

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FOR**

**Allegheny County Transportation Initiative**

**ISSUING OFFICE**

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Human Services  
Bureau of Procurement and Contract Management  
Room 528 Health and Human Services Building  
625 Forster Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120**

**RFA NUMBER**

**25-RFA-13798**

**DATE OF ISSUANCE**

**October 7, 2025**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS FOR  
25-RFA 13798, Allegheny County Transportation Initiative**

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## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

The Commonwealth will make every effort to adhere to the following schedule:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
Deadline to submit questions via email to <a href="mailto:RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV">RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV</a>	Potential Applicants	October 15, 2025 12:00 PM EST
Answers to Potential Applicant questions posted to the Department of General Services website at <a href="http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Search.aspx">http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Search.aspx</a> no later than this date.	DHS	October 28, 2025
Please monitor this website for all communications regarding this Request for Applications.	Potential Applicants	Ongoing
Application must be received by the Issuing Office at <a href="mailto:RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV">RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV</a> .	Applicants	November 25, 2025 12:00 PM EST

## PART I

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- I-1. Purpose.** This Request for Applications (“RFA”) provides to those interested in submitting applications for the subject procurement (“Applicants”) sufficient information to enable them to prepare and submit applications for the Department of Human Services’ (“Department”) consideration on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (“Commonwealth”) to satisfy a need for the **Allegheny County Transportation Initiative** (“Project”). This RFA contains instructions governing the requested applications, including: the requirements for the information and material to be included; a description of the service to be provided; requirements that Applicants must meet to be eligible for consideration; general evaluation criteria; and other requirements specific to this RFA.
- I-2. Issuing Office.** The Department’s Office of Administration, Bureau of Procurement and Contract Management (“Issuing Office”) has issued this RFA on behalf of the Commonwealth. The sole point of contact in the Commonwealth for this RFA shall be Nadine Chinapoo, [RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV](mailto:RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV), the Issuing Officer for this RFA. Please refer all inquiries to the Issuing Officer.
- I-3. Overview of Project.** The Department, on behalf of the Department’s Office of Income Maintenance (“OIM”), is seeking a qualified Applicant to provide transportation allowances for transportation to and from Employment & Training (“E&T”) activities for qualified Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”) E&T participants residing in Allegheny County. The selected Applicant shall make issuances for monthly bus passes, stored value vouchers, gas cards, and alternative transportation allowances such as ridesharing options. The selected Applicant shall obtain Connect Cards directly from the Port Authority Transit of Allegheny and obtain and provide gas cards in a way that maximizes savings, including but not limited to bulk purchase savings, and administer these services in a responsible, fiscally-accountable manner. The selected Applicant shall implement plans to utilize the most cost-effective transportation options available for all areas of Allegheny County, including alternative transportation allowances such as ridesharing options.

The Allegheny County Assistance Office (“CAO”) will refer the E&T participants to the selected Applicant. TANF and SNAP recipients are eligible to receive transportation allowances from the selected Applicant if they are participating in an allowable E&T activity, which will be determined by the CAO.

**I-4. Objectives.**

- A. General.** The Department seeks a qualified Applicant to oversee and administer the transportation allowance program in a centralized location with a physical presence in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, for TANF and SNAP E&T participants.
- B. Specific.** The Department’s specific objectives are to efficiently address transportation needs in Allegheny County for qualifying TANF and SNAP E&T participants, prevent any possible duplication of services, and reduce fraud, waste, and abuse. The selected Applicant shall be responsible for documenting and inputting recipient data into the appropriate secure Commonwealth system as prescribed by the Department. The Department has chosen this delivery method as a means to improve fiscal integrity by providing the assurance that transportation services are obtained, retained, and used for their intended purpose, which will be validated by an individual’s participation in an E&T activity.

**C. Enhancements:** The Department is open to exploring future enhancements to facilitate the streamlining and efficiency of the transportation services for TANF and SNAP E&T participants. Applicants may propose enhancements to the Department for review. The selected Applicant shall provide the proposed additional services at the negotiated price if the Department accepts the enhancements and funding is available.

- I-5. Type of Agreement.** The Department intends to award one agreement as the result of this RFA. If the Department enters into an agreement, it will be a **Cost Reimbursement** agreement containing the Standard Grant Terms and Conditions as shown in **Appendix F** of this RFA. The Department, in its sole discretion, may undertake negotiations with Applicants whose applications, in the judgment of the Department, show them to be qualified, responsible and capable of performing the Project.
- I-6. Rejection of Applications.** The Department, in its sole and complete discretion, may reject any application received as a result of this RFA.
- I-7. Incurring Costs.** The Commonwealth and the Department are not liable for any costs an Applicant incurs in the preparation and submission of its application, in participating in the RFA process, or in anticipation of agreement award.
- I-8. Questions & Answers.** If an Applicant has questions regarding this RFA, the Applicant must submit the questions by email (**with the subject line “25-RFA-13798 Question”**) to the Issuing Officer named in **Part I, Section I-2** of this RFA. If the Applicant has questions, they must be submitted as they arise via email but **no later than** the date stated in the Calendar of Events. The Applicant shall not attempt to contact the Issuing Officer by any other means.

