regularly visit the client’s home and build a relationship with the client while assessing the risk, safety, care, and support of the client (the frequency of visits is informed by the Comprehensive Assessment and the Individual Care Plan).

Care Plan & Referrals

The purpose of the planning portion of the ICAS program model is to determine which services would resolve the problem and help establish and maintain the referred client’s well-being, and also to identify and engage potential partner agencies that will collaborate to support the long-term plan for living independently in the community. Ideally, this will allow the individual to remain living independently in their home. The planning phase should include, but is not limited to:

- Utilizing the ICAS Assessment to help determine priorities of interventions and services that may solve the key problems the client is facing.
- Meeting with the client regularly to develop a person-centered Individual Care Plan that meets the client’s needs, including identification of next steps and outcome goals.
- Entering into ECM the Comprehensive Assessment, Individual Care Plan, case notes, and updates within one business day of each contact (successful or not) with the client and/or any other party associated with the client’s case in the ECM system.
- In complex cases with significant risks, DFSS expects a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency approach to share information and agree on the steps to minimize the impact on the client. In these cases, DFSS may act as a broker or resource to expedite the coordination, scheduling, and delivery of services as necessary (please refer to list of potential partners at the end of this section).

Case Management & Care Plan Implementation

After a relationship has been established with the client and an Individual Care Plan (including outcome goals) has been developed, the ICAS provider will implement the plan. During the implementation phase, the ICAS provider will conduct follow-up casework activities to protect the client’s health and safety, reduce social isolation, increase independence, and leverage the resources of relevant partners as needed. The implementation period is guided by the Individual Care Plan’s goals. ICAS providers are expected to interact with their assigned clients regularly until their identified issues have been addressed and/or they are non-

compliant and/or their situation has shifted (see Reasons for Closure). Implementation should include, but is not limited to:

- Client-focused actions:
 - Support the individual and assist them in reducing any negative impact on their own well-being and on others, including an Individual Care Plan that describes how the ICAS provider will provide services.
 - Determine which interventions may be required. Note: Interventions that support and monitor routine daily tasks (i.e., homemaker or heavy-duty chore services) may be helpful but are not effective in the long-term in isolation. They must be part of an integrated, multi-agency plan monitored by the ICAS worker and DFSS.
 - All casework and actions must be appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances of the case. These should be formulated, entered into ECM within one business day, and any questions referred to DFSS Senior Services Division.
- Partner-focused actions:
 - Establish partnership agreements to provide services as appropriate (please refer to the list of potential partners below).
 - Work with the client and/or support network to complete agreed upon goals as soon as possible.
- Implementation for clients lacking capacity:
 - Conduct or refer for neuropsychological (cognitive capacity) evaluations as needed. Agencies may plan for mental health petitions and writ of examination in cases of acute mental status changes or mental illness.
 - Provide ongoing support in line with the client's mental capacity to assist with relevant decisions as appropriate.
 - Assist in the selection of a reliable Power-of-Attorney for health and finance if self-neglect is affecting the client's finances or health care and the client has capacity. In some instances of self-neglect, a conservatorship or guardianship may be required.
- Quality assurance:
 - Promote the safety of the client and community, with endorsement of the client's right to self-determination, as appropriate, given individual circumstance and capacity.
 - Enter case notes and updates in the ECM system within 24 hours on business days of each contact with the client or any other party associated with the client's case, if successful or not.

Case Closure

As is standard in Care Management, variable time limitations exist for cases. It is not within our scope to have the client receive services indefinitely. In general, it is expected that cases will remain active for less than one year. For cases requiring further services and/or supervision, DFSS will be notified and a Care Conference will be convened to discuss the case. There are several possible ways to close a case in the ICAS program: 1) when the client's needs have been stabilized, 2) when the client transitions to other providers or when the client moves into another setting, or 3) the client declines further assistance, or passes away.

1. Client needs have been stabilized:
 - A. Individual Care Plan goals have been achieved.
 - B. Client is stabilized to a manageable plateau and can continue to live independently with supports.
2. Client transitions to other providers:
 - A. As a case progresses it may be necessary for other care providers to step in (e.g., hospice, transition to Community Care Program, etc.). In these instances, the ICAS provider will convene a Care Conference with DFSS and other relevant collaborators to support client goals during transition.

- B. Cases will be closed when the senior transitions to an assisted living, nursing home, or other residential care facility.
- 3. Client declines further assistance or passes away:
 - A. Clients who persistently and adamantly refuse ICAS services may be referred to Adult Protective Services, the Cook County Guardian or the State Guardian for evaluation.
 - B. Clients who die will be closed immediately unless suspicions are present regarding the death of the client in which case it will be referred to DFSS and Adult Protective Services.

DFSS may require the Respondent to conduct other activities and duties as agreed upon.

Suggested Staffing

A successful ICAS provider should be staffed with care management professionals with extensive experience working with older adults, knowledge of community resources, and proficient in serving older clients who are resistant to services.

The ICAS provider is required to assign and maintain for the duration of the services, a staff of qualified personnel to perform the services. The ICAS provider will retain and make available to the City, State, and Federal agencies governing funds provided under this Agreement, proof of certification or expertise including, but not limited to, licenses, resumes, and job descriptions.

Staff may include management and supervisory staff, case managers, and support staff to provide quality programming and services. It is allowable for employees to have other roles within the organization, as appropriate, and as it does not impede on their dedicated time to the ICAS program.

Other roles are expected to be complementary to this program:

- **Program Coordinator/Director:** The ICAS provider should identify a Program Coordinator/Director who will be the main contact to DFSS and will manage program operations. This role is required at least 50% FTE, if a Respondent applies for four or more regions.
 - o The Program Coordinator/Director will be responsible for supervising program staff and have overall accountability for service delivery. The position may not be vacant at any time during the contract period.
 - o It is preferred that this staff have a master's degree in a social science field: Social Work, Gerontology, Psychology, Counseling, Psychiatric Nursing, or Rehabilitation Counseling.
 - o It is preferred that this staff have at least five years related social service, counseling, and administrative experience.
- **Case Managers:** The Respondent should identify a Case Manager to administer comprehensive assessments, engage and foster relationships with clients, create plans of care, and identify and educate clients about additional resources.
 - o It is preferred that this staff have a master's degree in a social science field: Social Work, Gerontology, Psychology, Counseling, or similar.
 - o The person must be licensed, registered, or certified by the State of Illinois to possess that license, registration, or certification.

Background Check Requirements:

All selected Respondent staff, consultants, subcontractors, and volunteers with access to confidential information who have direct or indirect contact or interact with seniors must meet the following requirements:

- Fingerprint/criminal background check (FBI, State, and Sex Offender). For HDM drivers, the Illinois Adult Protective Services (APS) registry must also be checked.
- Fingerprint/criminal background check is required at the time of hire and every five years after; the APS registry must be checked annually.
- Must be completed and cleared prior to hire date.

Recommended Partnerships for ICAS Provider Agencies

ICAS provider partners in assessment, planning, and implementation may include but are not limited to the following:

- Chicago Police Department
- Chicago Fire Department
- Chicago Department of Housing
- Chicago Department of Buildings
- Chicago Department of Public Health
- Cook County and/or State Guardians office
- Visiting Nurse Association
- Veteran’s Administration
- Entities and individuals providing care support (including client neighbors, friends, and family)
- Caregiver supports
- Public benefits
- Informal network of community supports and influencers including Aldermen, faith-based and community resources, as relevant
- Formal caregiver agencies (e.g. home care)
- Mental health services
- Animal Care and Control
- Primary care health provider or psychiatrist
- Pest control companies
- Landlords
- Others DFSS Services as appropriate.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and resources within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients.
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client’s next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

Additionally, as part of the National Aging Network, which supports the work of those who provide assistance to older Americans, delegates are also included in the overall national service coordination and partnership between federal, state, tribal and local agencies seeking to help older adults to live independently in their homes and communities.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 80% of cases demonstrate improvement over case interaction
- 80% of cases show client situation addressed as outlined in the Individual Care Plan
- 80% of cases have at least one monthly encounter with the client, as dictated by the Individual Care Plan

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 90% of opened cases create a Care Plan
- 90% of cases show progress achieved on Care Plan
- 90% compliance of delegate agency in achieving ECM reporting standards
- 90% of reports filed on time as determined by DFSS
- 11 annual (roughly monthly) outreach community meetings conducted with partners

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Senior Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in ECM as specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doi/supp_info/is-and-it-policies.html.

F. Application guidance for respondents

DFSS requests applications from Respondents that can serve the targeted regions. Awards will be made by region. Respondents may apply to one or more regions. Respondents who intend to respond to more than one region may submit one application that clearly denotes the proposed regions they are applying for with separate budgets for each region. The evaluation score received for the one application will be applied to each of the applicable regions the applicant is applying for. Respondents who propose to serve more than one region may ultimately receive an award for all, some, or none of the regions proposed.

Respondents must also submit all relevant resumes and job descriptions for each proposed program positions as identified in the RFP.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

Please see the list of ICAS Regions in the **Target Population** section of the RFP.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to 2 additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. DFSS anticipates funding 8 regions at \$41,875 (per region, per year). This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and the CDBG must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received (2021):	5
Projects funded:	5
Range of funding:	\$41,875 per region, per year
Total funding:	\$335,000 per year

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public, all units of government and sister agencies. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10% percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a city contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the city will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent is and/or is working to become responsive to the community it seeks to serve. • The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery as well as seeks community/client input to better inform program improvement and overall operations. • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight and management • The Respondent has organizational competencies, capabilities, and infrastructure to serve the intended target population • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has systems in place to address staffing shortages and/or emergency response situations to support continuity of services 	20

<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly addresses core components of program requirements and describes services to be provided that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population. • The Respondent effectively identifies and provides specific examples of the challenges and critical needs of the target population. • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by evidence based (studies, evaluations, primary and/or secondary) research and/or aligns with best practices that demonstrate program effectiveness. • The Respondent clearly identifies the region(s) and estimated clients to be served and effectively asserts why it is the agency well-suited and/or best equipped to serve the selected area. Respondent also demonstrates knowledge of community resources and/or strategies to support awareness of area supports. • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way • The Respondent effectively describes contingency plans to address a range of emergencies (public health, weather, etc.) in support of safety and continuity of services. 	<p>35</p>
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to identify problems in service delivery and inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has operations to track program performance, management, outcomes, and policies and practices for data analysis. • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store participant and performance data and describes how data is collected, tracked and stored as well as how data is used to support programmatic and/or organizational improvement. <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	<p>20</p>
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program • The Respondent has system for record management and fiscal monitoring and controls in place • The Respondent has an auditing process and procedure in place • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	<p>10</p>

Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve all populations as specified in the language above. Proposals will be evaluated separately by region.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Workforce Services: Employment Preparation and Placement Program (EPP) (RFP# 10102)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

Trenity Dobbey, Manager, Workforce Development

Phone: 312-746-8218

Email: Trenity.Dobbey@cityofchicago.org

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Employment Preparation and Placement program (EPP) RFP seeks organizations with a proven track record delivering wholistic workforce services, including career pathway navigation, comprehensive case management, and supportive services that prepare Chicago residents for employment opportunities at or above the City's minimum wage. Selected respondents will prioritize services to residents with significant barriers to employment, including system-impacted individuals with arrest and conviction records, returning residents transitioning home from incarceration, jobseekers with limited English proficiency, and people at imminent risk of homelessness.

A. Organizational Background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a wholistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Workforce Services Division (WSD) is committed to mobilizing innovative workforce solutions tailored to the distinct challenges faced by vulnerable Chicago residents. With a focus on a human-centered service methodology, the division is advancing efforts to deliver high-quality workforce services at the community level in partnership with organizations whose workspace and training environments are both healthful and supportive. By offering a suite of workforce services, including career navigation, industry-specific job training, and transitional jobs/work-based learning opportunities, the WSD addresses the workforce needs of adults (18 and older) residing in high promise community areas.

The WSD rigorously evaluates its initiatives to ensure they effectively tackle barriers to economic advancement and enhance participants' overall well-being. The division actively seeks partnerships with employers, community-based organizations and nonprofits with a proven track record of aiding Chicago's most vulnerable job seekers.

B. Program Goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The goal of the DFSS EPP program is to connect Chicago's most vulnerable residents to career navigation and supportive services to help them identify and overcome their barriers to employment and prepare them for full-time (defined as at least 35 hours per week) permanent job opportunities with wages at or above the City of Chicago's minimum wage.

Returning residents, jobseekers with limited English proficiency, and those at risk of homelessness encounter distinct challenges in securing and retaining employment. DFSS seeks delegate agencies to provide comprehensive services, including job readiness training, soft-skills development, career navigation, job placement, and retention support. Retention support, potentially involving additional job placements, is crucial to achieving sustained employment for the DFSS priority populations.

With this RFP, DFSS seeks to fund EPP models that serve low-and-moderate-income individuals who are at risk of homelessness, residents whose limited English proficiency restricts their access to employment opportunities, system-impacted individuals, returning residents, and other vulnerable Chicagoans with significant barriers to employment.

DFSS seeks to partner with community-based organizations that have:

- Expertise using career navigation to create pathways to meaningful careers for vulnerable Chicagoans
- Experience and evidence/data serving vulnerable residents successfully with favorable employment placement and retention outcomes
- Evidence of robust employer partnerships and relationships with hiring managers that lead to quality job opportunities
- Currently funded workforce programming options for vulnerable residents in the city of Chicago

Best Practices

The DFSS EPP model centers on the premise that job training and skill development programs tailored to the needs of participants, complemented with career navigation services administered within a trauma-informed and supportive environment and created in partnership with industry stakeholders, will enhance work readiness, improve professional capabilities, and lead to successful employment outcomes for participants.

The following best practices empower EPP program providers to address the evolving needs of participants, cultivate resilience, and optimize successful employment placement.

- **Targeted Engagement and Outreach:** Large scale outreach is critical to raise awareness, generate interest, and boost enrollment. However, targeted outreach initiatives focused on the target audience’s communication needs ensures the most vulnerable residents are included in the program.
- **Formalized Employer Partnerships:** Successful respondents foster robust partnerships with employers to enhance participant job placement and retention. These partnerships often establish clear expectations through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), creating a structured framework for collaboration and accountability.
- **Job-Readiness Training (JRT) Curriculum:** An effective JRT curriculum uses participant and employer feedback to align with industry trends and technological advancements and accounts for the individualized needs of participants to prepare them for success in the current job market.
- **Efficient Case Management:** Includes client-centered systems and processes that can be adapted for personalized participant support and successful employment outcomes.
- **Proactive Contingency Planning:** Successful respondents develop and maintain contingency plans to ensure program resilience in the face of unforeseen challenges and safeguards against disruptions such as sudden staffing changes, fostering the program's ability to navigate uncertainties effectively.
- **Varied Funding Strategies:** Includes braiding, blending, and sequencing funding to address a participant’s barriers to employment. Securing and maintaining additional funding sources is a strategy, successful respondents often use to sustain and de-risk program finances. (For more information, visit [https://workforcespending.results4america.org/strategies/braid-blend-or-sequence-funding.](https://workforcespending.results4america.org/strategies/braid-blend-or-sequence-funding)) Varied funding streams encourage program resilience and adaptability to evolving needs and opportunities.

Current state and priorities for improvement

In 2024, the EPP delegate agencies enrolled 1,774 clients, exceeding the WSD’s goal of 1,640. Of those enrolled, 1,025 (63%) were placed into employment. The agencies finished the contract year with an 86% retention rate at 30 days and a 51% retention rate at 90 days. In 2023, the EPP delegate agencies enrolled 1,670 clients, reaching approximately 98% of that year’s goal. Of those enrolled, 55% were placed, achieving an 84% retention rate at 30 days and a 52% retention rate at 90 days.

During the next contract cycle, the WSD is committed to the following outcomes:

- Maintaining a +60% employment placement rate by enhancing recruitment efforts to priority populations and matching clients to appropriate job opportunities
- Increasing the percentage of clients achieving the 90-day retention milestone to 55% by offering continuous engagement with participants and their employers and following up with the appropriate interventions to support long-term employment success.

In addition to the above, the WSD is committed to ensuring that workforce services are accessible within communities facing the most significant economic challenges, including Auburn Gresham, Austin, Bronzeville, Chicago Lawn, East Garfield Park, Englewood, Gage Park, Greater Grand Crossing, Humboldt

Park, New City, North Lawndale, Roseland, West Englewood, West Garfield Park, and West Pullman, all of which are characterized by high unemployment rates, as well as a historical legacy of underfunding and disenfranchisement.

Target Population

The DFSS EPP program is intended for Chicago residents who are part of priority populations facing significant barriers to employment. These populations include system-impacted individuals, returning residents, jobseekers with limited English proficiency, and individuals at imminent risk of homelessness. Eligible individuals must be 18 or older, city of Chicago residents, low-to-moderate income, and authorized to work in the United States.

In accordance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), low-to-moderate income is defined as individuals with an annualized family income between 50% and 80% of the area's median income. A table of income limits published by HUD can be found here: <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/doh/general/2024%20Income%20Limits.pdf>

Respondents should acknowledge their organization's primary priority population in their application and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the priority population they intend to serve. Respondents must articulate the unique challenges that prevent successful employment outcomes for the population and describe how the agency's career navigation supports would be sequenced to address a participant's barriers to employment and move them towards the goal of permanent job placement at or above the City's minimum wage.

C. Program Activities and Requirements

Respondents must demonstrate the capacity to execute the following services in their application:

Outreach and Recruitment

Respondents must have well-targeted and robust community outreach and recruitment strategies that engage residents from their selected priority population. Outreach approaches may include non-traditional yet trauma-informed techniques that engage individuals from various backgrounds and experiences. Respondents are encouraged to leverage systems like 2-1-1 Metro Chicago and social media to connect with Chicago residents seeking employment.

Comprehensive Program Orientation, Intake Screening, and Assessment

To ensure participant success, orientation must include a formal review of program eligibility criteria and an outline of the program completion process. Orientation should consist of an overview of the respondent's intake screening and assessment process, including how and why the agency gathers information from clients, as well as the tools they use to identify core needs and gauge program readiness. Common tools include the [O'Net Career Interest Profiler](#), Tests of Adult Basic Education ([TABE](#)), and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems ([CASAS](#)) to measure basic academic skills. This information should inform the development of Individual Employment Plans (IEP) and may be used to track a client's basic skill improvements and progress toward their goals. Individuals deemed unprepared for the program will be appropriately referred to other services. Attendance, conduct, and termination policies should be clearly communicated to participants and documented in case notes.

Comprehensive Case Management

A comprehensive case management system is crucial for participant success. The approach is led by the respondent's Career Navigators and begins with career counseling and the creation of an IEP derived from a thorough assessment of a participant's assets, aspirations, and employment barriers. Case management

personnel (i.e., Career Navigators) are responsible for monitoring participant attendance and performance during JRT and post job-placement, providing ongoing support to ensure job retention and address any concerns raised by employers. IEPs are collaboratively developed and regularly reviewed with the participant, outline clear employment and career goals, and include start and end dates for activities. Effective case management plays a pivotal role in helping participants overcome various obstacles, such as scheduling conflicts, transportation issues, childcare challenges, financial constraints, and motivational concerns. Respondents must show in their application how case management is integrated into their EPP program model.

Job Readiness Training (JRT)

JRT is mandatory and includes critical activities such as job application completion, mock interviewing, and resume development. It may cover various topics, including workplace ethics and behavior, goal setting, proper workplace attire, basic computer skills, networking, effective communication, and conflict resolution, as well as essential soft skills such as teamwork and collaboration, adaptability, problem-solving, and time management. JRT should include training on navigating the Internet for employment opportunities. All participants must maintain a valid email address and resume on file.

Permanent Employment Placement Services

This service involves proactive outreach and engagement with employers in high-demand industries to connect program participants with unsubsidized employment opportunities. Respondents must provide evidence of employer partnerships in their application.

Employment Retention Services

Monthly coaching sessions from enrollment through placement and retention for 90 days are required. Retention support through 180 days is strongly recommended to ensure employment stability. Post-employment follow-up activities may include subsequent job placement assistance in case of unexpected job loss. All retention benchmarks should be verified through pay stubs, employer confirmation (via letter, email, or other correspondence), and, when applicable, the Work Number or IDES (Illinois Department of Employment Security).

Participant Feedback Tools

Selected respondents must utilize a designated tool or system for collecting, analyzing, and incorporating feedback from participants on their experiences. Participant surveys, such as those offered by [Google Forms](#), [Microsoft Forms](#), [SurveyMonkey](#), [Qualtrics](#), [Typeform](#), are a few common tools used to gather this information from participants.

Career Navigator Services

Career Navigators will be the primary contact for participants, starting with outreach and connecting them to recommended support services through a community-based network. They will ensure culturally competent, trauma-informed service delivery, helping participants define career goals and co-create plans to achieve them. Navigators are proactive problem-solvers, working with participants to address both immediate and long-term goals, foster self-esteem, and provide judgment-free support. For priority populations, they will apply a trauma-informed approach using prosocial communication, positive reinforcement, and community support to guide participants toward success. Navigators play a key role in connecting clients to meaningful employment opportunities. These positions will be full-time with no other organizational duties, and respondents must include a copy of the Navigator job description and indicate how many will be assigned to the program.

Career Navigator(s) will be responsible for the following functions under this RFP:

- **Enhanced Engagement and Recruitment:** Navigators must deploy a robust outreach approach employing non-traditional, proactive strategies. They should possess the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from varied backgrounds and experiences. Navigators are encouraged to utilize 2-1-1 Metro Chicago and social media to engage participants from the priority populations effectively.
- **Intake Screening and Assessment for Case Planning:** Navigators are tasked with administering approved intake screening and assessments. These tools are crucial for developing the participant's IEP, identifying clients' strengths, and prioritizing services based on their chosen career pathway and resource needs (e.g., substance use treatment, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), or other mental health services).
- **Expert Career Coaching:** Under participant direction, Navigators will connect and coach clients to services, helping them understand available opportunities to advance their career goals. Navigators will meticulously track referrals to job interviews, further training, education, and skill development opportunities as needed.
- **Employer Partnership and Collaboration:** Work closely with employers to ensure participants receive at least an interview, with the ultimate goal of securing and retaining employment. Navigators will also collaborate with employers to address and resolve any concerns participants may have post-placement, offering support for up to 90 days to ensure successful employment retention.
- **Comprehensive Wrap-around Services and Supports:** Navigators will collaborate with participants to ensure access to a full range of needed services. They will either provide services directly or make referrals through partnership/linkage agreements with other agencies, including transportation assistance. A partnership/linkage agreement refers to a formal arrangement between two or more organizations, agencies, or service providers to work together in delivering services or achieving a common goal. These agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of each party and specify how they will collaborate to meet the needs of the target population. The goal is to ensure that participants have access to a wide range of services that might not be available through a single organization.
- **Participant Progress Summaries:** Navigators are required to provide a written summaries upon confirming 60, 90, and 120 employment retention. This report, documented in Enterprise Case Management (ECM) system (data reporting requirements are outlined in section E below) and included in the participant's case file, must follow an approved template and cover:
 - Program completion status (indicating success or challenges in completing required components)
 - Placement status (indicating success or reasons for any challenges)
 - Retention Status (indicating success or reasons for any challenges)
 - Overview of progress toward measurable objectives
 - Recommendations for continued services

These functions are vital for ongoing program evaluation, ensuring the effectiveness of interventions and tailoring support for sustained participant success.

