Mission: "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 Homeless Services Division: CDGA RFP Process and Homeless Prevention Assistance Program RFP – Frequently Asked Questions

About our RFPs, selection criteria, and application process overall

What programs are you issuing RFPs for as part of this process?

Program	Solicitation # in eProcurement
Coordinated Entry	6223
Frequent Users Service Engagement (FUSE)	6129
Homeless Prevention Assistance Program	6213
Mobile Crisis Response and Shelter Referral	6210
Outreach, Engagement & Housing Navigation Services	6225
Permanent Housing with Short Term Supports	6218
Permanent Supportive Housing Support Services including Safe Havens	6220
Rapid Rehousing Program Coordinator	6222
Rental Assistance Program Manager	6221
Shelter	6226
Youth Intentional Housing Supports	6224

What is the DFSS Strategic Framework?

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) launched the Strategic Framework in early 2016 to transition our department to a more outcomes-oriented and data-driven approach for delivering services. At its heart, the Strategic Framework is about placing greater focus on the quality of services and client progress (outcomes), as opposed to the number of clients or units of service delivered (outputs). The City's Community Development Grant Application (CDGA) is DFSS' first opportunity to incorporate the Strategic Framework into our contracting and engage with the service provider community to improve outcomes in line with these goals. Outcomes-based decision-making is a shift happening in human services nationally and we have an opportunity to be at the forefront of this because we share a common commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable Chicagoans.

Why do your RFPs, selection criteria, and application questions look different than in previous years?
As part of our Strategic Framework efforts to set priorities and outcome goals for our work, DFSS wants to engage with our delegate agency partners in new ways to improve services and outcomes in line with our goals. Our RFPs look different because we want to use them as critical tools to ensure outcomes continue to be at the center of our work; communicate our priorities for and how we will track data and support continuous improvement; and share information about best practices, high-quality services, and the needs present in our community. In Homeless Services in particular, we also wanted to create more flexibility for delegate agencies by providing options for more streamlined contract administration, inviting agencies to offer innovative solutions to critical challenges we face in our programs, and continuing to refine our approach to measuring impact.

What changed about your RFPs this year?
We have added content to RFPs to ensure we clearly communicate desired outcome goals, target population, program requirements, key performance measures, and additional context for where the program is today and our priorities for the future. We've also changed the overall structure of the set of RFPs released this year. We released several overarching RFPs that encompass multiple program models. These RFPs are oriented around shared, higher-level outcome goals and group together similar activities that align with these goals.

Do these "overarching RFPs" mean you've changed or eliminated CoC program models?
No. All of the program models we funded in 2017 are represented in the RFPs released in Spring 2018. Please consult this document to help you understand the RFP that your program is part of and other key information about applications: [click here for Application Information by Program Model document]. Program models are still aligned with the Chicago Continuum of Care (CoC) program models chart [click here to view].

The changes we've made in RFPs and applications do not change program models themselves but instead serve to: (1) bring similar program models together under overarching RFPs to provide flexibility for you in preparing applications and administering contracts; (2) solicit information to help DFSS understand the services you can offer, compare applications, and select the right mix of delegates as part of a broader portfolio of services; and (3) continue to refine our approach to measuring success building on the framework established by the Chicago CoC.

What changed about selection criteria?
We assigned new category names and point values that reflect DFSS priorities and re-arranged, refined, and added selection criteria to reflect key concepts in human services (e.g. understanding of target population, evidence base). In particular, the category entitled "Program performance, outcomes, and quality" has been elevated with more points and new criteria about past performance, data collection and performance management capabilities, and use of data to improve services. We are also placing a greater emphasis on diversity and inclusivity within the organizations we fund, and have included criteria about applicants' commitment to ensuring that they reflect and engage the diverse people and experiences of the communities served.

You can view the selection criteria in the text of each RFP. For Homeless Services RFPs, each category is awarded the following points: Strength of proposed program (30 points); Program performance,

outcomes, and quality (30 points); Organizational capacity (25 points); and Reasonable costs, budget justification, and leverage of funds (15 points).