When questions are submitted after the date specified in the Calendar of Events, the Issuing Officer *may* respond to questions of an administrative nature by directing the questioning Applicant to specific provisions in the RFA. If the Department decides to respond to a non-administrative question *after* the date for receipt of questions, the Department will provide the answer to all Applicants through an addendum.

All questions and responses will be posted on the Department of General Services (“DGS”) website and are considered as an addendum to, and part of, this RFA in accordance with RFA **Part I, Section I-9** of this RFA.

- I-9. Addenda to the RFA.** If the Department deems it necessary to revise any part of this RFA before the application response date, the Department will post an addendum to eMarketplace at <http://www.emarketplace.state.pa.us/Search.aspx>. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to periodically check the website for any new information or addenda to the RFA. The Department shall not be bound by any verbal information nor shall it be bound by any written information that is not either contained within the RFA or formally issues as an addendum.
- I-10. Response Date.** To be considered for selection, Applicants must submit electronic copies of their applications to the Issuing Office and the Issuing Office must receive the applications **no later than** the date and time specified in the Calendar of Events. Electronic copies of applications must be submitted to [RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV](mailto:RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV). Applicants should allow sufficient time for electronic submission and receipt of their applications. The Department will **not** accept hard copy applications or applications via facsimile transmission. **The Department will reject late applications or portions of applications.** “Late” includes, but is not limited to, applications which are received within a minute or less after the due date and time, as well as applications that are received several hours or days after the due date and time.

## **I-11. Application Requirements.**

- A. Application Submission:** To be considered, Applicants should submit a complete response to this RFA to the Issuing Office, using the format provided in **Part I, Section I-11.B**, providing **one copy of the Technical Submittal and one copy of the Cost Submittal** via email to [RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV](mailto:RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV). The subject line of the email must specify “**25-RFA-13798 Application.**” Email attachments are limited to 10 MB, cumulatively, per email, and files may not be sent in any compressed format. Any part of the application or its attachments over that limit must be sent via separate emails, with each labeled “**25-RFA-13798 Application Part X of Y**” (total number of emails). The Department will not accept encrypted email for the application submission.

The electronic response must be in Microsoft Office or Microsoft Office-compatible format to include Adobe Acrobat pdf files, except for **Appendix B, Cost Submittal**, which should be submitted as a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet; and any spreadsheets must be in Microsoft Excel. If an Applicant designates information as confidential or proprietary or trade secret protected in accordance with **Part I, Section I-17.**, the Applicant must also include one redacted version of the Technical Submittal, also excluding financial capability information. Applicants may not lock or protect any cells or tabs on the Cost Submittal Worksheet. **Applicants shall not lock, encrypt or restrict access to any files.** Applicants shall make no other distribution of its application to any other Applicant or Commonwealth official or Commonwealth consultant. Each application page should be numbered for ease of reference. An official authorized to bind the Applicant to its provisions must sign the application. If the official signs the **Application Cover Sheet (Appendix A** to this RFA) and the Application Cover Sheet is attached to the Applicant’s application, the requirement will be met. For this RFA, the application must remain valid for 120 days or until an agreement is fully executed. If the Department selects the Applicant’s application for award, the contents of the selected Applicant’s application will become, except to the extent the contents are changed through Best and Final Offers or negotiations, agreement obligations.

Each Applicant submitting an application specifically waives the ability to withdraw or modify it, except that the Applicant may withdraw its application by written notice and submitting it to [RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV](mailto:RA-PWRFAQUESTIONS@PA.GOV) prior to the date and time specified in the Calendar of Events of when applications are due. An Applicant may modify its submitted application prior to the exact hour and date set for application receipt only by submitting a new application or modification that complies with the RFA requirements.

- B. Application Format:** Applicants should submit their applications in the format, including heading descriptions, outlined below. To be considered, the application should respond to all application requirements. Applicants should provide any other information thought to be relevant, but not applicable to the enumerated categories, as an appendix to the application. All cost data relating to this application should be kept separate from and not included in the Technical Submittal. Applicants should not reiterate technical information in the Cost Submittal. Each application shall consist of the following two separate submittals:

### **1. Technical Submittal:**

- a.** Applicants should format their responses as outlined below and should consider the email attachment file size limitations included in **Section I-11.A** for file contents. **Do not include cost data in the Technical Submittal.** The Technical Submittal shall include the following sections:

- i. Table of Contents
  - ii. Statement of the Project
  - iii. Management Summary
  - iv. Qualifications
  - v. Financial Capability
  - vi. Work Plan
  - vii. Requirements
  - viii. Reports & Project Control
  - ix. Key Performance Standards
- b. Complete, sign and include **Appendix D - Lobbying Certification** and if applicable, the **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**.
  - c. Complete and include **Appendix C, Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act Sub-Recipient Data Sheet**.
  - d. Complete and include **Appendix E, Trade Secret Confidential Proprietary Information Notice Form**.
  - e. Complete and include **Appendix I, Worker Protection and Investment Certification Form**.