Some critical areas for services and support that selected Respondents must deliver or have collaborations to address include but are not limited to:

- Mental health services/assessment – e.g., mental health assessments; CBT-informed activities and engagement; social and emotional learning supports
- Education – e.g., engagement with bridge and contextual programming to address basic skills gaps, including reading, math, writing, computer skills, City Colleges or other post-secondary institutions, etc.
- Housing support – e.g., registration for rental assistance and low-cost/affordable housing programs
- Ancillary support – e.g., transportation support; cell phones/access to a phone line; email addresses/access to WIFI; financial literacy and income supports; TANF/SNAP/WIC benefits; food pantries; childcare and legal services; program incentives

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate.

These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support (e.g., accompaniment) to those clients.
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, etc.; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance Measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

Outcomes

- 60% of participants will obtain employment and retain employment for 30-days upon program completion.
- 55% of participants who retained 30 days will retain employment for 90 days.

- 75% of enrolled participants will belong to one of the priority populations (see target population section).
- 75% of participants placed in employment will belong to one of the priority populations (see target population section).
- 100% of participants placed will receive a base hourly pay equal to or above city of Chicago minimum wage.
- 100% of enrolled participants not employed within a year of program completion are referred for additional training and support.

Outputs

- Number and percentage of participants completing JRT (Job Readiness Training): Goal: 80% completion rate for JRT.
- Number and percentage of participants receiving monthly career navigation coaching and supportive services: Goal: 100% of participants receive monthly career navigation coaching and supportive services through employment placement and 90-day retention benchmark achievement.
- Number and percentage of participants who create IEPs: Goal: 100% of participants create IEPs.
- Number and percentage of participants referred for job interviews: Goal: 100% of participants receive referrals for job interviews.
- Number and percentage of participants that completed an interview: Goal: 80% of participants complete at least one job interview.
- Number and percentage of participants successfully placed in employment: Goal: 60% of participants are successfully placed in employment.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

Performance

To ensure effective program delivery and accountability, DFSS requires delegates to meet the following quarterly performance benchmarks throughout the life of the contract:

Quarterly Performance Expectations: Delegates are expected to achieve a 25% quarterly expenditure rate, enrollments, and placements, contributing to an overall program success with a target outcome rate of 75% to 100% over the life of the contract. For example, if a delegate's annual target is 20 enrollments and 12 placements, they should achieve at least 5 enrollments and 3 placements by the end of each quarter. Failure to meet these quarterly benchmarks may prompt a performance review and corrective actions.

Corrective Actions for Underperformance: If delegates do not meet the outlined quarterly performance benchmarks, DFSS reserves the right to initiate the following corrective actions:

- **Targeted Technical Assistance (TA):** Delegates may receive customized targeted support tailored to address specific performance deficiencies. This may include training sessions, strategic consultations, or expert guidance to improve outcomes.
- **Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs):** Delegates may be placed on a structured improvement plan lasting 30, 60, or 90 days. These plans will include clear strategies and objectives for achieving corrective outcomes, with regular monitoring of progress.
- **Funding Adjustments:** DFSS may reallocate, reduce, or defund awards for delegates demonstrating sustained underperformance, including issues of underspending or underutilization, redirecting resources to programs with higher efficacy. For example, if an agency has not achieved 50% of its targets by the close of Q3 (September 30), or if there is evidence of significant underspending or underutilization, DFSS reserves the right to develop and implement a plan to adjust funding allocations, including defunding if necessary. This approach ensures that resources are strategically aligned with program effectiveness and the achievement of overall performance goals.
- **Contract Reassessment:** If underperformance continues despite the implementation of the above-mentioned interventions, DFSS may terminate or reassign the contract to ensure effective program execution and resource optimization.

This framework is designed to enhance program success, optimize resource allocation, and support the overall mission of DFSS throughout the life of the contract.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Workforce Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be required to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. Data must be collected in ECM (Enterprise Case Management) and reports must be submitted in the format and by the deadlines specified by DFSS below:

- Monthly reports are due by the fourth of each month. Monthly reports are completed via an Excel sheet and must capture participant information including but not limited to, client demographics, enrollment date, housing status, placement date, retention status, and hourly wages or salary.
- Additionally, delegate agencies are required to enter participant information into the Enterprise Case Management Version 6.0 (ECM) system. Enterprise Case Management (ECM) reporting requirements include:
 - Using the ECM system for tracking participants from enrollment (assessment and IEP development) through employment placement and retention
 - Billing Coversheets for Enrollments and Placements must be properly documented

- o Entering required data and progress notes into ECM within 48 hours of participant interaction and adhering to required data standards based on the program model as outlined in ECM v6.0

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. DFSS Workforce Services Division’s Enterprise Case Management Version 6.0 (ECM) is the data system utilized to capture participant data from intake to placement and retention. All selected Respondents will use the ECM system to capture required data for workforce services programs. The ECM system is used to improve service delivery and conduct performance-based payments based on enrollments, placements, and retention. Contracted providers will be trained on how to enter data and run reports in ECM, with ongoing training as new program staff are hired and/or when there are changes made within the system. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City’s Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/progs/tech.html>.

F. Application Guidance for Respondents

Budget Submission Requirements:

Respondents must complete the provided Award Calculator as part of their proposal. The calculator will auto-populate the total award amount, ensuring alignment with the program’s performance-based cost standardization protocol, reimbursement structures, and DFSS funding expectations. This tool will be used to determine the proposed award amount and prepare a detailed budget based on the calculated total. Respondents must submit both the completed Award Calculator and the detailed budget template along with their proposal.

The calculator must reflect the following minimum requirements:

- Minimum Enrollments: 20
- Minimum Placements: 12
- For every additional 10 enrollments, Respondents must place at least 6 participants in employment.
- The completed calculator must be included in the submission package.

Line-Item Budget: Respondents must construct their line-item budget not to exceed the award total generated by their completed calculator. Using the total award amount from the Award Calculator, respondents must attach a detailed line-item budget that justifies proposed expenditures and aligns with program goals and funding requirements.

Program Type			Enrollment Rate	Reimbursement	Placement Rate	Reimbursement
Employment	Preparation	and	\$1,350		\$905	
Placement (EPP)						

Staffing

The wages of the staff who are employed by the Respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the Respondent must meet the City’s minimum wage requirements found here https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/bacp/supp_info/minimumwageinformation.html.

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the selected respondents. Respondents must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant, provide job descriptions and resumes of staff and explain time allocation for each person (full-time, part-time, as well as hourly), as well as job descriptions for any vacant positions or new positions that will be created because of this funding opportunity. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, lived experience (if applicable), and expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g., salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement).

The DFSS WSD, city partners, and stakeholders have worked together to define the components of a quality job. The City of Chicago believes that every resident should have access to a quality job that focuses on livable wages, stable and fair scheduling, safety and security within the workplace, voice and representation, work that is purposeful and meaningful, with opportunity for learning and development, comprehensive benefits, within a healthy environment and culture. More information on the components of a quality job can be found here: [Job Quality Playbook](#).

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term up to two times, with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$37,860 and \$750,000 depending on the size of their proposed program. DFSS anticipates funding up to 50 agencies within this program model. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and City of Chicago Corporate funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS, the CDBG, and the City of Chicago must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Year of Prior RFP: 2021

Applications received: 43

Projects funded: 39

Range of funding: \$52,800 – \$750,000

Total funding: \$3,137,485

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible Respondents

This RFP is a competitive process open to all non-profit corporations. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must

demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements, whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP. Respondents must submit MOUs, partnership, or linkage agreements that clearly outline each participating agency’s roles, responsibilities, and collaborative efforts. These agreements should detail how each agency will contribute to achieving the program’s goals and provide a cohesive service delivery model.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the priority population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges. • The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery. • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group. 	<p>25</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent’s leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves. 	
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent outlines the qualifications, expertise, and capacity of their organizational staff to effectively execute the proposed training program. This includes providing details on key personnel, their experience in relevant areas, and the availability of a skilled workforce capable of delivering high-quality training services. The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls. The Respondent has qualified career navigators that will guide, mentor, advocate, provide comprehensive case management, and transition participants through the various phases of the program. 	<p>20</p>
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population. The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field. The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and retaining program participants (including rules/regulations that reduce barriers to participation). The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way. The Respondent demonstrates an outreach and recruitment process that will engage employer partners in an effective manner. The Respondent demonstrates the ability to place individuals from each target population in employment opportunities with external employer partners. 	<p>25</p>
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population. The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices. The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key participant and performance data. <p>* For currently funded applicants, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected in ECM</p>	<p>15</p>
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program. The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations). The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	<p>15</p>

Basis of Award

In addition to the respondent's score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application, to request additional information during the evaluation process, make site visits, and require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee. Failure to submit a complete proposal or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Workforce Services: Industry-Specific Training Program (ISTP) (RFP# 10103)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Industry-Specific Job Training program (ISJT) RFP seeks organizations with a proven track record delivering wholistic workforce services, including industry-specific job training combined with career pathways navigation, comprehensive case management, workforce skills development, and supportive services that prepare Chicago residents for employment opportunities in high-demand, high-growth industries at or above the City’s minimum wage. Selected respondents will prioritize services to residents with significant barriers to employment, including system-impacted individuals with arrest and conviction records, returning residents transitioning home from incarceration, jobseekers with limited English proficiency, and people at imminent risk of homelessness.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago’s primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a wholistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS’ priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans’ lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS’ resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS’ [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive

greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Workforce Services Division (WSD) is committed to mobilizing innovative workforce solutions tailored to the distinct challenges faced by vulnerable Chicago residents. With a focus on a human-centered service methodology, the division is advancing efforts to deliver high-quality workforce services at the community level in partnership with organizations whose workspace and training environments are both healthful and supportive. By offering a suite of workforce services, including career navigation, industry-specific job training, and transitional jobs/work-based learning opportunities, the WSD addresses the workforce needs of adults (18 and older) residing in high promise community areas.

The WSD rigorously evaluates its initiatives to ensure they effectively tackle barriers to economic advancement and enhance participants' overall well-being. The division actively seeks partnerships with employers, community-based organizations and nonprofits with a proven track record of aiding Chicago's most vulnerable job seekers.

B. Program Goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The goal of the DFSS ISJT program is to connect Chicago's most vulnerable residents to industry-specific job training integrated with career navigation and supportive services to help them identify and overcome their barriers to employment and prepare them for full-time (defined as at least 35 hours per week), permanent job opportunities with wages at or above the City of Chicago's minimum wage.

Returning residents, jobseekers with limited English proficiency, and those at risk of homelessness encounter distinct challenges in securing and retaining employment. DFSS seeks delegate agencies to provide comprehensive services, including job readiness training, soft-skills development, career navigation, job placement, and retention support. Retention support, potentially involving additional job placements, is crucial to achieving sustained employment for the DFSS priority populations.

With this RFP, DFSS seeks to fund ISJT models that serve low-and-moderate-income individuals who are at risk of homelessness, residents whose limited English proficiency restricts their access to employment opportunities, system-impacted individuals, returning residents, and other vulnerable Chicagoans with significant barriers to employment.

DFSS seeks to partner with community-based organizations that have:

- Expertise using career navigation to create pathways to meaningful careers for vulnerable Chicagoans
- Experience and evidence/data serving vulnerable residents successfully with favorable employment placement and retention outcomes
- Programs that offer industry-recognized credentials that lead to middle- and higher-wage earning careers*
- Evidence of robust employer partnerships and relationships with hiring managers that lead to high quality job opportunities
- Currently funded workforce programming options for vulnerable residents in the city of Chicago

Based on research and industry demand, the WSD seeks to fund ISJT programs within these sectors:

Construction; Healthcare and Health Science; Human and Public Services; Hospitality & Tourism; Transportation, Distribution, Logistics (TDL); Manufacturing; and Information Technology. Other industry sectors such as Public Safety and Security, Finance, Childcare, Education and Training, etc., may be considered if the respondent can provide evidence/data showing successful outcomes in employment placement and retention for vulnerable residents within these industries. Additional points will be awarded for proposals that align with these priority sectors.

** DFSS also seeks to fund pre-apprenticeship programs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, pre-apprenticeship is a program or set of services designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program. Respondents administering a pre-apprenticeship program must document partnership with at least one Registered Apprenticeship program. (For further details, refer to the full guide: [Pre-Apprenticeship: Pathways for Women into High-Wage Careers.](#))*

Best Practices

The DFSS ISJT program centers on the premise that job training and skill development programs tailored to the needs of participants, administered within a trauma-informed and supportive environment, and created in partnership with industry stakeholders, will lead to enhanced professional capabilities and career advancement for participants.

The following best practices empower ISJT providers to adeptly address the evolving needs of participants, cultivate resilience and optimize success.

- **Targeted Engagement and Outreach:** Large scale outreach is critical to raise awareness, generate interest, and boost enrollment. However, targeted outreach initiatives focused on the target audience's communication needs ensures the most vulnerable residents are included in the program.
- **Strategic Industry Partnerships:** Successful ISJT providers form strategic partnerships with key industry stakeholders, collaborate to ensure program training equips participants with relevant job skills, is responsive to employer feedback, and creates opportunities for networking, internships, and job placements.
- **Customized Curriculum Design:** High quality ISJT is tailored to meet the selected industry's current workforce needs and ensures participants acquire directly applicable skills for enhanced employability.
- **Integrated Experiential Learning with Industry-Expert Guidance:** Programs that combine hands-on training with industry expert guidance allow ISJT participants to gain both theoretical knowledge and practical skills for a comprehensive training experience.
- **Industry Recognized Credential Attainment:** According to the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce (2018), an estimated 80% of good jobs require postsecondary credentials. Coupled with training and work experience, industry-recognized credentials can open doors to higher-wage careers.
- **Efficient Case Management:** Includes client-centered systems and processes that can be adapted for personalized participant support and successful employment outcomes.
- **Proactive Contingency Planning:** Successful respondents develop and maintain contingency plans to ensure program resilience in the face of unforeseen challenges and safeguards against disruptions such as sudden staffing changes, fostering the program's ability to navigate uncertainties effectively.

- **Varied Funding Strategies:** Includes braiding, blending, and sequencing funding to address a participant’s barriers to employment. Securing and maintaining additional funding sources is strategy successful respondents often use to sustain and de-risk program finances. (For more information, visit [https://workforcespending.results4america.org/strategies/braid-blend-or-sequence-funding.](https://workforcespending.results4america.org/strategies/braid-blend-or-sequence-funding)) Varied funding streams encourage program resilience and adaptability to evolving needs and opportunities.

Current state and priorities for improvement

In 2024, the ISJT delegate agencies enrolled 355 clients (approximately 95% of the enrollment goal). Of those enrolled, 52% were placed into employment. The agencies finished the contract year with a 51% retention rate at 30 days and a 16% retention rate at 90 days.

During the next contract cycle, the WSD is committed to the following outcomes:

- Improve the enrollment rate to 100% with a minimum of 50% of enrollees from priority populations
- Improve the employment placement and 30-day retention rate to 60%
- Improve the 90-day retention rate to 55%

In addition to the above, the WSD is committed to ensuring that workforce services are accessible within communities facing the most significant economic challenges including Auburn Gresham, Austin, Bronzeville, Chicago Lawn, East Garfield Park, Englewood, Gage Park, Greater Grand Crossing, Humboldt Park, New City, North Lawndale, Roseland, West Englewood, West Garfield Park, and West Pullman, all of which are characterized by high unemployment rates, as well as a historical legacy of underfunding and disenfranchisement.

Target Population

The DFSS ISTJ program is intended for Chicago residents who are part of priority populations facing significant barriers to employment. These populations include system-impacted individuals, returning residents, jobseekers with limited English proficiency, and individuals at imminent risk of homelessness. Eligible individuals must be 18 or older, city of Chicago residents, low-to-moderate income, and authorized to work in the United States.

In accordance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), low-to-moderate income is defined as individuals with an annualized family income between 50% and 80% of the area’s median income. A table of income limits published by HUD can be found here: <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/doh/general/2024%20Income%20Limits.pdf>

Respondents should acknowledge their organization’s primary priority population in their application and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the priority population they intend to serve. Respondents must articulate the unique challenges that prevent successful employment outcomes for the population and describe how the agency’s career navigation supports would be sequenced to address a participant’s barriers to employment and move them towards the goal of permanent job placement at or above the City’s minimum wage.

C. Program Activities and Requirements

Respondents must demonstrate the capacity to execute the following services in their application:

Outreach and Recruitment

Respondents must have well-targeted and robust community outreach and recruitment strategies that engage residents from their selected priority population. Outreach approaches may include non-traditional yet trauma-informed techniques that engage individuals from various backgrounds and experiences. Respondents are encouraged to leverage systems like 2-1-1 Metro Chicago and social media to connect with Chicago residents seeking employment.

Comprehensive Program Orientation, Intake Screening, and Assessment

To ensure participant success, orientation must include a formal review of program eligibility criteria and an outline of the program completion process. Orientation should consist of an overview of the respondent's intake screening and assessment process, including how and why the agency gathers information from clients, as well as the tools they use to identify core needs and gauge program readiness. Common tools include the [O'Net Career Interest Profiler](#), Tests of Adult Basic Education ([TABE](#)), and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems ([CASAS](#)) to measure basic academic skills. This information should inform the development of Individual Employment Plans (IEP) and may be used to track a client's basic skill improvements and progress toward their goals. Individuals deemed unprepared for the program will be appropriately referred to other services. Attendance, conduct, and termination policies should be clearly communicated to participants and documented in case notes.

Comprehensive Case Management

A comprehensive case management system is crucial for participant success. The approach is led by the respondent's Career Navigators and begins with career counseling and the creation of an IEP derived from a thorough assessment of a participant's assets, aspirations, and employment barriers. Case management personnel (i.e., Career Navigators) are responsible for monitoring participant attendance and performance during JRT and post job-placement, providing ongoing support to ensure job retention and address any concerns raised by employers. IEPs are collaboratively developed and regularly reviewed with the participant, outline clear employment and career goals, and include start and end dates for activities. Effective case management plays a pivotal role in helping participants overcome various obstacles, such as scheduling conflicts, transportation issues, childcare challenges, financial constraints, and motivational concerns. Respondents must show in their application how case management is integrated into their EPP program model.

Industry-Specific Job Readiness Training

Industry-Specific Job Training programs are developed in tandem with employers or groups of employers to address their specific workforce needs. ISJT programs may include classroom-based, online, or on-the-job training that closely aligns with employer hiring requirements. ISJT programs must culminate in the attainment of, at minimum, one industry-recognized credential (a desired or required job qualifications that trade associations and employers recognize). An industry-recognized credential may include certificates, certifications, degrees, and/or licenses. DFSS requires that ISJT includes essential job-readiness activities (e.g., completing a job application, mock interviewing, resume development, etc.) and cover topics such as workplace ethics and behavior, goal setting, proper workplace attire, basic computer skills, networking, effective communication, and conflict resolution, as well as essential soft skills such as teamwork and collaboration, adaptability, problem-solving, and time management. Participants should also be trained and encouraged to access the Internet for employment opportunities. All participants must maintain a valid email address and resume on file.

Industry-Recognized Credential

Participants are required to successfully acquire and showcase the attainment of an industry-recognized credential directly aligned with the program's emphasis. An industry-recognized credential is a work-related certification, license, or credential that adheres to the following criteria:

- **Verification of Competence:** The credential verifies, through a valid assessment, an individual's qualifications or competence in a specific skill set relevant to a particular industry or occupation.
- **Issued by Authorized Entities:** It is issued by an industry-related organization or state licensing body with the requisite authority to grant such credentials, ensuring credibility and relevance.
- **Employer Recognition:** The credential is widely sought or accepted by employers as a recognized, preferred, or required qualification for various employment purposes, including recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or advancement. It serves as a reliable indicator of the participant's proficiency and enhances their marketability within the targeted industry.

Permanent Employment Placement Services

This service involves proactive outreach and engagement with employers in high-demand industries to connect program participants with unsubsidized employment opportunities. Respondents must provide evidence of employer partnerships in their application.

Employment Retention Services

Monthly coaching sessions from enrollment through placement and retention for 90 days are required. Retention support through 180 days is strongly recommended to ensure employment stability. Post-employment follow-up activities may include subsequent job placement assistance in case of unexpected job loss. All retention benchmarks should be verified through pay stubs, employer confirmation (via letter, email, or other correspondence), and, when applicable, the Work Number or IDES (Illinois Department of Employment Security).

Participant Feedback Tools

Selected respondents must utilize a designated tool or system for collecting, analyzing, and incorporating feedback from participants on their experiences. Participant surveys, such as those offered by [Google Forms](#), [Microsoft Forms](#), [SurveyMonkey](#), [Qualtrics](#), [Typeform](#), are a few common tools used to gather this information from participants.

Career Navigator Services

Career Navigators will be the primary contact for participants, starting with outreach and connecting them to recommended support services through a community-based network. They will ensure culturally competent, trauma-informed service delivery, helping participants define career goals and co-create plans to achieve them. Navigators are proactive problem-solvers, working with participants to address both immediate and long-term goals, foster self-esteem, and provide judgment-free support. For priority populations, they will apply a trauma-informed approach using prosocial communication, positive reinforcement, and community support to guide participants toward success. Navigators play a key role in connecting clients to meaningful employment opportunities. These positions will be full-time with no other organizational duties, and respondents must include a copy of the Navigator job description and indicate how many will be assigned to the program.