What changed about application questions?
To help us understand your work and make better decisions, we adjusted the application to ask more specific questions that are tailored to a human services context and our programs. We also added new questions that reflect DFSS's focus on evidence, best practices, and using data to improve. For some RFPs, we're asking you to submit HMIS data reflecting your performance to date (*see below*). There are more questions than in previous applications, but questions are more specific, which should allow you to provide more concise responses. By redesigning our questions, we hope to learn more about the unique strengths of your agencies and programs. We recommend you take a fresh look at the application to make sure you can respond to these new concepts.

How will my application be scored?
Applications will be read and scored on a 100 point system, split out across selection criteria categories (e.g., 30 points for "Strength of Proposed Program"). Questions are organized by selection criteria category and answers to questions will be assigned points based on the extent to which they align with the associated selection criteria. DFSS may also consider geography, service array, language, and ability to serve specific sub-populations, in addition to division- or program-specific factors, to ensure a variety of needs can be met through delegate agency services.

Why are you asking for HMIS ART reports for some of the Homeless Services RFPs?
DFSS is focused on using quality data to make more informed funding and policy decisions and understand and improve program performance with our delegates. To improve the quality of the data we use in our reading and scoring process, we are requesting that agencies that currently administer projects submit ART reports with key performance measures based off of HMIS data to provide evidence of past performance for some of our RFPs. DFSS is utilizing a special DFSS Advanced Reporting Tool (ART) report that All Chicago's HMIS Team has built. It is similar to the ART report that the Chicago CoC uses as part of its HUD NOFA competition. By doing so, DFSS aims to align with existing approaches used by the CoC and reduce the separate reporting burden for agencies.

How will ART reports be considered in scoring applications?
We will use this data as part of our application scoring. Points for prior performance will be assigned based on relative performance compared to other applicants with similar services and/or targets established for program models by the Chicago CoC. For example, a provider with 70% on a key performance outcome in an ART report would score higher than another provider operating the same program model with 40% on the same key performance outcome. We have not pre-assigned point numbers for specific performance (e.g., "X points if above Y% on housing outcome"). Since DFSS has never received this kind of HMIS-based performance data before, we plan to review data submitted and determine the most appropriate approach to assigning points based on the data we receive.

Can we submit ART reports voluntarily for projects we operate that (1) DFSS didn't ask for an ART report for and/or (2) DFSS doesn't fund?
Yes – please do. We would review that data as evidence of your agency's ability to achieve outcomes for the program. In general, we're interested in learning more about your track record of performance.

How will DFSS compare applicants that submit ART reports vs. applicants who don't need to?
Our aim is to compare "like with like" applications whenever possible. We will compare applicants that were required to submit ART reports against one another to establish an appropriate score. Similarly, we will compare applicants that did <u>not</u> submit ART reports and provided other scoring data or a narrative response against other applicants that did the same to establish an appropriate score. Note that applications across RFPs will not be directly compared to one another. For example, a drop-in center that was not required to submit an ART report will not be compared against an interim housing provider that was required to submit an ART report.

Are there limits on the length of my answers to application questions?
Yes. eProcurement has a 4,000 character limit in all text fields. This includes spaces and punctuation.

When can I start working on my application? When is my application due?
You can access application questions and begin to complete your application in the eProcurement system on April 16, 2018 at 9am. **Applications are due on May 31, 2018 at 12pm.** No late applications will be accepted.

If my agency is selected through the RFP process, how long will the contracts for services last?
Successful applicants will have the opportunity to sign one-year contracts with the City for January 1, 2019-December 31, 2019 with the option to renew for another year of funding based on performance and extend the contract until December 31, 2020.

My agency's program has been funded by CDBG for the past several years including in 2018. Do these RFPs apply to us?
Yes – the vast majority of agencies that operate homeless services programs have to apply for funding in 2019 regardless of what funding source you receive. For a list of every program model that has to apply for funding, see this document: [click here for Application Information by Program Model document]

Is there a range of funding for each program? How many agencies do you plan to fund?
At the end of each RFP, we have listed the amount of funding provided and the number of projects funded in 2017 for all of the programs contained under that RFP. We have not determined the allocation of funding across programs yet, and plan to do so as part of DFSS's RFP application review process. You can also consult the following document for information whether we're likely to fund one or multiple agencies: [click here for Application Information by Program Model document].