**2. Cost Submittal, in response to Part IV.**

Technical Submittals must adhere to the following format:

- a. Pages must be 8.5 by 11 inches with right and left margins of one inch.
- b. Must use Arial or Times New Roman font with a type size of 12.
- c. Section headings, shown in this **Part I, Section I-11**, should be used.
- d. Include a page number and identification of the Applicant in the page footer of each page.
- e. Specifically reference materials provided in any appendix by page numbers in the body of the application.
- f. Exceptions for paper and font size are permissible for project schedule or for graphical exhibits and material in appendices.

The Department may request additional information which, in the Department's opinion, is necessary to verify that the Applicant's competence, number of qualified employees, business organization, and financial resources are adequate to perform according to the RFA.

The Department may make investigations as deemed necessary to determine the ability of the Applicant to perform the Project, and the Applicant shall furnish to the Issuing Office all requested information and data. The Department may reject any application if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such Applicant fails to satisfy the Department that such Applicant is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the RFA and to complete the Project as specified.

**I-12. Economy of Preparation.** Applicants should prepare applications simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the Applicant's ability to meet the requirements of the RFA.



**I-13. Alternate Applications.** The Department has identified the basic approach to meeting its requirements, allowing Applicants to be creative and propose their best solution to meeting these requirements. The Department will not accept alternate applications.

**I-14. Discussions for Clarifications and Negotiations.** Applicants may be required to make an oral or written clarification of their applications, or both, to the Department to ensure thorough mutual understanding and Applicant responsiveness to the solicitation requirements. The Department will initiate requests for clarifications. Clarifications may occur at any stage of the evaluation and selection process prior to the award of an agreement.

The Department, in its sole discretion, may undertake negotiations with Applicants whose applications, shown them to be qualified, responsible, and capable of performing the Project. Negotiations may occur at any stage of the evaluation and selection process prior to the award of an agreement.

**I-15. Oral or Written Presentations.** Applicants may be required to make an oral or written presentation of their applications to the Department to demonstrate an Applicant's capabilities and ability to provide the services required in the RFA. The Department will initiate requests for presentations; and for oral presentations, may include a request that key personnel be present. The oral presentation will be held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Presentations may be requested at any stage of the evaluation and selection process prior to the award of the grant agreement.

**I-16. Prime Applicant Responsibilities.** The selected Applicant must perform services valued at least at 50% of the total agreement cost. Nevertheless, the Department will require the Applicant assume responsibility for all services offered in its application whether it produces them itself or by sub-agreement. The Department will consider the selected Applicant to be the sole point of contact for all agreement matters.

**I-17. Application Contents.**

**A. Confidential Information.** The Commonwealth does not require confidential proprietary information or trade secrets be included as part of Applicants' submissions. Except as provided, Applicants should not label applications as confidential or proprietary or trade secret protected. Any Applicant who determines that it must divulge such information as part of its application must submit the signed written statement described in Subsection C below and must provide a redacted version of its application in accordance with **Part I, Section I-11.A**, which removes only the confidential proprietary information and trade secrets, for required public disclosure purposes.

**B. Commonwealth Use.** All material submitted with the application shall be the property of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth has the right to use any or all ideas not protected by intellectual property rights that are presented in any application regardless of whether the application becomes part of an agreement. Notwithstanding any Applicant copyright designations contained on applications, the Commonwealth shall have the right to make copies and distribute applications internally and to comply with public record or other disclosure requirements under the provisions of any Commonwealth or United States statute or regulation, or rule or order of any court of competent jurisdiction.

**C. Public Disclosure.** After the award of a grant, all applications are subject to disclosure in response to a request for public records made under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know-Law, 65 P.S. § 67.101, et seq. If an application contains confidential proprietary information or trade secrets, the Applicant must provide a signed written statement to this effect with the submission in accordance with 65 P.S. § 67.707(b) for the information to be considered exempt under 65 P.S. § 67.708(b)(11) from public

records requests. Refer to **Appendix E** of the RFA for a **Trade Secret Confidential Proprietary Information Notice Form** that may be utilized as the signed written statement. If financial capability information is submitted in response to **Part III, Section III-4** such financial capability information is exempt from public records disclosure under 65 P.S. § 67.708(b)(26).

**I-18. Best and Final Offers (“BAFO”).**

**A.** While not required, the Department may conduct discussions with Applicants for the purpose of obtaining BAFOs. To obtain BAFOs, the Department may do one or more of the following, in any combination and order:

1. Schedule oral presentations;
2. Request revised applications; and
3. Enter into pre-selection negotiations.

**B.** The following Applicants will **not** be invited by the Department to submit a BAFO:

1. Those Applicants, which the Department has determined to be not responsible or whose applications the Department has determined to be not responsive.
2. Those Applicants, which the Department has determined from the submitted and gathered financial and other information, do not possess the financial capability, experience or qualifications to ensure good faith performance of the grant agreement.
3. Those Applicants whose raw score for their Technical Submittal is less than 75% of the total amount of raw technical points allotted to the technical criterion.

The Department may further limit participation in the BAFO process to those remaining responsible Applicants that the Department has, within its discretion, determined to be within the top competitive range of responsive applications.