Career Navigator(s) will be responsible for the following functions under this RFP:

- **Enhanced Engagement and Recruitment:** Navigators must deploy a robust outreach approach employing non-traditional, proactive strategies. They should possess the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from varied backgrounds and experiences. Navigators are encouraged to utilize 2-1-1 Metro Chicago and social media to engage participants from the priority populations effectively.
- **Intake Screening and Assessment for Case Planning:** Navigators are tasked with administering approved intake screening and assessments. These tools are crucial for developing the participant's IEP, identifying clients' strengths, and prioritizing services based on their chosen career pathway and resource needs (e.g., substance use treatment, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), or other mental health services).
- **Expert Career Coaching:** Under participant direction, Navigators will connect and coach clients to services, helping them understand available opportunities to advance their career goals. Navigators will meticulously track referrals to job interviews, further training, education, and skill development opportunities as needed.
- **Employer Partnership and Collaboration:** Work closely with employers to ensure participants receive at least an interview, with the ultimate goal of securing and retaining employment. Navigators will also collaborate with employers to address and resolve any concerns participants may have post-placement, offering support for up to 90 days to ensure successful employment retention.
- **Comprehensive Wrap-around Services and Supports:** Navigators will collaborate with participants to ensure access to a full range of needed services. They will either provide services directly or make referrals through partnership/linkage agreements with other agencies, including transportation assistance. A partnership/linkage agreement refers to a formal arrangement between two or more organizations, agencies, or service providers to work together in delivering services or achieving a common goal. These agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of each party and specify how they will collaborate to meet the needs of the target population. The goal is to ensure that participants have access to a wide range of services that might not be available through a single organization.
- **Participant Progress Summaries:** Navigators are required to provide written summaries upon confirming 60, 90, and 120 employment retention. This report, documented in Enterprise Case Management (ECM) system (data reporting requirements are outlined in section E below) and included in the participant's case file, must follow an approved template and cover:
 - Program completion status (indicating success or challenges in completing required components)
 - Placement status (indicating success or reasons for any challenges)
 - Retention Status (indicating success or reasons for any challenges)
 - Overview of progress toward measurable objectives
 - Recommendations for continued services

These functions are vital for ongoing program evaluation, ensuring the effectiveness of interventions and tailoring support for sustained participant success.

Some critical areas for services and support that selected Respondents must deliver or have collaborations to address include but are not limited to:

- Mental health services/assessment – e.g., mental health assessments; CBT-informed activities and engagement; social and emotional learning supports
- Education – e.g., engagement with bridge and contextual programming to address basic skills gaps, including reading, math, writing, computer skills, City Colleges or other post-secondary institutions, etc.
- Housing support – e.g., registration for rental assistance and low-cost/affordable housing programs
- Ancillary support – e.g., transportation support; cell phones/access to a phone line; email addresses/access to WIFI; financial literacy and income supports; TANF/SNAP/WIC benefits; food pantries; childcare and legal services; program incentives

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate.

These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients.
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

Outcomes

- 80% of program completers will earn an industry-recognized credential.
- 60% of participants will obtain employment and retain employment for 30-days upon program completion.
- 55% of participants who retained unsubsidized employment for 30 days will retain unsubsidized employment for 90 days.

- 75% of enrolled participants will belong to one of the priority populations (see target population section).
- 75% of participants placed in employment will belong to one of the priority populations (see target population section).
- 100% of participants earn a base hourly pay equal to or above the City of Chicago minimum wage.
- 20% of all pre-apprentice graduates are placed in an Apprenticeship.

Outputs (number of outputs required will vary by the size of the proposed program)

- Number and percentage of participants completing ISJT: Goal: 80% completion rate for ISJT
- Number and percentage of participants receiving monthly career navigation coaching and supportive services: Goal: 100% of participants receive monthly career navigation coaching and supportive services through employment placement and 90-day retention benchmark achievement.
- Number and percentage of participants who create IEPs: Goal: 100% of participants create IEPs.
- Number and percentage of participants referred for job interviews: Goal: 100% of participants receive referrals for job interviews.
- Number and percentage of participants that completed an interview: Goal: 80% of participants complete at least one job interview.
- Number and percentage of participants successfully placed in employment: Goal: 60% of participants are successfully placed in employment.
- Number and percentage of participants employed earning wages above city of Chicago minimum wage: Goal: 100% of participants employed earning wages at or above the City of Chicago minimum wage.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

Performance

To ensure effective program delivery and accountability, DFSS requires delegates to meet the following quarterly performance benchmarks throughout the life of the contract:

Quarterly Performance Expectations: Delegates are expected to achieve a 25% quarterly expenditure rate, enrollments, and placements, contributing to an overall program success with a target outcome rate of 75% to 100% over the life of the contract. For example, if a delegate's annual target is 20 enrollments and 12 placements, they should achieve at least 5 enrollments and 3 placements by the end of each quarter. Failure to meet these quarterly benchmarks may prompt a performance review and corrective actions.

Corrective Actions for Underperformance: If delegates do not meet the outlined quarterly performance benchmarks, DFSS reserves the right to initiate the following corrective actions:

- **Targeted Technical Assistance (TA):** Delegates may receive customized targeted support tailored to address specific performance deficiencies. This may include training sessions, strategic consultations, or expert guidance to improve outcomes.
- **Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs):** Delegates may be placed on a structured improvement plan lasting 30, 60, or 90 days. These plans will include clear strategies and objectives for achieving corrective outcomes, with regular monitoring of progress.
- **Funding Adjustments:** DFSS may reallocate, reduce, or defund awards for delegates demonstrating sustained underperformance, including issues of underspending or underutilization, redirecting resources to programs with higher efficacy. For example, if an agency has not achieved 50% of its targets by the close of Q3 (September 30), or if there is evidence of significant underspending or underutilization, DFSS reserves the right to develop and implement a plan to adjust funding allocations, including defunding if necessary. This approach ensures that resources are strategically aligned with program effectiveness and the achievement of overall performance goals.
- **Contract Reassessment:** If underperformance continues despite the implementation of prior interventions, DFSS may terminate or reassign the contract to ensure effective program execution and resource optimization.

This framework is designed to enhance program success, optimize resource allocation, and support the overall mission of DFSS throughout the life of the contract.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Workforce Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be required to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. Data must be collected in ECM (Enterprise Case Management) and reports must be submitted in the format and by the deadlines specified by DFSS below:

- Monthly reports are due by the Fourth of each month. Monthly reports are completed via an Excel sheet and must capture participant information including but not limited to, client demographics, enrollment date, housing status, placement date, retention status, and hourly wages or salary.
- Additionally, delegate agencies are required to enter participant information into the Enterprise Case Management Version 6.0 (ECM) system. Enterprise Case Management (ECM) reporting requirements include:
 - Using the ECM system for tracking participants from enrollment (assessment and IEP development) through employment placement and retention
 - Billing Coversheets for Enrollments and Placements must be properly documented

- o Entering required data and progress notes into ECM within 48 hours of participant interaction and adhering to required data standards based on the program model as outlined in ECM v6.0

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. DFSS Workforce Services Division’s Enterprise Case Management Version 6.0 (ECM) is the data system utilized to capture participant data from intake to placement and retention. All selected Respondents will use the ECM system to capture required data for workforce services programs. The ECM system is used to improve service delivery and conduct performance-based payments based on enrollments, placements, and retention. Contracted providers will be trained on how to enter data and run reports in ECM, with ongoing training as new program staff are hired and/or when there are changes made within the system. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City’s Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/progs/tech.html>.

F. Application guidance for respondents

Budget Submission Requirements:

Respondents must complete the provided Award Calculator as part of their proposal. The calculator will auto-populate the total award amount, ensuring alignment with the program’s performance-based cost standardization protocol, reimbursement structures, and DFSS funding expectations. This tool will be used to determine the proposed award amount and prepare a detailed budget based on the calculated total. Respondents must submit both the completed Award Calculator and the detailed budget template along with their proposal.

The calculator must reflect the following minimum requirements:

- Minimum Enrollments: 20
- Minimum Placements: 12
- For every additional 10 enrollments, Respondents must place at least 6 participants in employment.
- The completed calculator must be included in the submission package.

Line-Item Budget: Respondents must construct their line-item budget not to exceed the award total generated by their completed calculator. Using the total award amount from the Award Calculator, respondents must attach a detailed line-item budget that justifies proposed expenditures and aligns with program goals and funding requirements.

Program Type	Enrollment Rate	Reimbursement	Placement Rate	Reimbursement
Industry-Specific Job Training (ISJT)	\$2,250		\$1,508	

Staffing

The wages of the staff who are employed by the Respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the Respondent must meet the City’s minimum wage requirements found here https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/bacp/supp_info/minimumwageinformation.html.

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the selected respondents. Respondents must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant, provide job descriptions and resumes of staff and explain time allocation for each person (full-time, part-time, as well as hourly), as well as job descriptions for any vacant positions or new positions that will be created because of this funding opportunity. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, lived experience (if applicable), and expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g., salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement).

The DFSS WSD, city partners, and stakeholders have worked together to define the components of a quality job. The City of Chicago believes that every resident should have access to a quality job that focuses on livable wages, stable and fair scheduling, safety and security within the workplace, voice and representation, work that is purposeful and meaningful, with opportunity for learning and development, comprehensive benefits, within a healthy environment and culture. More information on the components of a quality job can be found here: [Job Quality Playbook](#).

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term up to two times, with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$63,096 and \$189,288 depending on the size of their proposed program. DFSS anticipates funding up to 20 agencies. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and City of Chicago Corporate funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS, the CDBG, and the City of Chicago must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified respondent.

Prior RFP statistics for this program

Year of Prior RFP: 2021

Applications received: 25

Projects funded: 18

Range of funding: \$70,000.00 - \$180,000.00

Total funding: \$1,438,996.00

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This RFP is a competitive process open to all non-profit corporations. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements, whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP. Respondents must submit MOUs, partnership, or linkage agreements that clearly outline each participating agency's roles, responsibilities, and collaborative efforts. These agreements should detail how each agency will contribute to achieving the program's goals and provide a cohesive service delivery model.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the priority populations, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges. • The Respondent has developed relationships with employers to inform the training curriculum and serve job seekers enrolled in the program. • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves. 	25
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent outlines the qualifications, expertise, and capacity of their organizational staff to effectively execute the proposed training program, including key personnel experience and workforce readiness to deliver high-quality training. Additionally, the Respondent has qualified career navigators who guide, mentor, advocate, provide comprehensive case management, and transition participants through the various phases of the program. • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls. • The Respondent demonstrates the existence of well-established systems and processes for collecting, storing, and managing key participant and performance data. This criterion ensures that the Respondent has the necessary infrastructure to maintain accurate and secure records, enabling effective program monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. 	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly outlines creative and effective training methodologies tailored to the industry's specific needs. This should include a clear explanation of how the proposed training approaches will engage participants, enhance learning outcomes, and stay abreast of industry advancements and best practices. • The Respondent clearly outlines a plan for incorporating industry-recognized credentials into the training curriculum. This criterion assesses the alignment of the proposed training with widely accepted certifications, licenses, or qualifications upon completion of the program. • The Respondent clearly details existing collaborations or partnerships with reputable industry organizations, educational institutions, or key stakeholders. Such partnerships demonstrate the bidder's ability to leverage collective expertise and resources, fostering a more comprehensive and industry-aligned training program. 	25
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent showcases a successful history of placing individuals from the target populations, into relevant positions within the industry. • The Respondent provides concrete examples of how the Respondent has utilized data to assess and enhance the effectiveness of its training programs. This includes evidence of using performance metrics and data analysis to identify areas for improvement, 	15

<p>implement strategic changes, and consistently refine training methodologies to better meet the needs of the target populations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent presents compelling evidence of past success in achieving outcome goals and performance metrics. This includes measurable accomplishments, such as increased participant employment rates, successful skill acquisition, and positive impacts on the target populations’ socioeconomic status. • The respondent has a robust capability to disaggregate data, allowing them to identify disparities in outcomes between different subgroups of their clients. Beyond tracking overall participation, they analyze these details to identify trends, disparities, and areas for improvement in program delivery. <p>* For currently funded applicants, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected in ECM</p>	
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program. • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations). • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	15

Basis of Award

In addition to the respondent’s score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application, to request additional information during the evaluation process, make site visits, and require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee. Failure to submit a complete proposal or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Workforce Services: Transitional Jobs Program (TJP) (RFP# 10104)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Transitional Jobs program (TJ) RFP seeks organizations with a proven track record delivering holistic transitional jobs services, including time-limited, subsidized employment opportunities combined with career pathways navigation, comprehensive case management, workforce skills development, and supportive services that prepare Chicago residents for employment opportunities at or above the City's minimum wage. Selected respondents will prioritize services to residents with significant barriers to employment, including system-impacted individuals with arrest and conviction records, returning residents transitioning home from incarceration, jobseekers with limited English proficiency, and people at imminent risk of homelessness.

A. Organizational background

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago's primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a wholistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS' priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans' lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS' resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS' [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Workforce Services Division (WSD) is committed to mobilizing innovative workforce solutions

tailored to the distinct challenges faced by vulnerable Chicago residents. With a focus on a human-centered service methodology, the division is advancing efforts to deliver high-quality workforce services at the community level in partnership with organizations whose workspace and training environments are both healthful and supportive. By offering a suite of workforce services, including career navigation, industry-specific job training, and transitional jobs/work-based learning opportunities, the WSD addresses the workforce needs of adults (18 and older) residing in high promise community areas.

The WSD rigorously evaluates its initiatives to ensure they effectively tackle barriers to economic advancement and enhance participants' overall well-being. The division actively seeks partnerships with employers, community-based organizations and nonprofits with a proven track record of aiding Chicago's most vulnerable job seekers.

B. Program Goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The goal of the DFSS TJ program is to connect Chicago's most vulnerable residents to transitional jobs, time-limited, wage-subsidized work experiences within the context of a career navigator-employee-employer relationship, to develop important workplace skills and behaviors, establish an employment record, enhance a participant's competitiveness in the job market, and prepare them for full-time (defined as at least 35 hours per week) permanent job opportunities with wages at or above the City of Chicago's minimum wage.

Transitional jobs come in a variety of forms, including work crews that place teams of participants in project-based environments, scattered employment sites that draw from numerous employers to make TJ placements, and in-house models where participants work for the agency delivering TJ services. TJ programs can focus on a single occupation or take a sector-based approach that includes multiple occupations. The transitional jobs provided through the proposed TJ programs may be with for-profit, non-profit, or government employers. The selected respondent must demonstrate how they prioritize these work-based learning experiences to individuals from DFSS's priority populations and other vulnerable residents with significant barriers to employment, who are chronically unemployed, or have an inconsistent work history.

With this RFP, DFSS seeks to fund TJ programs that integrate career navigation with wage-subsidized work-based learning experiences and prioritize services to low-income individuals who are at risk of homelessness, residents whose limited English proficiency restricts their access to employment opportunities, system-impacted individuals, returning residents, and other vulnerable Chicagoans with significant barriers to employment.

DFSS seeks to partner with community-based organizations that have:

- Expertise using transitional jobs to create pathways to meaningful careers for vulnerable Chicagoans
- Experience and evidence/data serving vulnerable residents successfully with favorable employment placement and retention outcomes
- Experience creating and providing temporary subsidized jobs integrated with work-based learning opportunities for vulnerable Chicagoans
- Evidence of robust employer partner relationships for job shadowing, job tours, on the job training, paid work experiences, permanent job opportunities, etc.
- Currently funded workforce programming options for vulnerable residents in the city of Chicago

Best Practices

The DFSS TJ program centers on the premise that job training, work-based learning and skill development programs tailored to the needs of participants, complemented with career navigation services administered within a trauma-informed and supportive environment and created in partnership with local employers, will enhance work readiness, improve professional capabilities, and lead to successful employment outcomes for participants.

The following best practices empower TJ programs to address the evolving needs of participants, cultivating resilience, and optimize successful employment placement.

- **Targeted Engagement and Outreach:** Large scale outreach is critical to raise awareness, generate interest, and boost enrollment. However, targeted outreach initiatives focused on the target audience's communication needs ensures the most vulnerable residents are included in the program.
- **Formalized Employer Partnerships:** Successful respondents foster robust partnerships with employers to enhance participant's work-based learning experience. These partnerships often establish clear expectations through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), creating a structured framework for collaboration and accountability.
- **Job-Readiness Training (JRT) Curriculum:** An effective JRT curriculum uses participant and employer feedback to align with industry trends and technological advancements and accounts for the individualized needs of participants to prepare them for success in the current job market.
- **Efficient Case Management:** Includes client-centered systems and processes that can be adapted for personalized participant support and successful employment outcomes.
- **Proactive Contingency Planning:** Successful respondents develop and maintain contingency plans to ensure program resilience in the face of unforeseen challenges and safeguards against disruptions such as sudden staffing changes, fostering the program's ability to navigate uncertainties effectively.
- **Varied Funding Strategies:** Includes braiding, blending, and sequencing funding to address a participant's barriers to employment. Securing and maintaining additional funding sources is a strategy successful respondents often use to sustain and de-risk program finances. (For more information, visit <https://workforcespending.results4america.org/strategies/braid-blend-or-sequence-funding>.) Varied funding streams encourage program resilience and adaptability to evolving needs and opportunities.

Current state and priorities for improvement

In 2024, the TJ delegate agencies enrolled 765 clients, exceeding the WSD's goal of 734. Of those enrolled, 303 (40%) were placed into employment. The agencies finished the contract year with a 60% retention rate at 30 days.

Given the challenges vulnerable residents experience accessing permanent employment, selected respondents must track the following data to understand the impact of the TJ program model:

- Number and percentage of individuals completing the TJ program
- Number of hours and weeks participants work, and wages earned

The division is committed to improving these enrollment, placement, and retention outcomes with the following objectives:

- Improve the placement rate to 60% by improving TJ program completion rates and matching clients to job opportunities that align with an individual’s skills, experience, and ambitions.
- Achieve a 75% TJ program completion rate by administering high-quality career navigation that ensures clients remain actively engaged and complete all required program components, with a focus on overcoming barriers to participation and maximizing opportunities for training and employment success.

In addition to the above, the WSD is committed to ensuring that workforce services are accessible within communities facing the most significant economic challenges including Auburn Gresham, Austin, Bronzeville, Chicago Lawn, East Garfield Park, Englewood, Gage Park, Greater Grand Crossing, Humboldt Park, New City, North Lawndale, Roseland, West Englewood, West Garfield Park, and West Pullman, all of which are characterized by high unemployment rates, as well as a historical legacy of underfunding and disenfranchisement.

Target Population

The DFSS TJ program is intended for Chicago residents who are part of priority populations facing significant barriers to employment. These populations include system-impacted individuals, returning residents, jobseekers with limited English proficiency, and individuals at imminent risk of homelessness. Eligible individuals must be 18 or older, city of Chicago residents, low-income, and authorized to work in the United States.

In accordance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), low-income is defined as individuals with an annualized family income of 50% of the area’s median income. A table of income limits published by HUD can be found here: <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/doh/general/2024%20Income%20Limits.pdf>.

Client eligibility for Community Services Block Grant-funded TJ programs (CSBG) is based on a “poverty” income threshold established and annually adjusted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Citizens whose income is within 125% of the poverty threshold are determined to be “low-income” and are also eligible. More information about CSBG income limits can be found here: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/communityservices/homeweatherization/communityactionagencies/helpillinoisfamilies.html>.

Respondents should acknowledge their organization’s primary priority population in their application and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the priority population they intend to serve. Respondents must articulate the unique challenges that prevent successful employment outcomes for the population and describe how the agency’s TJ program components would be sequenced to address a participant’s barriers to employment and move them towards the goal of permanent job placement at or above the City’s minimum wage.

C. Program Activities and Requirements

Respondents must be able to execute the following services in their application:

Outreach and Recruitment

Respondents must have well-targeted and robust community outreach and recruitment strategies that engage residents from their selected priority population. Outreach approaches may include non-

traditional yet trauma-informed techniques that engage individuals from various backgrounds and experiences. Respondents are encouraged to leverage systems like 2-1-1 Metro Chicago and social media to connect with Chicago residents seeking employment.

Comprehensive Program Orientation, Intake Screening, and Assessment

To ensure participant success, orientation must include a formal review of program eligibility criteria and an outline of the program completion process. Orientation should consist of an overview of the respondent's intake screening and assessment process, including how and why the agency gathers information from clients, as well as the tools they use to identify core needs and gauge program readiness. Common tools include the [O'Net Career Interest Profiler](#), Tests of Adult Basic Education ([TABE](#)), and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems ([CASAS](#)) to measure basic academic skills. This information should inform the development of Individual Employment Plans (IEP) and may be used to track a client's basic skill improvements and progress toward their goals. Individuals deemed unprepared for the program will be appropriately referred to other services. Attendance, conduct, and termination policies should be clearly communicated and documented.

Comprehensive Case Management

A comprehensive case management system is crucial for participant success. The approach is facilitated by the respondent's Career Navigators and begins with career counseling and the creation of an IEP derived from a thorough assessment of a participant's assets, aspirations, and employment barriers. Case management personnel (i.e., Career Navigators) are responsible for monitoring participant attendance and performance during JRT and post job-placement, providing ongoing support to ensure job retention and address any concerns raised by employers. IEPs are collaboratively developed and regularly reviewed with the participant, outline clear employment and career goals, and include start and end dates for activities. Effective case management plays a pivotal role in helping participants overcome various obstacles, such as scheduling conflicts, transportation issues, childcare challenges, financial constraints, and motivational concerns. Respondents must show in their application how case management is integrated into their TJ program model.

Job Readiness Training (JRT):

JRT is mandatory and includes critical activities such as job application completion, mock interviewing, and resume development. It may cover various topics, including workplace ethics and behavior, goal setting, proper workplace attire, basic computer skills, networking, effective communication, conflict resolution, and essential soft skills such as teamwork and collaboration, adaptability, problem-solving, and time management. JRT should include training on navigating the Internet for employment opportunities. All participants must maintain a valid email address and resume on file.

Permanent Employment Placement Services

This service involves proactive outreach and engagement with employers in high-demand industries to connect program participants with unsubsidized employment opportunities. Respondents must provide evidence of employer partnerships in their application.

Employment Retention Services

Monthly coaching sessions from enrollment through placement and retention for 90 days are required. Retention support through 180 days is strongly recommended to ensure employment stability. Post-employment follow-up activities may include subsequent job placement assistance in case of unexpected job loss. All retention benchmarks should be verified through pay stubs, employer confirmation (via letter, email, or other correspondence), and, when applicable, the Work Number or IDES (Illinois Department of

Employment Security).

Participant Feedback Tools

Selected respondents must utilize a designated tool or system for collecting, analyzing, and incorporating feedback from participants on their experiences. Participant surveys, such as those offered by [Google Forms](#), [Microsoft Forms](#), [SurveyMonkey](#), [Qualtrics](#), [Typeform](#), are a few common tools used to gather this information from participants.