You've mentioned outcomes, performance measurement, and using data to improve services a lot. How will that change the way we work together?
As part of our commitment to be more outcomes-oriented, we want to actively and regularly collaborate with our delegate agencies to monitor performance and track improvement over time. We

will establish a clear plan for data collection, sharing data, and expectations for what this collaboration will look like (e.g. meetings, communications) in any resulting contract.

We will pursue different approaches to performance improvement for each program based on current performance and the level of collaboration that might be needed. For some programs, we will schedule group meetings monthly with delegates to review performance data, identify trends, troubleshoot problems, and make needed adjustments in program delivery together. For others, we will report back performance data on a quarterly basis to keep everyone informed. In addition, the Homeless Services Division also wants to share our performance against our Strategic Framework outcome goals with delegates and get your input on how we can continue to improve. Together, we can actively use data to improve results, spread best practices across the delegate community, and adjust program delivery. In the future, we also plan to use absolute and relative performance against key performance measures to inform funding decisions.

General questions about preparing applications

Can I apply for multiple projects within one RFP?
Yes. In past RFPs, applicants for DFSS homeless services programs were asked to submit one application for each project. We've heard from many delegates about how challenging it can be to have many separate contracts for different parts of your work that are similar in nature, scope, and goals – introducing complexity for contract compliance, program management, and administering associated budgets and funds. We want to create more flexibility for providers administering multiple projects to manage contracts encompassing a broader set of related work.

This year, agencies are invited to submit one application covering multiple projects that fall within the same category of an RFP. We recommend taking this approach to give you more flexibility in administering your contracts (since your application will correspond to your budget and contract). However, if desired, agencies may continue to submit separate applications for projects within the same category if you believe that will enable you to prepare a stronger application and/or more easily administer the resulting contract for the work.

Please review each RFP closely to understand categories you can apply within and associated restrictions. If you plan to include multiple projects in one application, pay close attention to the application questions which will ask you to provide information about each project (e.g., number of beds per project, estimated breakdown of cost per project).

What if I want to submit multiple applications… do I need multiple iSupplier accounts?
Yes – you will need multiple iSupplier accounts to submit more than one response to an RFP. Unfortunately, this bug has **not** been fixed in the system. Organizations that plan to submit more than one proposal to a specific RFP may do so by submitting each proposal by a separate, unique registered account user. Please refer to this handout for guidance: [click link here].

Can I still apply for two projects within one model if they have different populations, service models, ART reports, etc.?
Please review each RFP closely to understand categories you can apply within and associated restrictions. These categories are designed to group similar types of activities and services. Submitting

one application is permitted if the two projects are within the same category. If ART reports are requested, you should submit multiple ART reports (one for each project). It's up to you to decide if you'd prefer to prepare one or two applications and consequently administer one or two contracts. If you determine that your programs feel too different (whether because of the populations you serve, how you deliver your services, or monitoring requirements), then you are free to submit multiple applications you have as in the past.

If I combine two or more of my projects, will my funding sources remain the same?
Not necessarily. Our goal is to identify ways to streamline funding sources too, and reduce the number of different funding sources providers receive (therefore reducing complexity of contract management, budgeting, and compliance reporting). These decisions will be made as part of DFSS's RFP application review process.

Do I have to submit an ART report for my application?
This applies to a few of the RFPs and program models (except domestic violence projects):

Providers currently administering these projects…	…. will submit and be scored based on data from this ART report summary tab…	…as part of their application for the following RFP
Interim Housing (**not** *for domestic violence projects)*	Interim	Shelter RFP
Permanent Housing with Short-term Supports (**not** *for domestic violence projects)*	PHwSS	Permanent Housing with Short-Term Supports RFP
Permanent Supportive Housing	PSH	Permanent Supportive Housing Support Services (including Safe Havens) RFP
Safe Havens	SH	
Youth Intentional Transitional Housing (project-based or scattered-site)	Youth TH	Youth Intentional Housing Supports RFP
Youth Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)	PSH	

How do I pull and submit an ART report?
If this applies to you, please consult the Instruction Guide assembled by All Chicago's HMIS team for detailed instructions on how to pull these reports: [click here for link]. Agency Technical Administrators (ATAs) will have access to the "2018 DFSS CDGA RFP Evaluation Report" under the ART Browser drop-downs. Individual reports should be pulled for each relevant project. ATAs are encouraged to check reports for accuracy and update data as needed before running final reports. Agencies should submit their final reports in excel and PDF as part of their RFP applications in the eProcurement system.