**C.** The Evaluation Criteria found in **Part II, Section II-4**, shall also be used to evaluate the BAFOs.

**D.** Price reductions offered shall have no effect upon the Applicant’s Technical Submittal.

**E.** The Department, in its sole discretion, also may undertake negotiations with Applicants whose applications, in the judgement of the Department, show them to be qualified, responsible, and capable of performing the Project.

**I-19. News Releases.** Applicants shall not issue news releases, Internet postings, advertisements or any other public communications pertaining to this Project without prior written approval of the Department, and then only in coordination with the Department.

**I-20. Restriction of Contact.** From the issue date of this RFA until the Department selects an application for award, the Issuing Officer is the sole point of contact concerning this RFA. Any violation of this condition may be cause for the Department to reject the offending Applicant’s application. If the Department later discovers that the Applicant has engaged in any violations of this condition, the Department may reject the offending Applicant’s application or rescind its grant agreement. Applicants shall not distribute any

part of their applications beyond the Issuing Office. An Applicant who shares information contained in its application with other Commonwealth personnel or consultants or competing Applicant personnel may be disqualified.

- I-21. Department Participation.** The selected Applicant shall provide all services, supplies, facilities, and other support necessary to complete the identified work, except as otherwise provided in **Part I, Section I-21**. The selected Applicant will have access to a Human Services Analyst (“HSA”) from the Department. This HSA will be the selected Applicant’s primary contact and resource for issues related to the Project as well as any general questions.
- I-22. Term of Agreement.** The term of the agreement will commence on the Effective Date and will end **one year** after the Effective Date. Subject to the performance of the Applicant and other considerations, the Department may extend the agreement on the same terms and conditions for up to four additional one-year periods. The Department will fix the Effective Date after the agreement has been fully executed by the selected Applicant and by the Commonwealth and all approvals required by the Commonwealth have been obtained. The selected Applicant shall not start the performance of any work prior to the Effective Date of the agreement and the Commonwealth shall not be liable to pay the selected Applicant for any service or work performed or expenses incurred before the Effective Date.
- I-23. Applicant’s Representations and Authorizations.** By submitting its application, each Applicant understands, represents, and acknowledges that:
- A.** All Applicant’s information and representations in the application are material and important, and the Department will rely upon its contents in awarding the agreement. The Commonwealth may treat any misstatement, omission or misrepresentation as fraudulent concealment of the true facts relating to the application, punishable pursuant to 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904.
  - B.** The Applicant has arrived at the price(s) and amounts in its application independently and without consultation, communication, or agreement with any other Applicant or potential Applicant.
  - C.** The Applicant has not disclosed the price(s), the amount of the application, nor the approximate price(s) or amount(s) of its application to any other firm or person who is an Applicant or potential applicant, and the Applicant shall not disclose any of these items on or before the application submission deadline specified in the Calendar of Events.
  - D.** The Applicant has not attempted, nor will it attempt, to induce any firm or person to refrain from submitting an application, or to submit an application higher than its application, or to submit any intentionally high or noncompetitive application or other form of complementary application.
  - E.** The Applicant makes its application in good faith and not pursuant to any agreement or discussion with, or inducement from, any firm or person to submit a complementary or other noncompetitive application.
  - F.** To the best knowledge of the person signing the application for the Applicant, the Applicant, its affiliates, subsidiaries, officers, directors, and employees are not currently under investigation by any governmental agency and have not in the last **four** years been convicted or found liable for any act prohibited by State or Federal law in any jurisdiction, involving conspiracy or collusion with respect to bidding or proposing on any public agreement, except as the Applicant has disclosed in its application.

- G.** To the best of the knowledge of the person signing the application for the Applicant and except as the Applicant has otherwise disclosed in its application, the Applicant has no outstanding, delinquent obligations to the Commonwealth including, but not limited to, any state tax liability not being contested on appeal.
- H.** The Applicant is not currently under suspension or debarment by the Commonwealth, and has not been precluded from participation in any federally funded health care program by any other state or the federal government, and if the Applicant cannot so certify, then it shall submit along with its application a written explanation of why it cannot make such certification.
- I.** The Applicant has not made, under separate agreement with the Department, any recommendations to the Department concerning the need for the services or the specifications for the services described in the application.
- J.** Each Applicant, by submitting its application, authorizes Commonwealth agencies to release to the Department information concerning the Applicant's Pennsylvania taxes, unemployment compensation and workers' compensation liabilities.
- K.** Until the selected Applicant receives a fully executed and approved written agreement from the Issuing Office, no legal and valid agreement exists, in law or in equity, and the Applicant shall not begin to perform.
- L.** The Applicant is not currently engaged, and will not during the duration of the agreement engage in a boycott of a person or an entity based in or doing business with a jurisdiction that the Commonwealth is not prohibited by Congressional statute from engaging in trade or commerce.

**I-24. Notification of Selection.**

- A. Negotiations.** The Department will notify all Applicants in writing of the Applicant selected for negotiations after the Department has determined, taking into consideration all evaluation factors, the application that is the most advantageous to the Department.
- B. Award.** Applicants whose applications are not selected will be notified when negotiations have been successfully completed and the Department has received the final negotiated agreement signed by the selected Applicant.