Additional Transitional Jobs Program Requirements

- **TJ opportunities up to 12 weeks in duration**, offering subsidized work experiences through strategic partnerships with employers are required. A minimum of 30% of the awarded funding must be allocated to subsidized wages or work-based learning stipends.
- **Work-based Learning TJs** must include opportunities for the participant to develop transferable skills they can utilize in subsequent employment opportunities.
- **Employer Engagement** includes outreach to employers interested in leveraging the TJ program to meet their hiring goals, implementing a strategy to address a specific industry's workforce needs, and administering employer resources such as assistance in applying for tax credits. Employer engagement also includes collaboration with employers to support and guide participants while enrolled in the TJ program to ensure success. Respondents must include evidence of TJ employer partnerships (MOUs, MOAs, letters of support, etc.) in their application.

Career Navigator Services

Career Navigators will be the primary contact for participants, starting with outreach and connecting them to recommended support services through a community-based network. They will ensure culturally competent, trauma-informed service delivery, helping participants define career goals and co-create plans to achieve them. Navigators are proactive problem-solvers, working with participants to address both immediate and long-term goals, foster self-esteem, and provide judgment-free support. For priority populations, they will apply a trauma-informed approach using prosocial communication, positive reinforcement, and community support to guide participants toward success. Navigators play a key role in connecting clients to meaningful employment opportunities. These positions will be full-time with no other organizational duties, and respondents must include a copy of the Navigator job description and indicate how many will be assigned to the program.

Career Navigator(s) will be responsible for the following functions under this RFP:

- **Enhanced Engagement and Recruitment:** Navigators must deploy a robust outreach approach employing non-traditional, proactive strategies. They should possess the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from varied backgrounds and experiences. Navigators are encouraged to utilize 2-1-1 Metro Chicago and social media to engage participants from the priority populations effectively.
- **Intake Screening and Assessment for Case Planning:** Navigators are tasked with administering approved intake screening and assessments. These tools are crucial for developing the participant's IEP, identifying clients' strengths, and prioritizing services based on their chosen career pathway and resource needs (e.g., substance use treatment, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), or other mental health services).

- **Expert Career Coaching:** Under participant direction, Navigators will connect and coach clients to services, helping them understand available opportunities to advance their career goals. Navigators will meticulously track referrals to job interviews, further training, education, and skill development opportunities as needed.
- **Employer Partnership and Collaboration:** Work closely with employers to ensure participants receive at least an interview, with the ultimate goal of securing and retaining employment. Navigators will also collaborate with employers to address and resolve any concerns participants may have post-placement, offering support for up to 90 days to ensure successful employment retention.
- **Comprehensive Wrap-around Services and Supports:** Navigators will collaborate with participants to ensure access to a full range of needed services. They will either provide services directly or make referrals through partnership/linkage agreements with other agencies, including transportation assistance. A partnership/linkage agreement refers to a formal arrangement between two or more organizations, agencies, or service providers to work together in delivering services or achieving a common goal. These agreements outline the roles and responsibilities of each party and specify how they will collaborate to meet the needs of the target population. The goal is to ensure that participants have access to a wide range of services that might not be available through a single organization.
- **Participant Progress Summaries:** Navigators are required to provide a written summaries upon confirming 60, 90, and 120 employment retention. This report, documented in Enterprise Case Management (ECM) system (data reporting requirements are outlined in section E below) and included in the participant's case file, must follow an approved template and cover:
 - Program completion status (indicating success or challenges in completing required components)
 - Placement status (indicating success or reasons for any challenges)
 - Retention Status (indicating success or reasons for any challenges)
 - Overview of progress toward measurable objectives
 - Recommendations for continued services

These functions are vital for ongoing program evaluation, ensuring the effectiveness of interventions and tailoring support for sustained participant success.

Some critical areas for services and support that selected Respondents must deliver or have collaborations to address include but are not limited to:

- Mental health services/assessment – e.g., mental health assessments; CBT-informed activities and engagement; social and emotional learning supports
- Education – e.g., engagement with bridge and contextual programming to address basic skills gaps, including reading, math, writing, computer skills, City Colleges or other post-secondary institutions, etc.
- Housing support – e.g., registration for rental assistance and low-cost/affordable housing programs

- Ancillary support – e.g., transportation support; cell phones/access to a phone line; email addresses/access to WIFI; financial literacy and income supports; TANF/SNAP/WIC benefits; food pantries; childcare and legal services; program incentives

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate.

These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client’s next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

D. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of output and outcome metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

Outcomes

- 60% of participants will enter unsubsidized employment and retain employment for 30-days upon program completion.
- 40% participants who remain in unsubsidized employment for 90 days.
- 75% of enrolled participants will belong to one of the priority populations (see target population section).
- 75% of participants placed in employment will belong to one of the priority populations (see target population section).
- 100% of participants placed will receive a base hourly pay equal to or above city of Chicago minimum wage.
- 100% of enrolled participants not employed within a year of program completion are referred for additional training and support.

Outputs

- Number and percentage of participants completing TJ program: Goal: 90% completion rate for TJ program.
- Number and percentage of participants receiving monthly career navigation coaching and supportive services: Goal: 100% of participants receive monthly career navigation coaching and supportive services through employment placement and 90-day retention benchmark achievement.

In addition to the performance indicators and output metrics listed above, DFSS encourages Respondents to propose additional indicators and metrics, including those that demonstrate early success and are indicative of participants' progress.

Performance

To ensure effective program delivery and accountability, DFSS requires delegates to meet the following quarterly performance benchmarks throughout the life of the contract:

Quarterly Performance Expectations: Delegates are expected to achieve a 25% quarterly expenditure rate, enrollments, and placements, contributing to an overall program success with a target outcome rate of 75% to 100% over the life of the contract. For example, if a delegate's annual target is 20 enrollments and 12 placements, they should achieve at least 5 enrollments and 3 placements by the end of each quarter. Failure to meet these quarterly benchmarks may prompt a performance review and corrective actions.

Corrective Actions for Underperformance: If delegates do not meet the outlined quarterly performance benchmarks, DFSS reserves the right to initiate the following corrective actions:

- **Targeted Technical Assistance (TA):** Delegates may receive customized targeted support tailored to address specific performance deficiencies. This may include training sessions, strategic consultations, or expert guidance to improve outcomes.
- **Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs):** Delegates may be placed on a structured improvement plan lasting 30, 60, or 90 days. These plans will include clear strategies and objectives for achieving corrective outcomes, with regular monitoring of progress.
- **Funding Adjustments:** DFSS may reallocate, reduce, or defund awards for delegates demonstrating sustained underperformance, including issues of underspending or underutilization, redirecting resources to programs with higher efficacy. For example, if an agency has not achieved 50% of its targets by the close of Q3 (September 30), or if there is evidence of significant underspending or underutilization, DFSS reserves the right to develop and implement a plan to adjust funding allocations, including defunding if necessary. This approach ensures that resources are strategically aligned with program effectiveness and the achievement of overall performance goals.
- **Contract Reassessment:** If underperformance continues despite the implementation of prior interventions, DFSS may terminate or reassign the contract to ensure effective program execution and resource optimization.

This framework is designed to enhance program success, optimize resource allocation, and support the overall mission of DFSS throughout the life of the contract.

E. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, the Workforce Services Division seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be required to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. Data must be collected in ECM (Enterprise Case Management) and reports must be submitted in the format and by the deadlines specified by DFSS below:

- Monthly reports by the fourth of each month. Monthly reports are completed via an excel sheet and must capture participant information including but not limited to, client demographics enrollment date, housing status, placement date, retention status, and hourly wages or salary.
- Additionally, delegate agencies are required to enter participant information into the Enterprise Case Management Version 6.0 (ECM) system. Enterprise Case Management (ECM) reporting requirements include:
 - Using the ECM system for tracking participants from enrollment (assessment and IEP development) through employment placement and retention
 - Billing Coversheets for Enrollments and Placements must be properly documented
 - Entering required data and progress notes into ECM within 48 hours of participant interaction and adhering to required data standards based on the program model as outlined in ECM v6.0

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. DFSS Workforce Services Division's Enterprise Case Management Version 6.0 (ECM) is the data system utilized to capture participant data from intake to placement and retention. All selected Respondents will use the ECM system to capture required data for workforce services programs. The ECM system is used to improve service delivery and conduct performance-based payments based on enrollments, placements, and retention. Contracted providers will be trained on how to enter data and run reports in ECM, with ongoing training as new program staff are hired and/or when there are changes made within the system. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/progs/tech.html>.

F. Application guidance for respondents

Budget Submission Requirements:

Respondents must complete the provided Award Calculator as part of their proposal. The calculator will auto-populate the total award amount, ensuring alignment with the program's performance-based cost standardization protocol, reimbursement structures, and DFSS funding expectations. This tool will be used to determine the proposed award amount and prepare a detailed budget based on the calculated total. Respondents must submit both the completed Award Calculator and the detailed budget template along with their proposal.

The calculator must reflect the following minimum requirements:

- Minimum Enrollments: 20
- Minimum Placements: 12
- For every additional 10 enrollments, Respondents must place at least 6 participants in employment.
- The completed calculator must be included in the submission package.

Line-Item Budget: Respondents must construct their line-item budget not to exceed the award total generated by their completed calculator. Using the total award amount from the Award Calculator, respondents must prepare a detailed line-item budget that justifies proposed expenditures and aligns with program goals and funding requirements. The reimbursement rates used in the award calculator are inclusive of funding for wages, therefore the total annual award amount generated by the calculator must be used to cover program costs as well as wages. Please note that when you build your line-item budget, wages should equal no more than 40% of your total budget.

Program Type	Enrollment Reimbursement Rate	Placement Reimbursement Rate
Transitional Jobs (TJ)	\$2,750	\$1,843

Staffing

The wages of the staff who are employed by the respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the respondent must meet the City’s minimum wage requirements found here: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/bacp/supp_info/minimumwageinformation.html.

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the selected respondents. Respondents must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant, provide job descriptions and resumes of staff and explain time allocation for each person (full-time, part-time, as well as hourly), as well as job descriptions for any vacant positions or new positions that will be created because of this funding opportunity. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, lived experience (if applicable), and expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g., salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement).

The DFSS WSD, city partners, and stakeholders have worked together to define the components of a quality job. The City of Chicago believes that every resident should have access to a quality job that focuses on livable wages, stable and fair scheduling, safety and security within the workplace, voice and representation, work that is purposeful and meaningful, with opportunity for learning and development, comprehensive benefits, within a healthy environment and culture. More information on the components of a quality job can be found here: [Job Quality Playbook](#).

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the

program must be covered by your indirect costs.

G. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term up to two times, with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$77,166 and \$192,790 depending on the size of their proposed program. DFSS anticipates funding up to 25 agencies. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and CSBG funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS, the CDBG, and the CSBG must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified respondent.

H. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Year of Prior RFP: 2021

Applications received: 25

Projects funded: 25

Range of funding: \$90,000 - \$177,787

Total funding: \$3,025,124

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This RFP is a competitive process open to all non-profit corporations. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements, whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP. Respondents must submit MOUs, partnership, or linkage agreements that clearly outline each participating agency's roles, responsibilities, and collaborative efforts of each participating agency. These agreements should detail how each agency will contribute to achieving the program's goals and provide a cohesive service delivery model.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the priority population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges• The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery• The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group• The Respondent's leadership reflects and/or directly engages the people of the communities it serves.	25
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight and management• The Respondent demonstrates understanding of how to manage subsidized wage reimbursements to employer partners and has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls• The Respondent demonstrates the existence of well-established systems and processes for collecting, storing, and managing key participant and performance data. This criterion ensures that the Respondent has the necessary infrastructure to maintain accurate and secure records, enabling effective program monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.	20
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population	25

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and retaining program participants (including rules/regulations that reduce barriers to participation) 	
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent presents compelling evidence of past success in achieving outcome goals and performance metrics. This includes measurable accomplishments, such as increased participant employment rates, successful skill acquisition, and positive impacts on the target populations’, socioeconomic status. <p>* For currently funded applicants, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected in ECM</p>	15
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed TJ program; • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	15

Basis of Award

In addition to the respondent’s score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process, make site visits, and/or require respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection.

Selections will not be final until the City and the selected Respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the selected Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the Department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of an application.

DFSS Program: Homeless Services: Frequent Users Service Engagement (FUSE) (RFP# 10127)

CONTACT PERSON INFORMATION:

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Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

The Frequent Users Service Engagement (FUSE) RFP seeks applications from organizations that are experienced and capable in providing intensive case management and clinical services to vulnerable families experiencing homelessness to support their transition to stable housing. Families referred to the FUSE program will have been in at least 3 or more shelters within a 12-month period or are at risk for abrupt discharge from a shelter. This RFP seeks Respondents that can serve as a city “lead agency” system wide for the FUSE program. The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) intends to fund one agency under this model, but collaborative applications are encouraged.

Department Mission and Priorities

As the City of Chicago’s primary social services funder and administrator, the Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages a comprehensive, client-oriented human service delivery system that employs a holistic approach to improving the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. DFSS administers resources and provides assistance and support to a network of over 350 community-based organizations. The DFSS mission is:

Working with community partners, we connect Chicago residents and families to resources that build stability, support their well-being, and empower them to thrive.

DFSS’ priorities are to:

- **Deliver** and support high quality, innovative, and comprehensive services that empower clients to thrive
- **Collaborate** with community partners, sister agencies, and public officials on programs and policies that improve Chicagoans’ lives and advance systemic change
- **Inform** the public of resources available to them through DFSS and its community partners
- **Steward** DFSS’ resources responsibly and effectively

For further information about services and opportunities offered through DFSS, please visit: www.cityofchicago.org/fss

Commitment to Outcomes

DFSS’ [Commitment to Outcomes](#) represents a transition to a more results-oriented and data-driven approach to delivering services. In order to achieve better results for Chicagoans, DFSS seeks to clearly describe, measure, and report on outcomes; use these outcomes to support decision-making; and drive greater collaboration within DFSS as well as between DFSS and the delegate agencies we fund.

Division Priorities

The DFSS Homeless Services Division seeks to create an effective crisis response system that prevents homelessness whenever possible and rapidly returns people who experience homelessness to stable housing. The Division does this by supporting a range of services and infrastructure for people experiencing (or at risk of) homelessness including prevention, shelter, outreach and engagement, housing supports, and system planning/coordination efforts. The Division also works closely and collaboratively with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC), the CoC's designated Collaborative Applicant (All Chicago), the CoC's Coordinated Entry System, other City agencies, and community-based organizations to coordinate across the broader ecosystem of homeless services in the City towards the ultimate aim of preventing and ending homelessness in Chicago.

A. Program goals

Goals, best practices, and theory of change

The goal of the FUSE program is to engage highly vulnerable families with children experiencing homelessness that are frequent users of the shelter system and help them transition to more stable housing. This transition is achieved through intensive case management and clinical services that help families manage and navigate their housing and family needs and achieve housing stability. The end goal is to stabilize families using clinical interventions to address their barriers to obtaining stable housing and preventing further episodes of homelessness by providing on-going services past their initial placement in shelter and/or permanent housing.

Working within the DFSS family shelter system, Respondents will receive referrals from family shelter providers who identify consenting frequent user families who are at risk of being discharged from a shelter or have been in at least 3 or more shelters within a 12-month period. Families will be assessed for service needs both individually and as a family as part of the re-housing and stabilization process. Responding to the collective needs of these families and shelter providers, the Respondent will also provide training, technical and clinical assistance to family shelter providers allowing those providers to develop a deeper capacity to keep highly vulnerable families housed stably.

The FUSE program model is designed to help break the cycle of homelessness and crisis among family households with a high-level of need. Best practices for this program include:

1. Assessing each shelter provider's capacity to meet the needs of the vulnerable frequent user population;
2. Ensuring that the shelter provider's service plans consist of a combination of internal and external recourses/supports, in order to best meet the varied needs of the participants;
3. The ratio of case managers and other service providers to program participants should initially be kept low (1:10 to 1:15) and this should be reevaluated as program participants become more stable and independent;
4. FUSE program staff should consist of direct service staff (counselors, case managers, nurses, etc.) and supervisory staff (supervisors, program directors, administrative staff, executive director, financial manager, etc.); and
5. Some common services provided for FUSE participants should include Case Management; Life Skill Training; Chemical Dependence Treatment; Child Care and Parenting Skills Training; Housing Placement Assistance; Employment and Education/GED Services; Money Management Services and Community-building activities or events.

Current state and priorities for improvement

According to the 2024 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, the number of individuals in family households in

homeless shelters and transitional housing programs increased by over 500% from 2023 to 2024 – an increase from 1,773 to almost 11,000 people. This is a drastic change in the previously declining trend of the number of individuals in family households in shelters experiencing homelessness over the past 8 years. The increase was driven by different factors including the large influx of New Arrivals to Chicago since the 2023 PIT Count, the housing market became more expensive post-pandemic, and changing economic conditions for families as COVID-relief resources ended.

In 2024, the PIT Count estimated 3,038 family households were experiencing homelessness, almost all of which were residing in shelters. 85% of the individuals in these family households identified as Latino/a/e with another 11% identifying as Black/African American, or African. A significant share of the individuals in family households were children – 51 percent were under the age of 18.

The number of families experiencing homelessness in Chicago has decreased since the 2024 PIT Count as in-flow from the southwest border of the United States slowed and many New Arrival families moved on from shelter into housing.

Currently, there are roughly 5,400 publicly funded shelter beds for families with children. The homeless services system continues to see families that cycle in and out of shelters and experience prolonged episodes of homelessness. In 2024, 24 family households were serviced by the FUSE program.

Through the FUSE program, DFSS seeks to continue to improve services for these most vulnerable families and reduce the incidence of returns to homelessness among families. DFSS seeks to improve the process of identification and referral of eligible families that fit the target population criteria.

Target Population

The target population for the FUSE program is families who are identified as frequent users of the shelter system and families who have multiple discharges from shelter programs. The FUSE program also targets families who are at risk of being discharged from shelter programs.

The eligibility requirements for this program are as follows:

- Experiencing homelessness and residing in a shelter within the city of Chicago.
- Parent(s) or guardian(s) must be at least 18 years of age.
- Family must include one or more children under 18 years of age.
- Highly vulnerable families who have been in at least three or more shelters within a year (12 months) from the point of referral, as reported by the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- At risk of a discharge from their current shelter stay.

In some instances, DFSS may request assistance from the selected Respondent to work with a family that is in need, due to special circumstances. Delegate provider must work with DFSS in these circumstances.

A small subset of families experiencing homelessness, often those with long histories of homelessness and complex needs/ disabilities like untreated or poorly managed mental illnesses and substance usage, cycle through the shelter system and other public systems such as criminal justice, child welfare and emergency health care.

B. Program activities and requirements

The FUSE program is centered on identifying the needs of families and providing intensive case

management and clinical services to help address their barriers to staying in shelter and eventually obtaining permanent housing. Selected Respondents must accept referrals from agencies across the city for families who fit the target population criteria. Training and outreach to partner agencies will be required to inform and ensure services are delivered to families eligible under the target population criteria.

DFSS seeks Respondents with the ability deliver the following services:

- Create specific strategies for identifying and outreaching to families who meet eligibility criteria.
- Ensure proper outreach and education (e.g., printed literature, trainings) on FUSE program and FUSE eligibility for agencies with potential to refer families to the program.
- The reach of the FUSE program must extend to all DFSS funded family shelter providers across the city; must provide outreach plan to reach these providers across that may encounter families who fit the eligibility criteria.
- Provide intensive case management services to families across shelters in the city of Chicago with a case manager to family ratio of 1:15.
- For families at risk of shelter discharge: develop transition plans for families that lead to more stable housing, including working with the family and shelter providers to establish successful new shelter placements, helping to maintain a current placement, or moving to permanent housing options.
- Provide supportive services and crisis response support to prevent ongoing homelessness and promote trauma reduction. Interventions should reinforce connection with family and other forms of social support and be provided to the entire family.
 - Support services include assistance with childcare, transportation, job readiness and employment support, and/or school enrollment.
- Provide linkages to services provided by other agencies.
- Provide follow-up services for up to three months after family leaves the shelter.
- Solicit feedback from participating families and incorporate feedback into services as appropriate.
- Provide training, technical, and clinical assistance to shelter providers focused on supporting housing stability of vulnerable families within the shelter setting.
- Ensure households are assessed through the Coordinated Entry System.
- Desirable staff requirements include demonstrated experience providing mental health, substance use, child-focused services, and housing stability services to highly vulnerable families experiencing homelessness. Other preferred requirements include language capacity and cultural competency among staff and appropriate licensure for the level of services provided.
- Provide services in an fair and responsive manner and provide access to technology for virtual services at the client level, meeting clients at their ability and capacity.
- Provide remote services, when necessary (i.e. via phone calls, emails, remote calling with videoconferencing capacities).
- Incorporate tenets of Housing First, Harm Reduction, Trauma-Informed Care, and strengths-based practices. For more information on these Best Practices, please reference the Chicago CoC's Community Standards here: <https://allchicago.org/continuum-care/standards-and-monitoring>.

Service Coordination

DFSS recognizes that many of the clients we serve have needs beyond the scope of what we fund delegates to provide. DFSS is interested in supporting strategies to improve coordination across service delivery silos to improve outcomes for these clients. Through engagement with current delegates across

our divisions and tests within our Community Service Centers, we have identified some coordination practices that we encourage delegates to incorporate as appropriate. These practices include:

- Systematically identifying clients who struggle to independently access other resources they need and providing a higher level of coordination support to those clients;
- Using warm handoff strategies when making referrals, such as making a specific action plan for the client's next steps to follow through on the referral, assisting clients in calling service providers to schedule an appointment, or accompanying clients to intake appointments; and
- Working proactively with service providers after referrals to help clients overcome barriers to engagement and retention.

DFSS recognizes that these strategies may often fall outside of the core responsibilities of program staff, and successful implementation may require sustained attention from supervisors and organizational leaders. DFSS reserves the right to convene delegate agencies to provide additional support in implementing service coordination efforts.

C. Performance measures

To track progress toward achieving the outcome goals of this program and assess success, DFSS will monitor a set of performance indicators that may include, but is not limited to:

- 70% of families will move to more stable housing (includes family and friends, transitional, or permanent housing).
- Fewer than 10% of families will be discharged to another shelter program.
- 85% of families will engage in ongoing specialized services based on individual assessments to promote housing stability for three months after housing of any type is secured, or family exits shelter (may include mental health, substance use, employment, child-focused services).

To monitor and recognize intermediate progress toward the above performance indicators, DFSS also intends to track output metrics that may include, but are not limited to:

- 100% of households served by the FUSE program are a part of the intended target population of this RFP.
- 100% of referring shelter programs are provided training, technical, and clinical assistance.