If you have questions about how to run the report, please submit a ticket at the HMIS Helpdesk at https://hmis.allchicago.org or email hmis@allchicago.org. Be sure the subject of your message uses the wording "DFSS RFP ART report." All Chicago's HMIS Helpdesk is available to help you from April 16 to May 4.

When can I pull the ART report? When do I need to submit it?
You can pull ART reports at any time up until the application deadline but we encourage you to start as early as possible. They should be included as part of your application in the eProcurement system and are due – along with the rest of your application – on May 31, 2018 at 12pm CT.

What if my program doesn't have to submit an ART report?
For projects not covered by the table above, you should submit your key performance outcomes for your relevant projects the last 12 months of their previous contract (i.e., 2017 calendar year). If you do not currently operate a program, you will be asked to explain why you can execute and achieve these outcomes as part of your application.

How many years should I include in the budget form?
The budget should only be for one year (2019).

If our agency operates a program that is funded by City dollars but also have a contract for the same program that is funded by the City with State dollars, do we need to submit a separate application and/or separate budget?
You should submit one budget per program regardless of funding sources you've received in the past. At this time, we do not know which funding sources we will be using to fund specific programs.

If we combine several programs under one RFP application, what program name do we use to identify it in the section that requires "Title of Proposed Program"?
It is up to the agency to create a name for the proposed program. If you are combining several projects into one application, you need to be very clear which projects are covered by your application. In different application questions, you may be asked to specify the number of beds, population served, site information, and cost for each project. Please take care to provide this detail to help us understand what is included in your application.

I saw a question that asked me to "select yes/no" but included a text window not a drop-down or some other selection mechanism. What should I do?
Please write in "yes" or "no" only.

Should the work plan match the applicable performance measures listed in the RFP?
Yes, the work plan should match the applicable performance measures listed for your program type in the relevant RFP. Note that the RFP also specifies that 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 collaboration, including key performance objectives, will look like in any resulting contract. DFSS may also add metrics in contracts as we continue to refine our approach over time.

One of the documents we've been asked to upload into eProcurement is a cost allocation plan. Is there a template that we should use?
We currently don't have a cost allocation plan template. Please use your own cost allocation plan document.

Can we use a Certificate of Good Standing from December 2017 to upload into eProcurement as part of this RFP?
Yes. We request that Certificates of Good Standing should be dated within the last year.

Is there a list of all the attachments we have to submit as part of our application?
The required attachments vary by RFP so you should read the application carefully. Applicants can also look at the "RFQ view" in eProcurement which will show you the documents that have to be uploaded. Many of the RFPs may require the following attachments to be uploaded:

- Budget form
- Work plan form
- ART reports for certain RFPs (and/or option to upload other documents to reflect your performance)
- Resume or job description of individual who will manage the program

As an organization, you may also be required to upload the following attachments to provide agency information unrelated to a specific RFP:

- Articles of incorporation
- Liability insurance
- Board of directors member identification
- IRS determination latter
- SAM certificate/registration status
- Certificate of good standing
- Financial statements (updated annually)
- Most recent audit information
- Conflict of Interest Questionnaire
- Cost allocation plan (if indirect cost is included)
- Signature authorizations

Questions about Homeless Prevention Assistance RFP
Do I need to submit an ART report for this RFP?
No.

What if I have more questions?
We encourage you to visit the DFSS CDGA information webpage where a variety of documents and resources are posted, including the videos for our webinars: [click here to visit]. You can also reach out to the City's eProcurement assistance hotline at 312-744-0358 for questions related to using the system.

Please check this link and follow us on Twitter for the most up-to-date information.