**I-25. Use of Electronic Versions of this RFA.** This RFA is being made available by electronic means. If an Applicant electronically accepts the RFA, the Applicant accepts full responsibility to ensure that no changes are made to the RFA. If a conflict arises between a version of the RFA in the Applicant's possession and the Issuing Office's version of the RFA, the Issuing Office's version shall govern.

## PART II

### CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

- II-1. Mandatory Responsiveness Requirements.** To be eligible for selection, an application must:
- A. Be timely received from an Applicant (see **Part I, Section I-10**); and
  - B. Be properly signed by the Applicant (see **Part I, Section I-11.A**).
- II-2. Technical Nonconforming Applications.** The two Mandatory Responsiveness Requirements set forth in **Section II-1** are the only RFA requirements that the Commonwealth will consider to be *non-waivable*. The Department may, in its sole discretion, (1) waive any other technical or immaterial nonconformities in an Applicant's application, (2) allow the Applicant to cure the nonconformity, or (3) consider the nonconformity in the scoring of the application.
- II-3. Evaluation.** The Department has selected a committee of qualified personnel to review and evaluate the Technical Submittals of the timely submitted applications that are eligible for selection. The Department will provide written notice of its selection for negotiations the responsible Applicant whose application is determined to be the most advantageous to the Commonwealth after taking into consideration all evaluation factors.
- II-4. Evaluation Criteria.** The following criteria will be used in evaluating each application:
- A. **Technical:** The Department has established the weight for the Technical criterion as **65%** of the total points. Evaluation will be based upon the following: **Understanding the Project, Applicant Qualifications, Personnel Qualifications, and Soundness of Approach.**
    - **Understanding the Project.** This includes the Applicant's understanding of Commonwealth's needs that generated the RFA, the objectives of the RFA, and of the nature and scope of the work involved.
    - **Applicant Qualifications.** This includes, but is not limited to, the ability of the Applicant to meet the terms of the RFA, including the time constraints involved with the Project and the quality, relevancy, and recentness of projects completed. This also includes the Applicant's ability to undertake a Project of this size.
    - **Personnel Qualifications.** This includes, but is not limited to, the competence and sufficiency of the personnel and staff who would be assigned to the Project by the Applicant.
    - **Soundness of Approach.** This includes, but is not limited to, the Applicant's technical approach for completion of all services by this RFA, if it is responsive to all requirements of the RFA and if it meets the Project's objectives.

The final Technical scores are determined by giving the maximum number of technical points available to the application with the highest raw technical score. The remaining applications are rated by applying the formula located at:

[https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP\\_SCORING\\_FORMULA.aspx](https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP_SCORING_FORMULA.aspx)

- B. Cost:** The Department has established the weight for the Cost criterion for this RFA as **35%** of the total points. The cost criterion is rated by giving the application with the lowest total cost the maximum number of Cost points available. The remaining applications are rated by applying the formula located at:

[https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP\\_SCORING\\_FORMULA.aspx](https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Materials-Services-Procurement/Procurement-Resources/Pages/RFP_SCORING_FORMULA.aspx)

**II-5. Applicant Responsibility.** To be responsible, an Applicant must submit a responsive application and possess the capability to fully perform the agreement requirements in all respects and the integrity and reliability for the good faith performance of the agreement.

For an Applicant to be considered responsible for this RFA and eligible for selection for BAFO and selection for negotiations:

- A.** The total score for the Technical Submittal of the application must be greater than or equal to **75%** of the **available raw technical points**; and
- B.** The Applicant's financial information must demonstrate that the Applicant possesses the financial capability for the good faith performance of the agreement. The Commonwealth will review the Applicant's previous three financial statements, any additional information received from the Applicant, and any other publicly-available financial information concerning the Applicant, and assess each Applicant's financial capacity based on calculating and analyzing various financial ratios, and comparison with industry standards and trends.

An Applicant that fails to demonstrate sufficient financial capability to ensure good faith performance of the agreement as specified herein may be considered by the Department, in its sole discretion, for BAFO or negotiation contingent upon such Applicant providing performance security for the full agreement base term cost proposed by the Applicant in a form acceptable to the Department. Based on the financial condition of the Applicant, the Department may require a certified or bank (cashier's) check, letter of credit, or a performance bond conditioned upon the faithful performance of the agreement by the Applicant. The required performance security must be issued or executed by a bank or surety company authorized to do business in the Commonwealth. The cost of the required performance security will be the sole responsibility of the Applicant and cannot increase the Applicant's cost application or the agreement cost to the Commonwealth.

Further, the Department will award an agreement only to an Applicant determined to be responsible in accordance with the most current version of Commonwealth Management Directive 215.9, Contractor Responsibility Program.

**II-6. Final Ranking and Award.**

- A.** After any BAFO process is conducted, the Issuing Office will combine the evaluation committee's final technical scores and the final cost scores, in accordance with the relative weights assigned to these areas as set forth in this **Part II**.
- B.** The Issuing Office will rank responsible Applicants according to the total overall score assigned to each, in descending order.