DFSS will also monitor the above metrics by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other characteristics as appropriate in outcomes and outputs.

Within this framework, DFSS is focused on continuous improvement against these metrics. We are committed to working with delegate agencies to monitor performance against these indicators, including establishing relevant baselines or benchmarks and sharing data with delegate agencies to assess and understand our progress. DFSS expects that performance by these metrics will vary by sub-population served, and DFSS will continue to work with the delegate community to understand the factors influencing performance and to set appropriate performance expectations based on specific programs and sub-populations.

DFSS plans to track performance throughout the term of the contract and will use this information (including absolute and relative performance on metrics and improvement over time) to inform future funding decisions. DFSS therefore may add metrics in contracts as we continue to refine our approach to understanding and managing performance in upcoming contracts and over the years to come.

D. Contract management and data reporting requirements

As part of DFSS' commitment to become more outcomes-oriented, Homeless Services seeks to actively and regularly collaborate (such as periodic meetings) with delegate agencies to review program performance, learn what works, and develop strategies to improve program quality throughout the term of the contract. Reliable and relevant data are necessary to ensure compliance, inform trends to be monitored, evaluate program results and performance, and adjust program delivery and policy to drive improved results. As such, DFSS reserves the right to request/collect other key data and metrics from delegate agencies and set expectations for what this collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract.

Upon contract award, delegate agencies will be expected to collect and report client-level demographic, performance, and service data as stated in any resulting contract. These reports must be submitted in a format specified by DFSS and by the deadlines established by DFSS.

Delegate agencies must implement policies and procedures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of client records for both paper files and electronic databases. Homeless Services Division delegate agencies, with the exception of domestic violence organizations, must use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and produce required reports. All Chicago administers Chicago CoC's HMIS. For more information about accessing HMIS and training, please visit the HMIS Help Desk at <https://hmis.allchicago.org/hc/en-us>. Delegate agencies must have the ability to submit reports electronically to DFSS. The City's Information Security and Information Technology Policies are located at <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dgs/InformationTechnology/ISTP.pdf>.

E. Application guidance for respondents

Along with their proposal, all respondents must submit their proposed budget using the City of Chicago template provided as an attachment in eProcurement.

Indirect costs will be capped at 15% (federal *de minimis*) unless otherwise indicated by a federally approved indirect cost rate letter. Administrative costs that cannot be charged as directly related to the program must be covered by your indirect costs.

F. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DFSS may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. DFSS anticipates that the award will be \$350,000 (per year). DFSS anticipates funding one agency.

This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DFSS through Corporate funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DFSS and this fund must be met.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DFSS reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

G. Prior RFP statistics for this program

Applications received: 1
Projects funded: 1
Range of funding: \$350,000 (per year)
Total funding: \$350,000 (per year)

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

This is a competitive process open to all entities: non-profit, for-profit, faith-based, private, and public. Respondents may apply as a single agency or in partnership with multiple agencies, where one agency serves as the lead agency for the partnership and other agencies serve as subcontractors of the lead agency. Subcontracted agencies must demonstrate competence to implement programmatic elements whereas lead agencies must also demonstrate financial strength and ability to comply with all administrative requirements outlined in the RFP.

Individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a **minimum 10 percent in-kind match**.

Respondents who are current DFSS delegates whose existing contract(s) with DFSS are not in good standing will not be considered. Agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

Funding is subject to the availability and appropriation of funds. In addition, Respondents should be aware that the City will make payments for services on a reimbursement basis. Payment will be made 30 days after voucher approval. Selected Respondents must be able to proceed with program operations upon award notification.

B. Evaluation process

Each eligible proposal will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the selection criteria. DFSS reserves the right to consult with other city departments during the evaluation process. Successful Respondents must be ready to proceed with the proposed program within a reasonable period of time upon contracting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection. The Commissioner upon review of recommended agency(ies) may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied for grants based on previous performance and/or area need.

DFSS reserves the right to ensure that all mandated services are available citywide, and provided in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

C. Selection criteria and basis of award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the target population, including their strengths and assets and needs and challenges • The Respondent demonstrates client and community engagement activities that inform service delivery • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	<p>10</p>
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has enough qualified staff responsible for effective program oversight and management • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire staff in a timely manner and manage staff effectively • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key participant and performance data 	<p>25</p>
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the target population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent has an effective approach to identifying and retaining program participants (including rules/regulations that reduce barriers to participation) • The Respondent has partnerships or coordinates with other agencies to expand or improve services in a client-centered, comprehensive way • The Respondent proposes to serve at least 25 families annually. 	<p>30</p>
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates* evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent describes their ability to disaggregate data to identify disparities in program delivery <p><i>* When appropriate, DFSS may use prior performance data already collected by DFSS or a relevant intermediary (e.g., evaluator, database)</i></p>	<p>20</p>
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program 	<p>15</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations) • The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan. 	
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Basis of Award

In addition to your score on the selection criteria above, DFSS may consider additional factors in selection to ensure systems-level needs are met: geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations as specified in the language above.

DFSS reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this Application and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary. Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements will cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive, and therefore, subject to rejection.

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Department of Housing (DOH)

Chicago Department of Housing: Program: Housing Technical Assistance and Support (HTAS) - Community Based (TACOM) (RFP# 53663)

PROGRAM CONTACT

Sarah Gross, Program Director

Phone: 312-744-9775

Email: DOHCommunityPrograms@cityofchicago.org

Website: www.chicago.gov/housing

Section 1 - Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

A. Organizational background

The Department of Housing is committed to expanding access and choice for residents and protecting their right to quality homes that are affordable, safe, and healthy. DOH prioritizes providing services to underserved client groups and residents of Chicago neighborhoods. More information on our Mission, Vision, and Values is on our website at Chicago.gov/housing.

B. Program overview

The Technical Assistance – Community (TACOM) program leverages Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to provide Chicago-based nonprofit organizations funding to support their existing community-based housing programs and resource distribution efforts. TACOM organizations are expected to provide housing-related information and resources, events, workshops, housing fairs, and other housing-services at the community level. The TACOM funding source requires organizations to provide client-facing housing services to low-to-moderate income households. DOH is seeking to fund organizations that provide community-based housing programs and resources to underserved client groups and residents of Chicago neighborhoods. This includes people experiencing gender-based violence, substance dependencies, mental health concerns, migrants, people displaced by climate change, the re-entry population, and other marginalized groups. Respondents are expected to have an existing program or service that deeply engages with any of the marginalized groups outlined above. The respondents proposed program cannot be a Housing Counseling Program or an activity regulated by HUD's Housing Counseling Program.

C. Program goals

Services in this category will be community focused and target low-to moderate-income census tracts. Services will identify and address the needs of the community by providing education and access to resources and information. Agencies selected will engage in community outreach, workshops to promote programs, overall services and resources of the City and DOH.

D. Program activities

The following activities are examples of community based TACOM activities:

1. Work independently and or collaboratively to promote affordable housing development.
2. Work independently and or collaboratively to preserve affordable housing units.
3. Provide education/workshops on new local, state, or federal housing programs.

4. Provide handouts and literature on landlord, renter, homeowners and unhoused rights and responsibilities, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Fair Notice Ordinance
 - b. Eviction Support
 - c. Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (RLTO)
 - d. Heat Ordinance
 - e. Fair Housing
5. Provide housing information and resources to landlords, renters, homeowners, unhoused individuals.
6. Provide non-housing counseling application assistance support to existing local, state, or federal housing programs.
7. Participate in community-based events providing housing information and supportive services.
8. Connect Seniors with City Department resources for repairs that will improve their home safety and help them stay living in place.
9. Connect renters, landlords, homeowners, unhoused individuals, migrants, seniors, re-entry population, gender-based violence survivors, youth, refugees, or other marginalized people to existing housing services or resources.
10. Working with local alderman offices and staff to advance housing services for marginalized people.

As a requirement of TACOM, respondents will be required to participate in community-based events and promote existing City of Chicago and Department of Housing (DOH) programs and services. Given the nature of the program, TACOM organizations should be able to provide services in a variety of methods, including in-person and remote. DOH staff reserves the right to send communication to TACOM Delegate Agencies for the agency to share the information with their network. As needed, the Department of Housing will ask for respondents to participate in DOH-created efforts, including steering committees, roundtables, working groups, advisory boards, and other projects. These efforts may require several months of engagement and collaboration with DOH.

Since TACOM is a CDBG funded program, respondents will also be expected to maintain updated client or education records, collecting required baseline demographics from program participants, and keeping attendance records of education or workshop participants. At least 51% or more of the people served under TACOM must be low-to-moderate income (i.e., 80% or less of the area median income (AMI)). All clients under TACOM must reside in the City of Chicago.

E. Performance metrics

Program Evaluation

1. Demonstrate ability to provide direct service, community education, referrals and assistance to expand affordable housing for persons of low- and moderate-incomes (LMI).
2. Ability to carry out a work program within the funding cycle.
3. Ability to clearly define activities and expected outcomes.
4. Indication of sufficient funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative costs.
5. Available program staffing currently in place.
6. Create reasonable accommodations for non-English speakers and people with disabilities.
7. Expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group

Agency Evaluation

In addition to the CDGA general selection criteria, DOH will evaluate applicants on the following:

8. Support of the Department of Housing's mission, vision and values.
9. Competent Board of Directors and Staff responsive to community served/area of expertise.
10. Track record of providing culturally and linguistically competent services.
11. Satisfactory performance on current and prior delegate agency contracts (if applicable).
12. Evidence of sound financial management, including, but not limited to, understanding of contract management and vouchering.
13. Satisfactory performance on current and prior delegate agency contracts (if applicable).
14. Ability to promote existing DOH programs and services as opportunities arise and in language(s) spoken in target area(s).
15. Network and participate in community meetings and outreach events sponsored by DOH and its affiliates, if applicable.

Performance metrics should be tied to program targets that are:

1. **Specific** – clear and concrete enough to allow assessment
2. **Measurable** – there must be evidence available to demonstrate progress
3. **Achievable** – targets should be attainable given available resources & constraints
4. **Relevant** – there should be a direct connection between a program goal, associated program activity, and the metric used to measure it
5. **Timebound** – ambitious but realistic timelines drive prioritization and establish benchmarks

F. Program requirements

Budget and Justification

The wages of the staff who are employed by the respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the respondent must meet the City's minimum wage requirements found here [City of Chicago :: Minimum Wage](#). Department of Housing strongly encourages Respondents to pay all employees a fair living wage. More information about calculating living wages can be found using the following link [Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Cook County, Illinois \(mit.edu\)](#) .

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the agency/agencies. The respondent must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, lived experience (if applicable), and their expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g. salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement). The program budget cannot exceed the available funding amount that is approved for this RFP.

G. Contract management and data reporting requirements

Under the Bureau of Homeownership, the delegate agency must provide requested data using a city-approved platform or alternate approved method to submit delegate agency reports. Required reports include sharing qualitative and quantitative data and information the City leverages to assess program impact every quarter. At the beginning of every program year, the delegate agency will meet with their

assigned Program Managers to set performance goals and discuss expectations for the year. The delegate agency will be informed of the required reporting structure and must be able to provide data in a dynamic file type or an online platform. Dynamic file types typically include Excel, Word, Adobe, and PowerPoint.

Requested data will include, but is not limited to:

- # Of educational workshops or events for residents hosted by organization
- # Of Landlords receiving housing information or assistance
- # of Tenants Receiving housing information or assistance
- # Of homeowners receiving housing information or assistance
- # Of prospective homebuyers receiving housing information or assistance
- # of people experiencing homelessness receiving housing information or assistance
- # Of seniors receiving housing information or assistance
- # Of people in transitional housing or displaced people receiving housing information or assistance
- Demographics including Income level of clients

In addition to the data outlined above, the delegate agency must also be following all local, state, and federal requirements governed by the funding source leveraged for the program. DOH reserves the right to determine the appropriate funding source or funding sources for each program.

Furthermore, the delegate agency is subject to an annual program audit, which includes monitoring program service delivery and process documents. This includes, but is not limited to, providing the following to DOH:

- Agency or Program Process Manual for Service Delivery
- Client Data collection procedures
- Policy on serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) Individuals
- Policy on serving People with Disabilities including reasonable accommodation process
- Agency process for determining client satisfaction and program effectiveness
- Program quality control and program oversight procedures
- Agency's referral and or resource list
- List of all Board Members with email addresses
- Agency Personnel, Record Retention, and Information Security Policy
- Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Procurement Procedure
- Signed contract agreement with subcontractors and/or consultants providing services.
- List of program staff up to date resumes
- Program staff timesheets
- Program files and or case files
- Group Education files
- Subcontractor agreements, if applicable
- Marketing, training, or program materials for client use

Any delegate agency that is not performing in accordance with DOH's goals and expectations is subject to corrective measures including, but not limited to:

- Recurring check-ins with Program Manager
- Monthly reporting in lieu of quarterly reporting
- Written plan of action by delegate agency outlining steps for improvement
- Meeting between DOH and delegate agency Senior Leadership
- Award decrease or elimination
- Cure notice

I. Anticipated term of contract and funding source

Funding for each contract executed under this RFP is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council of the City, State and/or Federal authorities, if applicable. No payments will be made or due to you under the terms of any contract executed under this RFP, beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under the terms of such contract. The City’s obligations under such contract shall cease immediately, without penalty or further payment being required, if the City Council of the City, the Illinois General Assembly and/or federal funding source(s) fails to make an appropriation sufficient to fund terms of such contract.

The city reserves the right to use additional funding sources. For more information about the various rules and regulations that may govern the use of these funding sources, visit the specific web site referenced by each funding source.

- City of Chicago Local Funds
 - chicago.gov/budget
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning

For FY26, the anticipated award range is \$52,500 through \$66,186, and final awards are contingent on the appropriation and availability of funds from the various sources identified above. Also, the contract period is anticipated to start on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, with two (2) one-year opportunities for extension.

Funding Statistics for FY25:

The following table contains the funding statistics for January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Applications Received	24
Agencies Funded	21
Range of Funding	\$52,500- \$ 66,186
Total Funding	\$1,129,186.00

Section 2 – Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

A. Eligible respondents

To be eligible, respondents must meet all the requirements outlined in this RFP, including the Application Review Criteria immediately following this section. Respondents must be a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with a proven track record of providing services to vulnerable Chicagoans and being deeply engaged in their community.

B. Evaluation process

All proposals received by the deadline within the City's procurement system, iSupplier Portal, will undergo a technical review to determine whether all required components have been addressed and included. Only complete proposals will be considered by DOH, and a formal notice of rejection will be provided to the respondents submitting incomplete proposals. DOH reserves the right to waive minor irregularities across all submitted proposals. Minor irregularities include anything within the proposal that does not affect the quality of the proposed services or mandatory requirements. For example, spelling and grammatical errors may be classified as minor irregularities.

Additionally, DOH reserved the right to review the respondents' DOH-performance-related and performance-related concerns in other City Departments and remove from consideration respondents without a proven track record of effective program management.

Applications will be reviewed and scored using an Evaluation Committee comprised of members selected by DOH. Evaluation Committee members may include DOH Staff and those outside of DOH. Evaluation Committee members will be responsible for reviewing applications and supporting documents and any additional information supplied by DOH Staff to score applications based on the selection criteria outlined below.

DOH will then tabulate all Evaluation Committee Scores and review any comments or concerns identified by Evaluation Committee members. Finally, DOH's Program Director and Managing Deputy Commissioner will work collaboratively to create the recommended delegate agencies in alignment with DOH's Mission, Vision, Values, and Evaluation Committee scores and comments.

A recommendation of delegate agencies will be provided to The Commissioner. Upon review, the Commissioner may reject, deny, or recommend agencies that have applied based on previous performance or area need.

C. Application Review Criteria

Proposals will be scored based on the following criteria, with 100 points being the maximum score:

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><u>Community involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates the ability to build and execute processes and infrastructure that provide legal services in a safe and empowering environment for survivors, including using participant and community feedback to inform legal service delivery • The Respondent has expertise working with the focus populations and has relevant internal capacity and ties to community resources needed to serve these groups in trauma-informed and culturally specific ways. • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	30
<p><u>Strength of proposed program</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines legal services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the focus population • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field • The Respondent demonstrates a clear understanding of the focus population and how they will outreach and engage survivors to access their services 	30
<p><u>Performance management and outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to track and report performance on program outcomes • The Respondent has experience using data to inform/improve its services or practices • The Respondent has the relevant systems and processes needed to collect and store key participant and performance data 	15
<p><u>Organizational capacity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff • The Respondent has expertise working with the target population and has relevant capabilities and/or infrastructure needed to serve this group • The Respondent prepares staff with ongoing trainings on serving the target population in a culturally competent way 	15
<p><u>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program 	10

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations)• The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and funding requests relative to its financial and human resources. The proposed budget supports the proposed scope of work or work plan	
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Chicago Department of Housing: Program: Technical Assistance– Citywide (TACIT) (RFP 53660)

PROGRAM CONTACT

Sarah Gross, Program Director

Phone: 312-744-9775

Email: DOHCommunityPrograms@cityofchicago.org

Website: www.chicago.gov/housing

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING:

The Department of Housing is committed to expanding access and choice for residents and protecting their right to quality homes that are affordable, safe, and healthy. DOH prioritizes providing services to underserved client groups and residents of Chicago neighborhoods. More information on our Mission, Vision, and Values is on our website at Chicago.gov/housing.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND REQUIREMENTS:

The Department of Housing's (DOH) Bureau of Homeownership seeks to fund organizations with experience providing culturally and linguistically competent services that are responsive to the needs of the communities they serve.

DOH-Homeownership Technical Assistance – Citywide (TACIT) delegate agency program provides funding to nonprofit organizations, nonpartisan research institutions (i.e., universities), or Chicago-based for-profit providing expert-level training, technical assistance, education, or services in a housing-related topic within the City of Chicago. A delegate agency is a subgrantee selected by the City of Chicago through a competitive bid process to provide services under a program. Only select programs are open to nonpartisan research institutions and Chicago-based for-profit organizations; **read below for complete details.**

TACIT funding is reserved for activities otherwise not covered through other DOH RFPs (i.e., housing counseling activity is not a TACIT activity). DOH seeks to fund organizations to carry out one or more of the following programs. Respondents must submit one (1) completed application per program, including all attachments, for each program outlined below:

1. Supportive Housing Services and Advocacy for Marginalized People – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization with a proven track record of providing housing-related services, information, or advocacy to vulnerable Chicagoans and underserved client groups. In addition, the delegate agency must connect the population to critical housing services that help marginalized people remain stably housed. Required assistance includes providing application assistance for other services that aid in avoiding housing instability or providing direct housing supportive services (e.g., utility assistance and public or private benefits application assistance).
 - a. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Citywide housing advocacy, services or programs for marginalized communities or efforts to uplift concerns of marginalized groups. Such examples include:
 1. Housing program and supportive services for people leaving the sex work industry.

- 2. Housing program and supportive services to people experiencing gender-based violence or sexual violence.
 - 3. Housing program and supportive services to people with arrest records
 - ii. Citywide programs to help historically marginalized communities obtain access to critical housing improvements. (Administrative support only)
 - iii. Programs providing non-housing counseling education services to marginalized communities, citywide.

- 2. User-centered Design & Data Strategy Technical Assistance – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization, nonpartisan research institution, or Chicago-based for-profit able to provide support to DOH programs (administered both by the Department and delegate agencies) in both data strategy and creating applications, forms, and workflows that are resident-centric and improve the user experience of accessing housing services. For example, capabilities could include creating process maps, facilitating resident focus groups, working with public sector agencies or nonprofits to simplify application approval processes, training staff in web forms and applications, establishing data reporting best practices, and training in program evaluation analytical methods.
 - a. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Lead community focus groups to help delegate agencies to improve data collection and processes to assist the public better.
 - ii. Create program process maps to guide program decision-making.
 - iii. Analyze software systems for user-centered design alignment and support system updates and improvements.
 - iv. Provide public training or guidance on understanding and using publicly available data.
 - v. Work with nonprofits to collect, analyze, and interpret data for public impact.
 - vi. Provide public-facing reports on program impact.

- 3. Legal Eviction or foreclosure defense services – The respondent must be a nonprofit legal services entity, either having a licensed attorney on staff or working with a consortium of volunteers, part-time, full-time licensed attorneys directly or through subcontractors. In addition, the respondent must have a proven track record of providing services in eviction or foreclosure defense before, during, or after any legal action.
 - a. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Providing citywide free or low-cost legal services. Such examples include:
 - 1. Conducting intakes and screenings for eviction or foreclosure defense needs.
 - 2. Providing legal representation and legal advice and briefs on foreclosure or eviction matters.
 - 3. Providing legal counseling through the duration of eviction and foreclosure defense cases.
 - ii. Providing eviction or foreclosure defense workshops, seminars, trainings, and other educational events for community-based organizations, partners, and stakeholders.

4. Tenant Rights and Responsibilities – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization with a proven track record of providing workshops or individual services to tenants or tenant associations. Expected activities include providing information on the Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance, code compliance, safety, cleanliness, damages, repairs, utilities, inspections, emergencies, general conduct, remedies, conflict resolution, and other tenant-related matters, including tenant organizing.
- a. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Providing in-person, over-the-phone, or various methods to inform tenants of their rights and responsibilities as a renter in the City of Chicago.
 - 1. Case management services for tenants who need to resolve disputes with their landlord.
 - 2. Connecting tenants to legal services as needed.
 - 3. Providing literature, ordinances, and examples that can help the tenants understand and resolve their concerns or questions.
 - ii. Providing educational information through various methods, including:
 - 1. Workshops, trainings, seminars, and other educational endeavors to inform community partners and stakeholders of tenant rights and responsibilities.
 - 2. Some foundational topics include the Chicago Rental Landlord/tenant ordinance, eviction laws, fair notice ordinance, and discrimination.
 - iii. Participation in the City of Chicago’s efforts for advocacy and education by becoming a member of the Advisory Committee on Renting Rights.
5. Landlord Rights and Responsibilities – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization with a proven track record providing workshops or individual services to landlords. Expected activities include providing information on the Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance, required materials to distribute to tenants, code compliance, safety, cleanliness, damages, repairs, utilities, inspections, emergencies, general conduct, remedies, conflict resolution, and other landlord-related matters.
- a. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Providing individual technical assistance, guidance, and instruction to property owners.
 - 1. Working with landlords of two to two-to-four units to inform them about landlord requirements when obtaining a new renter, including required literature, disclosures, and other materials.
 - 2. Best practices for inspections and emergency inspections
 - 3. The available assistance to tenants to avoid evictions.
 - ii. Providing educational information through various methods, including:
 - 1. Workshops, trainings, and seminars on property management, fair housing, Chicago Rental Landlord/Tenant Ordinance, eviction laws, nuisance abatement, and other foundational topics.
 - 2. Property management workshops.

6. Tenant & Landlord Matters – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization with a proven track record of providing services related to solving tenant and landlord issues. Services rendered include giving information and mitigating tenant-landlord disputes and conflicts before, during, or after any legal action. Tenant and Landlord support includes working with both parties neutrally to resolve disputes and conflicts and work towards a resolution. The nonprofit organization can also work collaboratively with tenants or landlords to preserve affordable housing for low-to-moderate income residents.
- a. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Providing individual technical assistance, guidance, and instruction to property owners and their tenants.
 - 1. Delegate agency acts as a neutral third party to mitigate landlord and tenant disputes, including providing solutions to avoid eviction.
 - 2. Delegate agency provides both landlord and tenant understand their landlord and tenant rights by providing both parties with literature and information.
 - 3. Delegate agency provides both landlord and tenant with other resources as needed to remedy the situation, including referring to arbitration.
 - 4. Attending court hearings with landlords and tenants
 - ii. Providing educational efforts through various methods including:
 - 1. Workshops on landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities, and group sessions with landlords and tenants.
 - 2. Providing workshops about landlord rights and responsibilities to existing landlords
 - 3. Providing workshops on tenant rights and responsibilities to existing tenants or tenant associations.
7. Estate Planning – The respondent must be a nonprofit legal services entity through either having a licensed attorney on staff or working with a consortium of volunteer, part-time, full-time licensed attorneys directly or through subcontractors. In addition, the respondent must have a proven track record of providing estate planning services through education, individual counseling, or other methods of reaching seniors or low-to-moderate-income households.
- a. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Providing individual technical assistance to Chicagoans in estate planning documents. This includes helping individuals understand the process and complete pertinent documents related to:
 - 1. Power of Attorney
 - 2. Housing Preservation
 - 3. End of Life Seminars
 - 4. Guardianship
 - ii. Providing educational efforts in various methods including:
 - 1. Citywide technical assistance clinics, workshops, seminars, and other educational events covering foundational estate planning topics.

8. Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and Housing – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization able to support to DOH Programs (administered by the Department and delegate agencies) in strategy and building curricula related to climate change, environmental justice, and housing. In addition, the respondent must have a proven track record of working with public and private entities in addressing climate change and environmental justice, supporting property owners and tenants in taking advantage of federal, state, and local climate-related programs, and providing technical assistance to organizations on environmental justice and climate resiliency. Support to DOH includes building and maintaining interactive tools related to climate change, energy efficiency, decarbonization, and resilient/sustainable building and providing technical assistance to environmental or housing nonprofit organizations or a task force related to climate resilience, environmental justice, and transportation equity.
 - a. Providing citywide technical assistance workshops, trainings and educational events for community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, industry partners and stakeholders. Some topic examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Environmental building techniques
 - ii. Climate Resiliency
 - iii. Affordable Housing in conjunction with sustainability
 - iv. Sustainable communities
 - v. What tenants, landlords, and homeowners can do to decrease their carbon footprint
 - vi. Available programs and how Chicagoans can apply.

9. Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization, nonpartisan research institution, or Chicago-based for-profit able to support to DOH Programs (administered by the Department and delegate agencies) in building a strategy and curriculum to advance ETOD. This city-wide policy framework prioritizes creating healthy, walkable, vibrant communities connected to transit and all its benefits. ETOD support includes creating and maintaining interactive tools for embedding ETOD principles in programs: educating the development community, community organizations, and community members on making use of City ordinances and programs relevant to ETOD; and providing technical assistance to environmental groups, housing nonprofit organizations, or task forces related to climate resilience, environmental justice, and transportation equity.
 - a. Providing citywide technical assistance workshops, trainings and educational events for community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, industry partners and stakeholders. Some topic examples include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Equitable development near transit hubs
 - ii. Increasing ownership of assets by marginalized people
 - iii. Healthy and climate resilient spaces
 - iv. Benefits of walkable communities
 - v. Vibrant and cultural spaces and improving community.

10. Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization, nonpartisan research institution, or Chicago-based for-profit able to provide Chicagoans housing-related technical assistance, education, problem-solving, and resources on the City’s inclusionary housing program, the Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO). The delegate agency selected

must be a subject matter expert in the ARO Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing and Tenant Screening Plan Rules and the ARO tenant application, income requirements, and approval process. The delegate agency must provide affordable housing-focused solutions and services to low- and moderate-income renters. The delegate agency will assist with ongoing technical support, including, but not limited to, training, webinars, workshops, community events, and meetings to inform Chicagoans about how to access available ARO units by type, location, and income, and subsequently assist them with the application process. The delegate agency will assist with ongoing technical support, including, but not limited to:

- a. Increasing awareness about the City's ARO by:
 - i. Creating informative multi-language materials on how to find and apply for available ARO rental units, the application process, and income requirements.
 - ii. Attending public meetings and community events to get the word about available ARO rental units.
 - iii. Hosting and facilitating training, webinars, workshops, and meetings to inform Chicagoans how to access available ARO rental units by type, location, and income and subsequently assist them with the application process.
 - b. Assisting qualified tenants with the application process by:
 - i. Guiding the applicant through each step of the ARO application process
 - ii. Addressing tenant applicant's questions and concerns via phone or email
 - iii. Ensuring rental tenant applications and supporting documents are complete and accurate under the ARO rules.
 - iv. Submitting applications on behalf of rental applicants, particularly for applicants who do not have access to a computer or internet.
 - v. Act as a liaison between the tenant applicant and the ARO leasing agency/property manager.
 - c. Market available for-sale units to prospective homebuyers
 - i. Guiding prospective homebuyers to available units, including but not limited to the chicagohousingtrust.org.
 - ii. Assist in planning and presentation efforts for the semi-annual trolley tours.
 - d. Assist prospective homebuyers with the application process by:
 - i. Guiding the applicant through each step, which may include the Chicago Housing Trust Application process.
 - ii. Addressing each applicant's questions and concerns via phone or email.
 - iii. Ensuring applications and supporting documents are complete and accurate.
 - iv. Submitting applications on behalf of applicants who do not have internet access.
 - v. Act as a liaison between the applicant and the Seller/Listing Agent or Chicago Housing Trust.
11. Troubled Building Initiatives (TBI) Supportive Services – The respondent must be a nonprofit organization able to support DOH's Troubled Building Initiatives Program and have a proven track record of assisting individuals facing housing instability. The selected awardee will provide relocation services for court-ordered, and emergency vacates, which include assisting TBI receivers and court-ordered vacates specific to dangerous and hazardous conditions of troubled buildings. In addition, the respondent must connect the affected residents to critical housing services and administer relocation assistance to displaced individuals. The required assistance to

residents includes but is not exclusive to the distribution of emergency housing payments, replacement unit identification, payment of move-in or security deposit fees and application fees, case management, and payment of moving expenses. The program will be funded by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and the respondent will be responsible for complying with all income verification as required under CDBG regulations. Examples of programs meeting these requirements include but are not limited to:

- a. The delegated agency administers an emergency housing and supportive services program that can assist with emergency housing payment costs and case management services. The selected delegate agency will receive direct referrals for buildings being vacated under the TBI program from DOH and other DOH partners. The chosen delegate agency will prioritize the following:
 - i. Single Room Occupancy (SRO)
 - ii. Senior buildings
 - iii. Other buildings containing at least 50% special population categories such as a person living with a disability and blind or visually impaired.
- b. A TBI delegate agency that can administer additional assistance to tenants, including:
 - i. Coordinating emergency housing payments
 - ii. Coordinating other housing-related costs (move-in fees, security deposits, cost for movers, and other costs related to moving from one domicile to another)
 - iii. Assisting with locating a new unit that is affordable for the tenant.
 - iv. Connecting the tenant to other relevant resources
 - v. Providing these services through the lens of trauma-informed care

All delegate agencies must work collaboratively with DOH and other delegate agencies to advance DOH's Mission, Vision, and Values. Working collaboratively includes the respondents providing training to other delegate agencies or participating in DOH-created efforts, including steering committees, working groups, advisory boards, and other projects.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Under the Bureau of Homeownership, the delegate agency must provide requested data using a city-approved platform or alternate approved method to submit delegate agency reports. Required reports include sharing qualitative and quantitative data and information the city leverages to assess program impact every quarter. At the beginning of every program year, the delegate agency will meet with their assigned Program Managers to set performance goals and discuss expectations for the year. The delegate agency will be informed of the required reporting structure and must be able to provide data on a dynamic file type or an online platform. Dynamic file types typically include Excel, Word, Adobe, and PowerPoint. Requested data will include, but is not limited to:

- # Of workshops, events, or classes
- # Of attendees at workshops, events, or classes
- # Of individuals or households served
- # Of units receiving services
- Tenant income
- Thorough responses to narrative questions
- Performance Summary
- Program and/or client files

In addition to the data outlined above, the delegate agency must also be following all local, state, and federal requirements governed by the funding source leveraged for the program. DOH reserves the right to determine the appropriate funding source or funding sources for each program.

Furthermore, all delegate agencies are subject to an annual program audit, which includes monitoring program service delivery and process documents. This includes, but is not limited to, providing the following to DOH:

- Agency or Program Process Manual for Service Delivery.
- Client Data collection procedures.
- Policy on serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) Individuals.
- Policy on serving People with Disabilities including reasonable accommodation process.
- Agency process for determining client satisfaction and program effectiveness.
- Program quality control and program oversight procedures.
- Agency's referral and/or resource list.
- List of all Board Members with email addresses.
- Agency Personnel, Record Retention, and Information Security Policy.
- Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.
- Procurement Procedure.
- Signed contract agreement with subcontractors and/or consultants providing services.
- List of program staff up to date resumes.
- Program staff timesheets.
- Program files and/or case files.
- Subcontractor agreements, if applicable.
- Marketing, training, or program materials for client use.

Any delegate agency that is not performing in accordance with DOH's goals and expectations is subject to corrective measures including, but not limited to:

- Recurring check-ins with Program Manager.
- Monthly reporting in lieu of quarterly reporting.
- A written plan of action by the delegate agency outlining steps for improvement.
- Meeting between DOH and delegate agency Senior Leadership.
- Award decreases or elimination.
- Cure notice.

REQUIRED FOR PROPOSAL CONTENT:

The respondent is advised to carefully review the Request for Proposals (RFP) instructions and adhere to all requirements. The respondents must provide all the information requested, provide thorough responses, and submit all requested documents. The respondents applying to multiple RFPs must include all required documents requested of the RFP. Failure to fully comply may cause the submitted proposal to be categorized as non-compliant and subsequently have the rejection of the non-compliant proposal. The City reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from the respondent during the evaluation and selection process. Any respondent that makes a material misrepresentation will be eliminated from further consideration. The City reserves the right to reject proposals for any of the following reason(s):

- Non-compliant proposals (e.g., required documents not uploaded).

- Respondent has DOH or other City Departments performance-related concerns in the past (5) five years.
- The deadline for submissions was missed.
- The proposal topic was not aligned with the requirements of the RFP.
- The budget was unrealistic in terms of the estimated requirements for the program.
- Respondents proposed staffing is insufficient to carry out the scope of the proposed program.
- Respondents proposed Work Program does not meet DOH Standards and or is unrealistic in terms of the requirements for the program.

AGENCY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

To be eligible, respondents must meet all the requirements outlined in this RFP, including the Application Review Criteria immediately following this section. Respondents must be an organization with a proven track record of providing services to vulnerable Chicagoans and being deeply engaged in their community. The selected delegate agency must participate in DOH-Homeownership led training workshops. Additionally, successful respondents will:

- Have a proven history of providing similar services to the communities they serve.
- Have adequate staffing levels to carry out the proposed activities, including any applicable program intakes, case management services, workshop management, program quality assurance, program evaluation and monitoring, and fiscal controls.
- Have adequate systems, internal processes, and procedures outlining:
 - Process Manual for Service Delivery Process and Policy assisting individuals with Limited English Proficient (LEP) and People with Disabilities (PWD).
 - Hiring, Recruitment, and Staff Training Plans by Human Resources or other responsible parties.
 - Plan for continuity of services should responsible program staff change.
- Have the capacity to coordinate and network with other public or private agencies to support or enhance resources to target populations.
- Can carry out the services under the program within the allotted timeframe of one-year.
- Can work under a reimbursement model.
- The delegate agency must submit invoices to the city for payment.
- Have a Board of Directors and Staff responsive to the needs of the community or communities they are serving.

Current Delegate Agency: A respondent that has been a DOH delegate agency within the past five years is subject to additional evaluation. This includes disclosing information about your organization to the Evaluation Committee member(s) before scoring. Information and/or documentation to be shared with the Evaluation Committee includes, but is not limited to:

- Review of current Year to Date (YTD) deliverables
- Review of historical performance and outcomes
- Review of any performance summary or summaries

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA:

All proposals received by the deadline within the City's procurement system, iSupplier Portal, will undergo a technical review to determine whether all required components have been addressed and included.

Only complete proposals will be considered by DOH, and a formal notice of rejection will be provided to the respondents submitting incomplete proposals. DOH reserves the right to waive minor irregularities across all submitted proposals. Minor irregularities include anything within the proposal that does not affect the quality of the proposed services or mandatory requirements. For example, spelling and grammatical errors may be classified as minor irregularities.

Additionally, DOH reserved the right to review the respondents' DOH-performance-related and performance-related concerns in other City Departments and remove from consideration respondents without a proven track record of effective program management.

Applications will be reviewed and scored using an Evaluation Committee comprised of members selected by DOH. Evaluation Committee members may include DOH Staff and those outside of DOH. Evaluation Committee members will be responsible for reviewing applications and supporting documents and any additional information supplied by DOH Staff to score applications based on the selection criteria outlined below.

DOH will then tabulate all Evaluation Committee Scores and review any comments or concerns identified by Evaluation Committee members. Finally, DOH's Program Director and Deputy Commissioner will work collaboratively to create the recommended delegate agencies in alignment with DOH's Mission, Vision, Values, goals, and Evaluation Committee scores and comments.

A recommendation of delegate agencies will be provided to the Commissioner. Upon review, the Commissioner may reject, deny, or recommend agencies that have applied based on previous performance or area need.

Proposals will be scored based on the following criteria, with 100 points being the maximum score:

Selection Criteria	Points
<u>Strength of the Proposed Program (Program Summary)</u>	25
<u>Organizational Capacity</u>	25
<u>Program Quality and Impact</u>	20
<u>Reasonable Cost, Budget Justification and Leverage of Funds</u>	20
<u>Overall Response</u>	10

Required Document: As part of the RFP submission process, the following documents must be uploaded in the Administrative Section and labeled accordingly.

1. Liability Insurance
2. Board Member Identification
3. IRS Determination Letter
4. SAM Certificate
5. Certificate of Good Standing
6. Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
7. Financial Statement
8. Organizational Chart
9. Up-to-date resumes
10. Work Program Form
11. Budget Forms
12. TACIT Education Materials

- 13. Conflict of Interest Questionnaire
- 14. Quality Assurance or Control procedures, if applicable.

BASIS OF AWARD:

DOH reserves the right to consider additional factors in the selection of delegate agencies to ensure program-level needs are met, including prioritizing organizations whose proposals demonstrate a strong track record of providing services to underserved client groups. DOH may also factor in the organization's geographic location to ensure residents in all Chicago wards can be provided services through the entire delegate agency network.

The selection of delegate agencies will not be final until the city and the selected respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The city assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs by the respondent chosen in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in preparing an application. Furthermore, respondents' history of prior executed delegate agency contracts with DOH is not a guarantee of continued funding under this RFP.

FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAM:

Funding for each contract executed under this RFP is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council of the City, State and/or Federal authorities, if applicable. No payments will be made or due to you under the terms of any contract executed under this RFP, beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under the terms of such contract. The City's obligations under such contract shall cease immediately, without penalty or further payment being required, if the City Council of the City, the Illinois General Assembly and/or federal funding source(s) fails to make an appropriation sufficient to fund terms of such contract.

The city reserves the right to use additional funding sources. For more information about the various rules and regulations that may govern the use of these funding sources, visit the specific web site referenced by each funding source.

- City of Chicago Local Funds
 - chicago.gov/budget
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning

For FY26, the anticipated award range is \$40,000.00 through \$120,000.00, and final awards are contingent on the appropriation and availability of funds from the various sources identified above. The contract period is anticipated to start on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, with two (2) one-year opportunities for extension.

Funding Statistics for FY25: The following table contains the funding statistics for January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Applications Received	19
Agencies Funded	16
Range of Funding	\$40,000 - \$120,000
Total Funding	\$1,321,301

Housing Counseling Centers Program (HCC) (RFP# 53661)

PROGRAM CONTACT

Sarah Gross, Program Director

Phone: 312-744-9775

Email: DOHCommunityPrograms@cityofchicago.org

Website: www.chicago.gov/housing

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING:

The Department of Housing is committed to expanding access and choice for residents and protecting their right to quality homes that are affordable, safe, and healthy. DOH prioritizes providing services to underserved client groups and residents of Chicago neighborhoods. More information on our Mission, Vision, and Values is on our website at Chicago.gov/housing.

PROGRAM DESIGN:

DOH is seeking nonprofit HUD-Approved Housing Counseling Agencies to apply to the Housing Counseling Centers (HCC) Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) to support their existing Housing Counseling program. A delegate agency is a subgrantee selected by the City of Chicago through a competitive bid process to provide services under a program. A delegate agency is expected to provide comprehensive housing counseling and education. All housing counseling activities performed under HCC must be conducted by a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor, and all housing education must be approved by a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor. HUD-Certified means they have passed the HUD Certification Exam verified their employment through FHA Connection. Effective January 13, 2017, all Housing Counselors must be able to discuss the entire cycle of Homeownership, regardless of what counseling topic they seek, and must distribute HUD Home Inspection Materials to clients. See Housing Counseling Certification Final Rule for compliance deadlines and HUD Housing Counseling Handbook 7610.1 REV-5, Chapter 3-5 for housing counseling requirements.

Housing Counseling Centers must provide both education and counseling services in one or more of the following numbered topics.

1. Financial Management
2. Pre-Purchase
3. Post-Purchase
4. Foreclosure Avoidance
5. Tenancy
6. Condo Purchase

The respondents must indicate which counseling activity their organization will deliver and ensure their program meets HUD Housing Counseling Requirements and the City of Chicago's minimum standards. Additionally, the delegate agency under this category must network and participate in community meetings and outreach events sponsored by DOH or its affiliates.

1. **Financial Management** – Deliver Financial Counseling and Education on various topics, including Budget, Credit, Managing Assets, and Protecting Assets. A HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must conduct all Housing Counseling under this activity, and a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must approve all education.

- a. Counseling
 - i. HUD-Certified Housing Counselor helps clients improve financial health through personalized guidance on other financial topics separate from foreclosure prevention, post-purchase, and pre-purchase counseling.
 - ii. Collects necessary baseline information and related financial documents from clients to verify budget and debt levels.
 - iii. Housing Counselors analyze clients' budget and financial situation to determine their available options related to their housing goal.
 - iv. The Housing Counselor develops a personalized action plan outlining clear steps client must take to achieve their housing-related goal.
 - v. Provides referrals for additional services as needed.
 - vi. Delivered face-to-face, online or via telephone.

 - b. Education
 - i. Group Education teaches clients' financial skills and knowledge on various topics such as: opening an account, reading a bank statement and other banking products, creating a budget, using credit, repairing credit.
 - ii. Group education curriculum must be a minimum of 90 minutes.
 - iii. Delivered in person or online.
 - iv. Available to City of Chicago residents only.

 - c. Performance Measures
 - i. The delegate agency must provide a minimum of 4 Financial Management workshops.
 - ii. To make this program successful, ensure that 75% of financial counseling clients achieve their goal outlined in the action plan set by the housing counselor. Successful outcomes include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Increasing household savings and or income
 - 2. Reducing household debt or expenses
 - 3. Accessing local, state, or federal resources improving their household's financial situation
 - 4. Establishing an account in traditional financial institutions
 - 5. Improving credit or access to credit
 - iii. The delegate agency must submit demographic data for all reported clients in accordance with DOH standards.
 - iv. The delegate agency must be able to provide documentation proving client workshop and/or counseling outcomes reported.
2. Pre-Purchase – Deliver Pre-Purchase Counseling and Education (i.e., First-Time Homebuyer Education) and possessing a strong knowledge of the entire homebuying process, including budgeting, credit, mortgage financing options, insurance requirements, inspections, home maintenance, fair housing, choosing a community, etc. A HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must conduct all Housing Counseling under this activity, and a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must approve all education.
- a. Pre-Purchase Counseling

- i. Collects necessary baseline information and related financial documents from client to verify budget and debt levels.
 - ii. Housing Counselor analyzes clients' budget and conducts a financial assessment to determine their available options as it relates to a home purchase.
 - iii. Housing Counselor develops a personalized action plan outlining clear steps client must take to achieve homeownership.
 - iv. Housing Counselor provides step-by-step guidance during any point of the homebuying process, from just starting the process to closing of the loan.
 - v. Provides referrals for additional services as needed and promotes existing DOH programs.
 - vi. Delivered face-to-face, online or via telephone.
 - b. Pre-Purchase Education (Homebuyer Education)
 - i. Provided in a group education setting which covers the entire cycle of the home buying process.
 - ii. Must be a minimum of 8 hours of group homebuyer education or six hours of homebuyer education plus 2 hours of individualized pre-purchase counseling.
 - 1. The delegate agency dividing the group education portion into different times must only report one workshop for every 8-hour or 6-hour group education session.
 - 2. The delegate agency is responsible for tracking completion rates.
 - iii. Covers topics related to the purchase of a home, including affordability, budget & credit, loan types, the lending process, how to shop for a home, the different types of homes and owning types, predatory loans and DOH programs.
 - iv. Allowed formats include in-person, web-based or using HUD-Approved platforms eHome America or Framework.
 - c. Performance Measures
 - i. The delegate agency must provide a minimum of 12 pre-purchase (homebuyer) education workshops.
 - ii. To make this program successful, the delegate agency must ensure that at least 75% of Pre-Purchase attendees complete the homebuyer education workshop, AND
 - iii. 50% pre-purchase attendees completing the homebuyer education workshop engage in a one-on-one counseling session AND
 - iv. 25% of one-on-one pre-purchase counseling clients become first-time homebuyers within the City of Chicago.
 - v. The delegate agency must submit demographic data for all reported clients in accordance with DOH standards.
 - vi. The delegate agency must be able to provide documentation proving client workshop and/or counseling outcomes reported.
3. Post-Purchase – Deliver Non-Delinquency Post-Purchase Counseling and Education and possess a strong knowledge of various topics impacting existing homeowners in Chicago. Counseling and education can include, but is not limited to Refinancing Options, Predatory Lending, Tax Exemptions, Homeowners Insurance, Probate, Estate, Wills, Energy Efficiency, Weatherization, Saving or Planning for Home Maintenance and Repairs, Reverse Mortgage and Financial

Management for Homeowners. Homeowners receiving post-purchase services must not be delinquent on their mortgage, property taxes, and insurance or at risk of becoming delinquent on their mortgage, property taxes, and insurance. A HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must conduct all Housing Counseling under this activity, and a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must approve all education.