- C. Except as provided in **Section II-6.D**, the Department must select for negotiations the Applicant with the highest overall score.
- D. The Department has the discretion to reject all applications or cancel the RFA, at any time prior to the time an agreement is fully executed, when it is in the best interests of the Commonwealth. The reasons for the rejection or cancellation shall be made part of the RFA file.
- E. The Department intends to award a grant as a result of this RFA with maximum funding of \$1,196,000 for the base term, contingent on the availability of funding.

## PART III

### TECHNICAL SUBMITTAL

- III-1. Statement of the Project.** State in succinct terms your understanding of the Project and the service required by this RFA. The Applicant's response should demonstrate that the Applicant fully understands the scope of services to be provided, the Applicant's responsibilities, and how the Applicant will effectively manage the grant.

#### ***Applicant Response***

- III-2. Management Summary.** Include a narrative description of the proposed effort and a list of the items to be delivered and services to be provided. The Applicant should condense and highlight the contents of the Technical Submittal in a manner that allows a broad understanding of the entire Technical Submittal.

#### ***Applicant Response***

- III-3. Qualifications.**

- A. Company Overview.** The Applicant should describe the corporate history and relevant experience of the Applicant with a focus on the capacity to reach and serve large populations in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. This section must detail information on the ownership of the company (names and percent of ownership), the date the company was established, the date the company began operations, the physical location of the company, and the current size of the company. The Applicant should provide a corporate organizational chart.

The Applicant should describe its corporate identity, legal status and forms, including the name, address, telephone number, and email address for the legal entity that is submitting the application. In addition, the Applicant should provide the name of the principal officers, a description of its major services, and any specific licenses and accreditations held by the Applicant.

Applicants should provide similar organizational background information on any significant subcontractor for services. A "significant subcontractor" is defined as an organization undertaking more than 10% on the total cost basis of the work associated with this RFA.

If an Applicant is proposing to use the services or products of a subsidiary or affiliated firm, the Applicant should describe the business arrangement with that entity and the scope of the services the entity will provide.

If the experience of any proposed subcontractor is being used to meet the qualifications and requirements of this RFA, the Applicant should provide the same information as listed above for the subcontractor. This information must be presented separately within this section, clearly identifying the subcontractor experience and name of the subcontractor.

The Applicant should disclose any contract or agreement cancellations, or terminations within five years preceding the issuance of this RFA. If a contract or agreement was canceled or terminated for lack of performance, the Applicant must provide details on the customer's allegations, the Applicant's position relevant to the allegations, and the final resolution of the cancellation or the termination. The



Applicant must include each customer's Company or entity name, address, contact name, phone number, and email address.

The Department may disqualify an Applicant based on a failure to disclose such a cancelled or terminated contract or agreement. If the Department learns about such a failure to disclose after an agreement is awarded, the Department may terminate the agreement.

### ***Applicant Response***

- B. Prior Experience.** The Applicant should describe their experience, or similar experience, in providing to bus passes, stored value vouchers, gas cards, and alternative transportation allowances (e.g. rideshare) as well as their capacity to reach and serve large populations like Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Experience should be work done by individuals who will be assigned to this Project as well as that of your company. Studies or projects referred to should be identified and the name of the customer shown, including the name, address and telephone number of the responsible official of the customer, company, or agency who may be contacted.

### ***Applicant Response***

- C. Personnel.** Include the number of executive and professional personnel, analysts, auditors, researchers, programmers, consultants, etc., who will be engaged in the work. Show where these personnel will be physically located during the time they are engaged in the Project. For "Key Personnel," defined as **Program Manager, Operations Specialist (two minimum), and Customer Support Manager**, include the employee's name and, through a resume or similar document, the Project personnel's education and experience in similar in size and scope projects. Indicate the responsibilities each individual will have in this Project and how long each has been with your company. For non-Key Personnel, include position descriptions and minimum qualifications.

The general responsibilities and preferred qualifications for each Key Personnel are as follows:

- 1. Program Manager.** This person should have large project management skills and experience with low-income populations, including community-based organizations, or other similar experience and leadership skills. In addition, this person should have a background in business and management in either the public or private sector. This individual should be responsible for identifying and reinforcing agreement requirements and accountable for all activities related to the services required by this RFA. The Program Manager must be available for scheduled and ad hoc meetings and consultation.
- 2. Operations Specialists (two minimum).** The Department will allow flexibility for the Applicant to designate how many individuals are necessary for this position in order to handle the day-to-day operations but expects a minimum of two individuals in this role. These individuals should have operations management and community relations skills.
- 3. Customer Support Manager.** This person must have an ability to manage a large volume Customer Service Center that provides assistance to TANF and SNAP participants.

Submitted responses are not to include personal information that will, or will be likely to, require redaction to release of the application under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, including but not limited to home addresses and phone numbers, Social Security Numbers, driver's license numbers or numbers from state identification cards issued in lieu of a driver's license, and financial account

numbers. If the Commonwealth requires any of this information for security validation or other purposes, the information will be requested separately and as necessary.