- a. Post-Purchase Counseling
 - i. Collects necessary baseline information and related financial documents from client to verify budget and debt levels.
 - ii. Housing Counselors analyze non-delinquent clients' budget and financial situation to determine their available options as it relates to homeownership.
 - iii. Housing Counselor develops a personalized action plan outlining clear steps client must take to achieve or remedy their homeownership related goal.
 - iv. Delivered face-to-face, online or via telephone.
 - v. Available to City of Chicago residents only.
 - b. Post-Purchase Education
 - i. Group education providing clients a variety of homeownership related topics including Refinancing Options, Predatory Lending, Tax Exemptions, Homeowners Insurance, Probate, Estate, Wills, Energy Efficiency, Weatherization, Home Maintenance and Repairs, Reverse Mortgage and Financial Management for Homeowners.
 - ii. Group education curriculum must be a minimum of 90 minutes.
 - iii. Delivered face-to-face, online or via telephone.
 - iv. Available to City of Chicago residents only.
 - c. Performance Measures
 - i. The delegate agency must provide a minimum of 4 post-purchase workshops.
 - ii. 50% of post-purchase counseling clients are connected to local, state, or federal resources aiding in their housing related goal.
 - iii. The delegate agency must submit demographic data for all reported clients in accordance with DOH standards.
 - iv. The delegate agency must be able to provide documentation proving client workshop and/or counseling outcomes reported.
4. **Foreclosure** – Deliver Foreclosure Prevention Counseling and Education and possess a strong knowledge of various methods to help homeowners in Chicago avoid foreclosure. Counseling and education can include but are not limited to assisting homeowners in understanding all options available under loss mitigation, working with loan services to negotiate and obtain a resolution, guiding homeownership through non-retention options, and recovering from foreclosure. A HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must conduct all Housing Counseling under this activity, and a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must approve all education.
- a. Foreclosure Prevention Counseling
 - i. Collects necessary baseline information and related financial documents from client to verify budget and debt level.

- ii. Housing Counselor analyzes clients' budget and conducts a financial assessment to determine available options which helps the homeowner avoid mortgage delinquency or foreclosure.
- iii. Housing Counselor develops a personalized action plan outlining clear steps client must take to achieve housing related goal.
- iv. Housing counselor guides client through the loss mitigation process, including connecting them to resources for non-retention options.
- v. When necessary, Housing Counselor helps by contacting lenders/ servicers directly to investigate available mortgage relief options and submits necessary documentation to the lender/ servicer to apply for available mortgage relief options.
- vi. Provides referrals for additional services as needed.
- vii. Delivered face-to-face, online or via telephone.
- viii. Available to City of Chicago residents only.

b. Foreclosure Education

- i. Group education providing clients an overall review of the loss mitigation process, different mortgage relief options, available resources in the area and/ or budgeting and credit to avoid delinquency.
- ii. Delivered in person or online.
- iii. Group education curriculum must be a minimum of 90 minutes.
- iv. Available to City of Chicago residents only.

c. Performance Measures

- i. To make this program successful DOH expects a minimum of 20% of homeowners seeking foreclosure counseling to obtain an outcome avoiding foreclosure.
 - 1. Secure loan modification (permanent or trial)
 - 2. Obtain mortgage reinstatement.
 - 3. Obtain short sale.
 - 4. List property for sale
 - 5. Obtain repayment plan.
 - 6. Obtain a forbearance.
 - 7. Obtain a Deed in Lieu.
 - 8. Obtain a short-payoff or refinance.
 - 9. Obtain a Partial Claim.
- ii. The delegate agency must submit demographic data for all reported clients in accordance with DOH standards.
- iii. The delegate agency must be able to provide documentation proving client workshop and/or counseling outcomes reported.

5. Tenancy – Deliver Rental Counseling and Education and possessing a strong knowledge of a variety of methods that can help existing tenants and prospective tenants in Chicago. Counseling and education can include but is not limited to helping clients identify an affordable unit, educate on renter's rights and responsibilities, and help the tenant sustain their rental unit. A HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must conduct all Housing Counseling under this activity, and a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must approve all education.

- a. Rental Counseling
 - i. Collects necessary baseline information and related financial documents from client to verify budget and debt levels.
 - ii. Housing Counselors analyze client's budget and financial situation to determine their available options as it relates to renting.
 - iii. Housing Counselor develops a personalized action plan outlining clear steps client must take to achieve or remedy their housing-related goal.
 - iv. As needed, Housing Counselor works with the client to determine if they are ready to rent and assists with understanding local, state, and federal requirements and programs. Additionally, housing counselor provides in-depth assistance to renter assisting in applying to any local, state, and federal programs.
 - v. As needed, Housing Counselor works with client to find an affordable unit or market rate unit.
 - vi. As needed, Housing Counselor provides in-depth support for existing renters facing eviction and connects them to support legal services.
 - vii. Housing Counselor assists clients understanding their rights and responsibilities, including, but not limited to
 - 1. Fair Notice Ordinance
 - 2. Eviction Support
 - 3. Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (RLTO)
 - a. Landlord's general duties
 - b. Landlords right of access
 - c. Security and prepaid rent
 - 4. Heat Ordinance
 - 5. Fair Housing
 - a. Local, State and Federal Requirements
 - b. Protected Classes
 - c. Submitting a Housing Discrimination Complaint
 - viii. Delivered face-to-face, online or via telephone.
 - ix. Available to City of Chicago residents only.
- b. Rental Education
 - i. Group education providing clients an overview of their rights and responsibilities, eviction matters, and local, state and or federal laws pertaining to renter. Housing Counseling Agency can also create specialized rental topics as new rental programs become available.
 - ii. Delivered in person or online.
 - iii. Available to City of Chicago residents only.
- c. Performance Measures
 - i. The delegate agency must provide a minimum of 4 rental counseling workshops.
 - ii. To make this program successful, ensure that 75% of rental counseling achieve their housing goal. Successful outcomes include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Understanding their rights and responsibilities as tenants
 - 2. Obtaining a rental unit, whether an affordable unit or market rate unit
 - 3. Avoiding eviction
 - iii. The delegate agency must submit demographic data for all reported clients in accordance with DOH standards.

- iv. The delegate agency must be able to provide documentation proving client workshop and/or counseling outcomes reported.
6. **Condo Purchase** – Deliver Counseling and Education tailored explicitly for individuals seeking to purchase a condo in the City of Chicago. The delegate agency must possess a strong knowledge of various methods to help prospective buyers navigate the additional complexities of buying a condominium and its structure. Condo counseling and education must be separate workshops and activities from pre-purchase counseling and education. A HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must conduct all Housing Counseling under this activity, and a HUD-Certified Housing Counselor must approve all education.
- a. **Condo Counseling**
 - i. Collects necessary baseline information and related financial documents from client to verify budget and debt levels.
 - ii. Housing Counselors analyze client’s budget and financial situation to determine feasibility of purchasing a condo.
 - iii. Housing counselor provides in-depth, personalized guidance on the additional requirements for condominium owners, including homeowners’ association fees, special assessments, and consumer protections.
 - b. **Condo Education**
 - i. Group education providing clients an overall review of condominium homeownership related topics including, but not limited to:
 1. Governing Documents
 2. Condominium Rules and Regulations
 3. Financial Management
 4. Homeowner's Association (an "Association" or HOA)
 5. Election of Members of the Board of Directors
 6. Common Elements and Limited Common Elements
 7. Condominium Insurance
 8. Management Company versus Self-Managed Property
 9. Filing a Condominium Valuation Appeal
 - ii. Group education curriculum must be a minimum of 90 minutes.
 - iii. Delivered face-to-face, online or via telephone.
 - c. **Performance Measures**
 - i. The delegate agency must provide a minimum of 4 condo workshops.
 - ii. 25% of condo counseling clients purchase a condo.
 - iii. The delegate agency must submit demographic data for all reported clients in accordance with DOH standards.
 - iv. The delegate agency must be able to provide documentation proving client workshop and/or counseling outcomes reported.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Under the Bureau of Homeownership, the delegate agency must provide requested data using a city-approved platform or alternate approved method to submit delegate agency reports. Required reports include sharing qualitative and quantitative data and information the City leverages to assess program

impact every quarter. At the beginning of every program year, the delegate agency will meet with their assigned Program Managers to set performance goals and discuss expectations for the year. The delegate agency will be informed of the required reporting structure and must be able to provide data in a dynamic file type or an online platform. Dynamic file types typically include Excel, Word, Adobe, and PowerPoint. Requested data will include, but is not limited to:

- # Of workshops, events, or classes
- # Of attendees at workshops, events, or classes
- # Of individuals or households receiving counseling services
- # Of HUD-Certified Housing Counselors
- # Of Non-HUD-Certified Housing Counselors
- Client Outcomes
- Thorough responses to narrative questions
- Performance Summary
- Program and or client files

In addition to the data outlined above, the delegate agency must also be following all local, state, and federal requirements governed by the funding source leveraged for the program. DOH reserves the right to determine the appropriate funding source or funding sources for each program.

Furthermore, the delegate agency is subject to an annual program audit, which includes monitoring program service delivery and process documents. This includes, but is not limited to, providing the following to DOH:

- Agency or Program Process Manual for Service Delivery
- Client Data collection procedures
- Policy on serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) Individuals
- Policy on serving People with Disabilities including reasonable accommodation process
- Agency process for determining client satisfaction and program effectiveness
- Program quality control and program oversight procedures
- Agency's referral and or resource list
- List of all Board Members with email addresses
- Agency Personnel, Record Retention, and Information Security Policy
- Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy
- Procurement Procedure
- Signed contract agreement with subcontractors and/or consultants providing services.
- List of program staff up to date resumes
- Program staff timesheets
- Program files and or case files
- Group Education files
- Subcontractor agreements, if applicable
- Marketing, training, or program materials for client use

Any delegate agency that is not performing in accordance with DOH's goals and expectations is subject to corrective measures including, but not limited to:

- Recurring check-ins with Program Manager
- Monthly reporting in lieu of quarterly reporting
- Written plan of action by delegate agency outlining steps for improvement

- Meeting between DOH and delegate agency Senior Leadership
- Award decrease or elimination
- Cure notice

REQUIRED FOR PROPOSAL CONTENT:

The respondent is advised to carefully review the Request for Proposals (RFP) instructions and adhere to all requirements. The respondent must provide all information requested, provide thorough responses, and submit all requested documents. The respondents applying to multiple RFPs must include all required documents requested of the RFP. Failure to fully comply may cause the submitted proposal to be categorized as non-compliant and subsequently have the rejection of the non-compliant proposal.

The City reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from the respondent during the evaluation and selection process. Any respondent that makes a material misrepresentation will be eliminated from further consideration. The City reserves the right to reject proposals for any of the following reason(s):

- Non-compliant proposals (e.g., required documents not uploaded).
- Respondent has DOH or other City Departments performance-related concerns in the past (5) five years.
- The deadline for submissions was missed.
- The proposal topic was not aligned with the requirements of the RFP.
- The budget was unrealistic in terms of the estimated requirements for the program.
- Respondents proposed staffing is insufficient to carry out the scope of the proposed program.
- Respondents proposed Work Program does not meet DOH Standards and or is unrealistic in terms of the requirements for the program.

AGENCY CRITERIA:

To be eligible, respondents must meet all the requirements outlined in this RFP, including the Application Review Criteria immediately following this section. Respondents must be a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with a proven track record of providing services to vulnerable Chicagoans and being deeply engaged in their community. Successful respondents will:

- Have a proven history of providing similar services to the communities they serve.
- Have adequate staffing levels to carry out the proposed activities, including any applicable program intakes, case management services, workshop management, program quality assurance, program evaluation and monitoring, and fiscal controls.
- Have adequate systems, internal processes, and procedures outlining:
 - Process Manual for Service Delivery Process and Policy assisting individuals with Limited English Proficient (LEP) and People with Disabilities (PWD).
 - Hiring, Recruitment, and Staff Training Plans by Human Resources or other responsible parties
 - Plan for continuity of services should responsible program staff change.
- Have the capacity to coordinate and network with other public or private agencies to support or enhance resources to target populations.
- Can carry out the services under the program within the allotted timeframe of one-year.
- Can work under a reimbursement model.
- The delegate agency must submit invoices to the city for payment.

- Have a competent Board of Directors and Staff responsive to the needs of the community or communities they are serving.

Current Delegate Agency: Respondents who have been a DOH delegate agency within the past five years are subject to additional evaluation. This includes disclosing information about your organization to the Evaluation Committee member(s) before scoring. Information and or documentation to be shared with the Evaluation Committee includes, but is not limited to:

- Review of current Year to Date (YTD) deliverables
- Review of historical performance and outcomes
- Review of any performance summary or summaries

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA:

All proposals received by the deadline within the City's procurement system, iSupplier Portal, will undergo a technical review to determine whether all required components have been addressed and included. Only complete proposals will be considered by DOH, and a formal notice of rejection will be provided to the respondents submitting incomplete proposals. DOH reserves the right to waive minor irregularities across all submitted proposals. Minor irregularities include anything within the proposal that does not affect the quality of the proposed services or mandatory requirements. For example, spelling and grammatical errors may be classified as minor irregularities.

Additionally, DOH reserved the right to review the respondents' DOH-performance-related and performance-related concerns in other City Departments and remove from consideration respondents without a proven track record of effective program management.

Applications will be reviewed and scored using an Evaluation Committee comprised of members selected by DOH. Evaluation Committee members may include DOH Staff and those outside of DOH. Evaluation Committee members will be responsible for reviewing applications and supporting documents and any additional information supplied by DOH Staff to score applications based on the selection criteria outlined below.

DOH will then tabulate all Evaluation Committee Scores and review any comments or concerns identified by Evaluation Committee members. Finally, DOH's Program Director and Managing Deputy Commissioner will work collaboratively to create the recommended delegate agencies in alignment with DOH's Mission, Vision, Values, and Evaluation Committee scores and comments.

A recommendation of delegate agencies will be provided to The Commissioner. Upon review, the Commissioner may reject, deny, or recommend agencies that have applied based on previous performance or area need.

Proposals will be scored based on the following criteria, with 100 points being the maximum score:

Selection Criteria	Points
<u>Strength of the Proposed Program (Program Summary)</u>	25
<u>Organizational Capacity</u>	25
<u>Program Quality and Impact</u>	20
<u>Reasonable Cost, budget justification and leverage of funds</u>	20
<u>Overall Response</u>	10

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Required Document: As part of the RFP submission process, the following documents must be uploaded in the Administrative Section and labeled accordingly.

1. Liability Insurance
2. Board Member Identification
3. IRS Determination Letter
4. SAM Certificate
5. Certificate of Good Standing
6. Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
7. Financial Statement
8. Organizational Chart
9. Up-to-date resumes
10. Quality Assurance or Control procedures, if applicable.
11. Resource List
12. Work Program Form
13. Budget Forms
14. Agency HUD Approval
15. HUD Certification for Housing Counselors
16. Counseling and Education Materials
17. Audit or review findings, if applicable.
18. Conflict of Interest Questionnaire

BASIS OF AWARD:

DOH reserves the right to consider additional factors in the selection of delegate agencies to ensure program-level needs are met, including prioritizing organizations whose proposals demonstrate a strong track record of providing services to underserved client groups. DOH may also factor in the organization's geographic location to ensure residents in all Chicago wards can be provided services through the entire delegate agency network.

The selection of delegate agencies will not be final until the city and the selected respondent have fully negotiated and executed a contract. The city assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs by the respondent chosen in anticipation of a fully executed contract. Receipt of a final application does not commit the department to award a grant to pay any costs incurred in preparing an application. Furthermore, respondents' history of prior executed delegate agency contract with DOH is not a guarantee of continued funding under this RFP.

FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAM:

Funding for each contract executed under this RFP is subject to the availability of funds and their appropriation by the City Council of the City, State and/or Federal authorities, if applicable. No payments will be made or due to you under the terms of any contract executed under this RFP, beyond those amounts appropriated and budgeted by the City to fund payments under the terms of such contract. The City's obligations under such contract shall cease immediately, without penalty or further payment being required, if the City Council of the City, the Illinois General Assembly and/or federal funding source(s) fails to make an appropriation sufficient to fund terms of such contract.

The city reserves the right to use additional funding sources. For more information about the various rules and regulations that may govern the use of these funding sources, visit the specific web site referenced by each funding source.

- City of Chicago Local Funds
 - chicago.gov/budget
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
 - https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning

For FY26, the anticipated award range is \$55,000.00 through \$225,000.00, and final awards are contingent on the appropriation and availability of funds from the various sources identified above. Also, the contract period is anticipated to start on January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, with two (2) one-year opportunities for extension.

Funding Statistics for FY25:

The following table contains the funding statistics for January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Applications Received	12
Agencies Funded	12
Range of Funding	\$64,100 - \$247,500
Total Funding	\$1,384,200

Chicago Department of Housing: Program: Right to Counsel (RTC) (RFP# 53664)

Purpose of RFP and Scope of Services

Organizational Background

The Department of Housing is committed to expanding access and choice for residents and protecting their right to quality homes that are affordable, safe, and healthy. DOH prioritizes providing services to underserved client groups and residents of Chicago neighborhoods. More information on our Mission, Vision, and Values is on our website at [Chicago.gov/housing](https://chicago.gov/housing).

Program overview

The Right to Counsel Pilot Program (RTC), which provides free legal support to low-income tenants facing eviction, was launched in the third quarter of 2022 by the City of Chicago Department of Housing. Funded through an \$8 million allocation from the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP2), the pilot program aimed to help tenants navigate eviction proceedings by providing them with legal representation and guidance—an essential service currently unavailable to most tenants in eviction cases.

RTC places Chicago at the forefront of a national movement to offer legal counsel to tenants facing eviction. Major cities and states—including New York City, San Francisco, Washington, Connecticut, and Maryland—have implemented similar initiatives to address the growing housing crisis and ensure that tenants receive equitable legal representation in eviction proceedings. Currently, tenants facing eviction do not have the same right to legal counsel as individuals involved in criminal trials, which makes this program even more crucial.

With this RFP, the City of Chicago seeks to expand on the success of the pilot program, re-launching RTC as a CDBG-funded program to continue providing vital legal support for tenants facing eviction. This transition represents an opportunity to build upon the program's proven model while securing long-term sustainability for tenants in need of eviction defense.

Program Goals

The performance goals outlined in this RFP are grounded in the findings of [Stout's independent evaluation](#) of the RTC pilot program, which analyzed key outcomes such as eviction avoidance rates, tenant housing stability, and program cost-effectiveness. These goals are intended to set clear benchmarks for service delivery and program impact while recognizing legal representation in eviction cases is complex and influenced by a range of external factors. Future funding decisions will not necessarily be contingent on meeting every target; rather, these metrics will serve as a framework to assess the effectiveness of the program and determine the level of funding required to achieve certain outcomes. By tracking performance against these goals, we aim to refine service delivery, enhance program efficiency, and ensure that RTC continues to provide meaningful support to tenants at risk of eviction.

The selected organization will be responsible for administering the RTC program and ensuring that tenants facing eviction receive high-quality legal representation. The following performance goals will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program:

Access to Legal Representation

- Provide full legal representation to at least 600 tenants per year who meet program eligibility criteria.
- Ensure that at least 90% of tenants seeking legal assistance receive either full representation or brief legal consultation.

Eviction Prevention and Housing Stability

- Maintain an eviction avoidance rate of at least 90% for tenants seeking to avoid eviction.
- Ensure that at least 70% of tenants represented obtain more than 30 days to secure alternative housing if relocation is necessary.
- Collect follow-up data showing that at least 65% of tenants were able to achieve their housing goals with RTC assistance.

Accessibility and Service Delivery

- Develop a strategy to prioritize representation for tenants in zip codes that see the highest eviction rates in Chicago.
- Provide language access services for all non-English-speaking tenants to ensure fair access to legal assistance.

Case Resolution and Legal Outcomes

- Resolve at least 75% of cases through negotiation, settlement, or case dismissal, minimizing the number of tenants experiencing disruptive displacement.
- Ensure that 100% of tenants receive a clear explanation of their legal rights and case outcomes.

Integration with the Cook County Early Resolution Program (ERP)

- Ensure that 100% of eligible tenants referred from ERP receive an initial legal consultation within five business days of referral.
- Establish real-time case referral and tracking systems in collaboration with ERP partners to ensure seamless service coordination.

Program Activities

The selected organization will be responsible for implementing and managing the RTC program through collaboration with the Early Resolution Program (ERP) within the Cook County court system. The program will consist of multiple service levels based on tenant needs, ensuring a tailored, client-centered approach to eviction defense.

1. Tenant Referral and Screening

Tenants referred to RTC attorneys through the ERP or alternative pathways will be screened to determine the appropriate level of service based on the complexity of their case and available resources. The screening process will assess factors such as income, housing stability, legal defenses, and the likelihood of reaching a settlement.

2. Brief Legal Services (60% of Cases)

The majority of tenants (approximately 60%) will receive a brief level of service. This typically includes a legal consultation, providing tenants with essential information about their rights and options, and in some cases, initiating settlement negotiations with the landlord. The goal is to resolve the case quickly and amicably, allowing tenants to transition out of their apartment without formal eviction and avoiding homelessness. This service should minimize life disruption while ensuring that tenants leave their residence in a dignified and orderly manner.

3. **Extended Representation for Defense on Merits**

In cases where tenants have a valid defense on the merits or where extended legal representation is necessary, RTC attorneys will provide full representation through trial. This service ensures that tenants have legal support when contesting eviction proceedings or negotiating better outcomes. Extended representation may include preparing legal defenses, attending hearings, and representing tenants in court to prevent eviction or secure more favorable terms.

4. **Settlement Negotiations**

For tenants who may not require full representation but could benefit from negotiation, RTC attorneys will facilitate settlement discussions between tenants and landlords. This may include negotiating additional time to relocate, rent adjustments, or other conditions that prevent formal eviction, while keeping the tenant housed and minimizing disruption.