Include organizational charts outlining the staffing, reporting relationships, and staff members in its description. Show the total number of staff proposed and indicate the Full Time Equivalents (“FTE”) to account for any additional staff (non-Key Personnel) that are not assigned on a full-time basis. Provide similar information for any subcontractors that are proposed. The organizational chart must illustrate the lines of authority, designate the positions responsible and accountable for the completion of each component in the RFA, indicate the names and job title and number of personnel that will be assigned to each role, and the number of hours per week each person is projected to work on the Project. The organizational chart must clearly indicate any functions that are subcontracted along with the name of the subcontractors entities and the services they will perform.

**Key Personnel Diversions or Replacement.** Once Key Personnel are approved by the Department, the selected Applicant may not divert or replace personnel without prior approval of the Department’s Grant Administrator. The selected Applicant must provide notice of a proposed diversion or replacement to the Department’s Grant Administrator at least 30 calendar days in advance and provide the name, qualifications, and background check (if required) of the person who will replace the diverted personnel. The Department’s Grant Administrator will notify the selected Applicant within ten business days of the diversion notice whether the proposed diversion is acceptable and if the replacement was approved.

“Divert” or “diversion” is defined as the transfer of personnel by the selected Applicant or its subcontractor to another assignment within the control of either the Applicant or subcontractor. Advance notification and approval does not include changes in Key Personnel due to resignations, death, disability, dismissal for cause or dismissal as a result of the termination of a subcontract or any other causes that are beyond the control of the selected Applicant or its subcontractor. The Department’s Grant Administrator must approve the replacement personnel.

The Department’s Grant Administrator may request that the selected Applicant remove a person from this Project at any time. For vacancies other than those caused by diversions and unless otherwise approved by the Grant Administrator, the selected Applicant will have ten business days to interim fill and 60 calendar days to permanently fill the vacancy with a person acceptable in terms of experience and skills, subject to the Department Grant Administrator’s approval.

### ***Applicant Response***

**D. Subcontractors.** Provide a subcontracting plan for all subcontractors, including SDBs and VBEs, who will be assigned to the Project. The selected Applicant is prohibited from subcontracting or outsourcing any part of this Project without the express written approval of the Commonwealth. Upon award of the grant agreement, subcontractors included in the application submission are approved. For each position included in your subcontracting plan provide:

1. Name of subcontractor;
2. Address of subcontractor;
3. Primary contact name, email address and phone number;
4. Type of organization;
5. Date of formation;
6. Status of charter and corporate charter number;
7. Unique Entity Identifier Number;

8. SAP/SRM Vendor Number;
9. Number of years worked with the subcontractor;
10. Number of employees by job category to work on this Project;
11. Description of services to be performed;
12. What percentage of time the staff will be dedicated to this Project;
13. Geographical location of staff; and
14. Resumes (if appropriate and available).

If applicable, the Applicant's subcontractor information should include the employees' names, education and experience in the services outlined in this RFA. The information provided should also include the responsibilities each individual will have in this Project and how long each has been with the subcontractor's company.

#### ***Applicant Response***

**III-4. Financial Capability.** Describe your company's financial stability and economic capability to perform the agreement requirements. Provide your company's financial statements (audited, if available) for the past three fiscal years. Financial statements must include the company's Balance Sheet and Income Statement or Profit/Loss Statements. If your company is a publicly traded company, please provide a link to your financial records on your company website in lieu of providing hard copies. The Commonwealth may request additional information it deems necessary to evaluate an Applicant's financial capability.

#### ***Applicant Response***

**III-5. Work Plan.** Describe in narrative form your technical plan for accomplishing the work with the Project tasks and the major milestones and deliverables provided below as a reference point. Modifications of tasks are permitted; however, reasons for changes should be fully explained. Include a Program Evaluation and Review Technique ("PERT") or similar type display, time related, showing each event. If more than one approach is apparent, comment on why you chose this approach. The relationship between Key Personnel and the specifics tasks, assignments, and deliverables proposed to accomplish the scope of work should also be described.

The Applicant should describe its management approach, including how it will implement its proposed work plan. Where applicable, the Applicant should provide specific examples of methodologies or approaches, including monitoring approaches, it will use to fulfill the RFA requirements and examples of similar experience and approach on comparable projects. The Applicant should describe the management and monitoring controls it will use to achieve the required quality of services and all performance requirements. The Applicant should also address its approach to internally monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of meeting the agreement requirements.

The Applicant should be including in the work plan its planned approach and process for establishing and maintaining communication between all parties and a technical approach that is aligned with all written specifications and requirements contained in the RFA.

#### **TASKS:**

**A. Transition.** Transition consists of activities that take place between the Effective Date of the grant agreement and the date the selected Applicant is fully responsible for all agreement activities. The Department has designated a maximum of three months for the completion of all transition activities.