5. **Collaboration with ERP**

The RTC program will work closely with the Cook County ERP, ensuring seamless integration of legal services within the court process. The organization will collaborate with ERP staff to ensure timely referrals, effective communication, and the appropriate allocation of resources for tenants at different stages of eviction cases. The program will also assist tenants in navigating ERP to receive the right level of support, whether through brief legal consultations or full representation.

6. **Ongoing Legal Assistance and Follow-up**

For tenants who need continued support throughout the eviction process, the RTC program will offer ongoing legal assistance, including follow-up services post-settlement or trial. The organization will track case progress and provide tenants with guidance on future housing-related legal issues, ensuring that they maintain housing stability and avoid recurring issues with eviction.

7. **Data Collection and Reporting**

The organization will collect and maintain comprehensive data on tenant referrals, case outcomes, and service levels. This data will be used for continuous improvement of the program and for reporting to the City. Regular reporting back to the City will be required, including case statistics, progress on program goals, and any challenges faced in meeting objectives.

These activities aim to ensure that all tenants referred to the RTC program have access to the legal support they need, ultimately fostering greater housing stability and reducing the risk of homelessness in the City of Chicago.

Performance Metrics and Data Reporting Requirements

The selected organization will be responsible for tracking and reporting on the performance of the RTC program. Performance metrics are categorized into outputs (measurable activities and services provided) and outcomes (the impact of those services on tenants and the eviction process). The organization must collect and analyze relevant data and submit regular reports to the City to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous program improvement.

Outputs (Service Delivery and Program Implementation)

The organization will track and report on the following service delivery metrics:

- **Number of tenants served** – Total number of renters who receive legal assistance through RTC.
- **Case representation levels** – breakdown of cases receiving brief legal consultation, limited scope representation, and full legal representation.
- **Attorney caseloads** – Average number of active cases per attorney.
- **ERP referrals and integration** – Percentage of RTC clients referred from the ERP and rate of successful coordination between RTC attorneys and ERP services.
- **Time to case resolution** – Average duration from case intake to resolution, categorized by level of legal service provided.
- **Tenant demographics** – Data on tenant income levels, race, ethnicity, disability status, and other relevant demographic factors to assess fair service distribution.

Outcomes (Program Effectiveness and Impact)

The organization will collect and report data on RTC's impact, including:

- **Eviction avoidance rate** – Percentage of RTC clients who avoid formal eviction judgements.
- **Tenant relocation stability** - Percentage of tenants who obtain sufficient time (30+ days) to secure alternative housing when eviction cannot be prevented.
- **Client satisfaction and perceived impact** – Percentage of RTC clients who report confidence in achieving their housing goals after receiving legal assistance.

Contract management and data reporting requirements

Data Reporting Requirements

The selected organization will be required to submit regular reports to the City to monitor progress and assess program effectiveness. The reporting framework includes:

- **Monthly reports:**
 - Total number of cases handled and level of representation provided.
 - Attorney caseloads and staffing levels.
 - ERP referrals and collaboration updates.
- **Quarterly reports:**
 - Detailed demographic breakdown of tenants served.
 - Eviction avoidance rate and case resolution data.
 - Client satisfaction survey results.
 - Challenges and recommendations for program improvements.
- **Annual report:**
 - Comprehensive analysis of RTC program impact, including eviction prevention rates, relocation stability, and legal successes.
 - Summary of lessons learned and proposed strategies for program enhancement.

Preference for Real-Time Data Access

Preference will be given to organizations that can provide access to real-time data through an Application Programming Interface (API). By utilizing API, the City will be able to seamlessly integrate and monitor case-level data, providing real-time insights into program performance. Access to real-time data will empower the City to identify emerging trends, conduct continuous process improvement, and make more

compelling cases for securing additional external funding to sustain and expand the program. This capability will greatly enhance the City's ability to make informed, timely decisions while creating a transparent source of insights to Chicago residents and external stakeholders.

Application guidance for respondents

The respondent is advised to carefully review the Request for Proposals (RFP) instructions and adhere to all requirements. The respondent must provide all information requested, provide thorough responses, and submit all requested documents. Respondents applying to multiple RFPs must include all required documents requested for each RFP. Failure to fully comply may cause the submitted proposal to be categorized as non-compliant and subsequently have the rejection of the non-compliant proposal.

The City reserves the right to request clarification or additional information from the respondent during the evaluation and selection process. Any respondent that makes a material misrepresentation will be eliminated from further consideration. The City reserves the right to reject proposals for any of the following reason(s):

- Non-compliant proposals (e.g., required documents not uploaded).
- Respondent has DOH or other City Departments performance-related concerns in the past (5) five years.
- The deadline for submissions was missed.
- The proposal topic was not aligned with the requirements of the RFP.
- The budget was unrealistic in terms of the estimated requirements for the program.
- Respondents proposed staffing is insufficient to carry out the scope of the proposed program.
- Respondents proposed Work Program does not meet DOH Standards and or is unrealistic in terms of the requirements for the program.

Anticipated Term of Contract and Funding Source

The term of contract(s) executed under this RFP will be from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028. Based on need, availability of funds and contractor performance, DOH may extend this term for up to two additional years with each extension not to exceed one year. Continued support will be dependent upon the selected Respondent's performance and the continued availability of funding. We anticipate that each award will be between \$2M to \$4M depending on the size of their proposed program and available funding. We anticipate funding 1-2 providers. This contract will operate on a reimbursement basis only. No advances will be given.

This initiative is administered by DOH through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DOH and the CDBG must be met. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act if applicable.

Should a selected Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DOH reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

Anticipated Awards for this Program

DOH anticipates making one to two awards for this program, in an amount between \$2M and \$4M, based on funding available in the 2026 budget.

Budget and Justification

The wages of the staff who are employed by the respondent and any agencies that will serve as subcontractors to the respondent must meet the City's minimum wage requirements found here [City of Chicago :: Minimum Wage](#). DOH strongly encourages Respondents to pay all employees a fair living wage.

More information about calculating living wages can be found using the following link [Living Wage Calculator - Living Wage Calculation for Cook County, Illinois \(mit.edu\)](#) .

Staff supported by this grant are NOT City of Chicago employees; they are employed by the agency/agencies. The respondent must list the salary and/or hourly rate of staff assigned to this grant. Staff are not permitted to serve as volunteers; they must be paid for their time worked, skill level, lived experience (if applicable), and their expertise in the field. The job description detailing the duties and responsibilities required will serve as guidance for the workflow and salary/hourly wage. Complete a program budget outlining all detailed expenses in its entirety for this proposal (e.g. salaries, program materials, travel reimbursement). The program budget cannot exceed the available funding amount indicated in Section I.I. *Anticipated Awards for this Program*.

Eligibility, Evaluation and Selection Procedures

Eligible Respondents

Organizations eligible to be funded to operate Chicago's RTC program would generally be those with experience in providing legal services, particularly in housing law, and with a demonstrated capacity to support low-income tenants facing eviction. Eligible organizations include:

1. **Legal Aid Organizations:** Nonprofits that specialize in providing free or low-cost legal assistance to individuals and families, especially those facing housing insecurity.
2. **Public Interest Law Firms:** Law firms or legal service providers that focus on public interest work, particularly in areas such as civil rights, tenant advocacy, and housing justice.
3. **Community-Based Organizations:** Local nonprofits or community groups with a focus on supporting low-income communities, particularly those working with vulnerable renter populations. These organizations would need to partner with legal service providers to offer a comprehensive approach that includes legal counsel along with support services like housing stability programs, emergency assistance, or tenants' rights education.
4. **University Legal Clinics:** Law school clinics that provide hands-on legal experience to students under the supervision of a licensed attorney while offering free legal services to the public.

Organizations must meet specific criteria, such as having the legal expertise, capacity, and infrastructure to deliver eviction defense services effectively. They would also need to demonstrate a commitment to serving low-income tenants and work in alignment with the goals of the RTC program, such as reducing eviction rates, preventing displacement, and protecting tenants' rights.

Evaluation Process

Phases of Evaluation

The evaluation process for this Request for Proposals (RFP) will follow best practices in government procurement to ensure a transparent, fair, and objective assessment of all submitted proposals. The evaluation will be conducted by an Evaluation Committee with expertise in legal services, program management, community engagement, and data analysis. Proposals will be reviewed and scored based on the selection criteria outlined in this RFP.

The evaluation process will consist of two phases:

Phase 1: Initial Screening

- **Compliance Check:** Proposals will be reviewed to ensure that all required documents and certifications are submitted.
- **Threshold Assessment:** Proposals will be assessed to determine whether they meet the minimum qualifications and eligibility requirements specified in the RFP.

Phase 2: Detailed Evaluation

- **Independent Review:** Each committee member will independently evaluate the proposals based on the selection criteria and scoring rubric provided in this RFP. Scores will be assigned to each criterion and sub-criterion to ensure consistency across evaluators.
- **Consensus Discussion:** After the initial evaluation, the committee will meet to discuss their individual assessments and reach a consensus on each proposal's strengths and weaknesses.
- **Clarification Requests:** If necessary, the committee may request additional information or clarification from proposers to resolve any ambiguities in the proposal or ensure a complete understanding of the organization's approach and capacity.

Scoring and Evaluation Criteria

The proposals will be scored based on the following categories:

- Community Involvement (30 points)
- Strength of Proposed Program (30 points)
- Performance Management and Outcomes (15 points)
- Organizational Capacity (15 points)
- Reasonable Costs, Budget Justification, and Leverage of Funds (10 points)

Each category will be evaluated based on the specific elements outlined in the selection criteria. A numerical scoring system will be used to provide a clear, objective comparison of the proposals.

Final Decision and Source Selection

Following the detailed evaluation, the evaluation committee will consider the strengths, weaknesses, and overall value of each proposal in making the final selection. Preference will be given to proposals that provide the best value to the City in terms of both quality and cost-effectiveness, with a focus on achieving the desired outcomes of the RTC program.

Transparency and Documentation

All evaluations will be thoroughly documented, including the individual scores and feedback provided by committee members. This documentation will support the final decision and ensure transparency throughout the evaluation process. If requested, constructive feedback will be provided to applicants to foster transparency and continuous improvement.

Conflict of Interest

All members of the Evaluation Committee will be required to disclose any potential conflicts of interest related to the proposals being evaluated. In cases where conflicts of interest arise, the committee member will recuse themselves from evaluating the relevant proposal(s).

Feedback and Debriefing

Proposers may request a debriefing following the final decision. This feedback will outline the strengths and weaknesses of their proposals, providing insight into how the proposal aligned with the City's needs and selection criteria.

By following this comprehensive evaluation process, the City will select the most qualified and capable organization to operate the Right to Counsel program, ensuring effective and fair legal assistance for Chicagoans facing eviction.

Selection Criteria and Basis of Award

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINTS
<p>Community involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates the ability to build and execute processes and infrastructure that provide legal services in a safe and empowering environment for survivors, including using participant and community feedback to inform legal service delivery • The Respondent has expertise working with the focus populations and has relevant internal capacity and ties to community resources needed to serve these groups in trauma-informed and culturally specific ways • The Respondent’s leadership reflects and engages the communities it serves and is responsive to community needs 	<p>20</p>
<p>Strength of proposed program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent clearly defines legal services to be provided (directly or through partnerships/linkage agreements with other agencies) that are appropriate to addressing needs of and achieving desired outcomes for the focus population • The Respondent’s proposed program will effectively and comprehensively address the focus population’s needs and meet the program objectives defined in this RFP • The Respondent’s proposed program is supported by a strong national or local evidence base and/or aligns with best practices for the relevant field 	<p>30</p>
<p>Performance management and outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent demonstrates evidence of strong past performance against desired outcome goals and performance metrics and/or other notable accomplishments in providing services to the target population • The Respondent has the systems and processes in place to effectively track, analyze, and report on program outcomes in a timely manner • The Respondent shows experience using data to inform and improve services, ensuring that data is used to drive programmatic decision-making and continuous improvement • The Respondent has systems and processes to collect and store key participant data and performance outcomes, including providing access to real-time data (via an API or other system) for transparent reporting and internal decision-making 	<p>25</p>
<p>Organizational capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Respondent has qualified staff responsible for program oversight, management, and service delivery, including staff with expertise in the target population and the required legal services • The Respondent has adequate systems and processes to support monitoring program expenditures and fiscal controls • The Respondent has adequate Human Resources capacity to hire and manage staff, ensuring that personnel are well-trained and prepared to serve the target population with cultural competence • The Respondent’s organization reflects and engages the people of the communities it serves 	<p>15</p>

<p>Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Respondent has the fiscal capacity to implement the proposed program• The Respondent leverages other funds and in-kind contributions to support total program and administrative cost (e.g., state, federal, foundation, corporate, individual donations)• The Respondent demonstrates reasonable implementation costs and provides a clear budget justification that supports the proposed scope of work. The budget should reflect an efficient allocation of financial and human resources.	<p>10</p>
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Chicago Department of Housing: Program: Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Operating Support (RFP# 53662)

PROGRAM CONTACT

Sarah Gross, Program Director

Phone: 312-744-9775

Email: DOHCommunityPrograms@cityofchicago.org

Website: www.chicago.gov/housing

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING:

The Department of Housing is committed to expanding access and choice for residents and protecting their right to quality homes that are affordable, safe, and healthy. DOH prioritizes providing services to underserved client groups and residents of Chicago neighborhoods. More information on our Mission, Vision, and Values is on our website at Chicago.gov/housing.

PROGRAM DESIGN:

DOH is seeking nonprofit CHDO-certified organizations to apply to the Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) Request for Funding Proposal (RFP). A delegate agency is a subgrantee selected by the City of Chicago through a competitive bid process to provide services under a program. The CHDO program provides capacity-building funding support to organizations that specialize in affordable housing development. All applicants must be CHDO-certified, as CHDO certification is necessary to become eligible for certain federal funds available for community development.

CHDO Capacity Building Award Agencies are delegate agencies and subject to reporting and program requirements. The grant can be used for any stage of the development process from ideation to post-production; **read below for complete details.**

CHDO organizations with a proven track record of performance are invited to apply for CHDO Operating Assistance Grants to be utilized for administrative skill building support. At least 15 percent of HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds must be earmarked for specific activities to be undertaken by CHDOs. A certified CHDO is a private non-profit, 501(c)(3) community-based organization that has obtained staff with the capacity to develop affordable housing for the communities it serves and has met all the requirements for CHDO status pertaining to their legal status, organizational structure, capacity and experience. (See below criteria for certification.) DOH receives HOME grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which provides support to certified CHDOs for capacity building activities.

AGENCY CRITERIA:

Existing CHDO-certified organizations may apply for up to \$50,000 in funding for capacity-building activities. The CHDO Capacity-Building Award is available through a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. To be eligible to apply to the RFP, organizations must have an unexpired CHDO Certification issued during the RFI or annual renewal process. In addition to the CHDO Certification requirements, respondents to the Capacity Building Award must also:

- Have plans that are well grounded in understanding current community housing conditions, housing needs, and need for supportive services
- Commit to advancing the housing needs of people marginalized by race, ethnicity, citizenship, ability, sexual orientation, arrest or conviction record, or income

Respondents will be required to comply with all laws, regulations, policies and procedures imposed by HOME funds. Applications will need to explain activities or projects the CHDO will undertake to enhance the development skills of its staff. Additionally, all delegate agencies must comply with the Single Audit Act where applicable, including OMB Circular A-133, (entitled “Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations”), the compliance requirements set forth in OMB Compliance Supplement, and any additional testing and reporting required by the City, A-122, etc. Other City monitoring measures such as fiscal and programmatic site visits will apply.

CHDO Certification

To be certified as a CHDO, an organization must meet specific legal and organizational characteristics described below.

To be eligible, organizations must meet the following criteria:

- Be an existing non-profit 501(c)(3) development agency
- Meet the regulatory Board Composition Threshold
- Have organizational capacity and set organizational structure to carry out the activities they are planning
- Have sufficient capital to advance their projects
- Adhere to all federally established CHDO requirements including:
 - [24 CFR 92 Subpart G](#)
 - [CPD-97-11 CHDO Guidance](#)
 - [CPD-06-01 CHDO Operating Expenses](#)
 - [CPD 97-09 CHDO Proceeds](#)

Current Certified CHDOs Qualifying Criteria for 2026 Grants

Applicants must meet the following requirements according to HUD’s designation requirements pertaining to their:

1. Legal Status

You must be an organization in good standing with the State of Illinois. Your organization’s mission must have a provision for quality housing that is affordable to low-and moderate-income residents as evidenced in the:

- Charter
- Articles of Incorporation
- By-Laws – or
- Resolution of the Board of Directors
- 501(c)(3) Status
- NO ONE IN THE ORGANIZATION CAN PROFIT FROM CHDO EARNINGS

2. Organizational Structure

The certified CHDO Board must be composed as follows:

- At least one-third must be representatives of the low-income community.

- No more than one-third may be public officials or employees of the City of Chicago, Department of Planning and Development
- The balance is unrestricted
- Certified CHDO applicants should have established systems for community involvement in parts of their service areas where housing will be developed, such as special committees, advisory councils or open town meetings

3. Capacity and Experience

A certified CHDO applicant must also demonstrate that it has at least one year of experience serving the community where it intends to develop affordable housing:

- The year of service does not have to be directly related to housing.
- The Certified CHDO applicant must identify the activity and/or project which will benefit from the administrative support grant they are seeking for staff skill building and the deliverables resulting.

Certified CHDO applicants must demonstrate the capacity of their key staff to carry out the HOME-assisted activities they are planning:

- Experienced key staff who have successfully completed projects similar to those proposed by the Certified CHDO; or
- Key staff with limited experience who will be trained through planning with a consultant.
- Key staff demonstrating CHDO capacity cannot be municipal, county or state employees; or consultants (paid or volunteer) not for training or volunteers.

4. Financial Standards

Certified CHDO applicants must have financial accountability standards that conform to 24 CFR 84.21, "Standards for Financial Management Systems."

Respondents proposed facility must meet minimum health and safety standards, and all applicable federal regulations, including A.D.A. compliant, compliant with building codes and federal regulations, minimum of one private space for one-on-one counseling.

Any Respondent, whose existing contract with the City of Chicago is not in good standing, will not be considered for agreement. Other agencies not eligible include those that have had a City contract terminated for default; are currently debarred and/or have been issued a final determination by a City, State or Federal Agency for performance of a criminal act, abridgement of human rights or illegal/fraudulent practices.

SCOPE OF SERVICES:

Design Description

In applying for this general operating, administrative support for staff skill building grant. Respondent will provide a program description detailing the activity/project to be provided to staff for the enhancement of skills and the deliverables necessary to carry out the task, budget for skill building activities, plan describing the recent development/planned activities and/or projects which indicate the low-and moderate-income community being served/to be served and tenant involvement plan.

Deliverables

Respondent will be requested to provide quarterly reports on development skill building activity electronically. Respondent agrees to adhere to all DOH associated activities and reporting requirements.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES:

This is a competitive process open to all certified non-profit CHDOs in good standing. Respondents must have a minimum of two-year proven development track record for the location of the Agency’s focus and must serve residents of the City of Chicago. An evaluation committee selected by DOH will review and rate all proposals based on the criteria outlined below. It will be evaluated on the strengths of the proposal and the responsiveness to the criteria. Applicants must also identify the activity and/or project which will benefit from the administrative support for staff skill building and the deliverables resulting.

Failure to submit a complete proposal and/or to respond fully to all requirements may cause the proposal to be deemed unresponsive and, therefore, subject to rejection and disqualification.

Successful respondents will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the populations to be served or similar populations and in the way in which these populations should be served as evidenced by previous or current successful operations.
- Demonstrate the resources and expertise to meet all administrative and fiscal requirements.
- Demonstrate program and administrative design/capability.
- Demonstrate cultural competency.
- Support the Department of Housing’s mission, vision and values. Consideration of prior performance (if applicable).
- Network and participate in community meetings and outreach events sponsored by DOH and its affiliates.

Additional considerations:

- Consideration of all DOH program and fiscal monitoring reports (if applicable).
- Consideration of prior performance (if applicable).

Consideration of all DOH program and fiscal monitoring reports (if applicable).

Proposals will be rated within each program category based on criteria and consideration. The Commissioner, upon review of recommended agencies, may reject, deny or recommend agencies that have applied based on previous performance and/or are needed.

The City assumes no liability for costs incurred in responding to this RFP or for costs incurred by the Respondent in anticipation of a fully executed contract. DOH reserves the right to seek clarification of information submitted in response to this RFP and/or to request additional information during the evaluation process and make site visits and/or require Respondents to make an oral presentation or be interviewed by the review subcommittee, if necessary.

Proposals will be scored based on the following criteria, with 100 points being the maximum score:

Selection Criteria	Points
<u>Strength of the Proposed Program (Program Summary)</u>	25
<u>Organizational Capacity</u>	25
<u>Program Quality and Impact</u>	20

<u>Reasonable Cost, budget justification and leverage of funds</u>	20
<u>Overall Response</u>	10

PROGRAM CONTACT:

Respondents are strongly encouraged to submit all questions and comments related to the RFP via iSupplier Online Discussions. For answers to program-related questions, please contact:

Name:	Sarah Gross
Phone:	312-744-9775
Email:	DOHCommunityPrograms@cityofchicago.org
Website:	Chicago.gov/housing

Questions regarding the iSupplier technical aspects of responding to this RFP may be directed to: OBM: CustomerSupport@cityofchicago.org or 312-744-4357 (HELP).

FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAM:

The anticipated term of agreement executed under this RFP will run from 1/1/2026 through 12/31/2026. The City reserves the right to extend the initial term of the agreement by up to two additional periods, each period not to exceed one year, based on need and availability of funds, program regulations and successful performance outcomes. Should the Respondent's contract be terminated or relinquished for any reason, DOH reserves the right to return to the pool of Respondents generated from this RFP to select another qualified Respondent.

Approximately 6 awards will be given from HOME funds, in amounts **up to \$50,000** each. A total of \$300,000 will be allocated for the entire program.

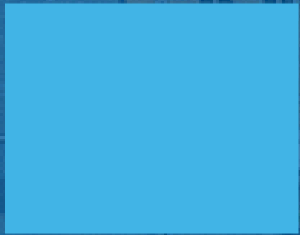
Funding Authority

This initiative is administered by DOH and HUD. Consequently, all guidelines and requirements of DOH, the City of Chicago, and HUD must be met. Additionally, all successful Respondents must comply with the Single Audit Act, if applicable.

Funding Statistics for FY25

The following table contains the funding statistics for January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Applications Received	6
Agencies Funded	6
Range of Funding	All award amounts were \$50,000 each
Total Funding	\$300,000



OBM

Office of Budget
& Management