1. The primary objectives of the Transition Phase are the following:
  - a. The successful orientation, knowledge acquisition, and operational independence from incumbent grantee to the selected Applicant;
  - b. The smooth transition of responsibilities from the incumbent grantee to the selected Applicant;
  - c. A complete knowledge transfer and operational understanding by the selected Applicant;
  - d. The smooth transition to the selected Applicant to assure seamless and uninterrupted services to current TANF and SNAP participants.
  - e. The establishment of accurate assessments and strong accountability controls; and
  - f. A mitigation of risk to the Commonwealth, Department, and taxpayers.
2. The selected Applicant's Responsibilities:
  - a. The selected Applicant shall prepare and submit a comprehensive Transition Plan to the Department for final review and approval within two weeks after the Effective Date of the agreement. Within the Transition Plan, the selected Applicant shall incorporate the activities necessary to turn over the business operations in an orderly manner. The selected Applicant shall address the resources required for the transition, including those from the Department and the incumbent grantee. Additionally, the selected Applicant shall identify the transition objectives and work plan activities and document activity time frames and responsibilities.
  - b. The selected Applicant shall provide a plan for a transition of the on-going business operational and strategic business and policy activities currently being executed by the incumbent grantee associated with the operations and functions included in the scope of this RFA.
  - c. The selected Applicant shall conduct knowledge transfer in such a manner to enable its staff to confidently assume ownership and to independently manage the in-scope operational activities without disrupting business operations or timely delivery of services.
  - d. Upon the Department's approval of the Transition Plan, the selected Applicant shall begin transitioning the business operating functions and provide transition progress assessments and status updates. The selected Applicant shall coordinate with the Department regarding transition tasks, prioritization issues, and conflicting activities interfering with maintaining and operating daily business.
  - e. At the end of the transition phase, the selected Applicant shall prepare the Transition Results Report. Within the Transition Results Report, the selected Applicant shall document the completion of transition activities and shall provide the status of each high-level task and activity that took place during the transition period. The selected Applicant shall highlight how each of the objectives stated in the Transition Plan have been achieved and the resolution of issues identified and prioritized during the process.
3. The Commonwealth's Responsibilities:
  - a. The Commonwealth shall review and approve, disapprove, or request modification and resubmission of each deliverable.
  - b. The Commonwealth shall identify Commonwealth key contacts.
  - c. The Commonwealth shall provide the selected Applicant with the necessary access to Commonwealth facilities, personnel, documentation, and other items under its control.
  - d. The Commonwealth shall provide coordination with and access to third parties, as required.
  - e. The Commonwealth shall participate in Project initiation and setup related discussions.
  - f. The Commonwealth shall provide agreed-upon levels of active participation (of the business staff, technical staff, and management, as applicable) in the Transition work sessions.
  - g. The Commonwealth shall coordinate with the incumbent grantee to ensure that the Transition needs are understood and can be met by the incumbent grantee.
  - h. The Commonwealth shall facilitate the Department's engagement in the Transition process.

- i. The Commonwealth shall facilitate collaboration and partnership during the transition process to ensure the incumbent grantee and the selected Applicant are able to work together and shall foster an environment where both parties communicate openly and support one another. The Commonwealth shall oversee this process to ensure the transition is seamless, minimize disruptions, and maintain continuity in services.

The deliverables for Transition are a Transition Plan and Transition Results Report that comply with the requirements listed in **Part III, Section III-5.A** of this RFA. Describe how the Applicant will comply with these requirements.

### ***Applicant Response***

**B. Services.** The selected Applicant shall provide the following program services:

1. **Referrals:** The selected Applicant shall:
  - a. Accept referrals for transportation allowance issuances from the Allegheny CAOs; and
  - b. Enter and maintain TANF and SNAP participants' identifying information into the appropriate secure Commonwealth system identified by the Department.
2. **Transportation Materials:** The selected Applicant shall:
  - a. Obtain Connect Cards directly from the Port Authority Transit of Allegheny;
  - b. Issue bus passes, vouchers, and gas cards to CAO referred individuals; and
  - c. Track and record all transportation allowance issuances and associated costs.
3. **Track Usage and Savings:** The selected Applicant shall:
  - a. Track and record any cost savings per issuance, including but not limited to statistics to indicate how the cost savings occurred such as partial issuances, duplicate issuances, no shows, and ineligible recipients;
  - b. Seek additional cost savings measures that may become available, ensuring participants are issued the least-costly type of transportation which is available, and practical considering the location and hours of the participant's schedule approved work or work-related activity; and
  - c. Communicate and collaborate closely with Allegheny CAOs and provide seamless operation and account reconciliation.
4. **Extended Business Hours:** The selected Applicant shall operate within traditional hours of business, as well as offer non-traditional business hours such as evenings and weekends, to accommodate clients and their employment and training schedules. The selected Applicant shall use the extended hours to provide participants with extended access to transportation services, allowing TANF and SNAP E&T participants to obtain their transportation issuances before or after attending their work or training site.
5. **Program-Based Procurement:** The selected Applicant shall review and pursue entering agreements with E&T agencies and organizations to arrange for authorized representatives from the programs to collect transportation issuances for their program participants. The selected Applicant shall maintain a clear, detailed, well-documented chain of custody for this process.
6. **Fraud and Abuse.** The selected Applicant shall establish and maintain written policies and procedures for the detection and prevention of fraud and abuse that may be committed by the selected Applicant's employees, its subcontractors, or TANF and SNAP participants. At minimum, the selected Applicant shall include in the fraud and abuse plan:

- a. Written compliance policies designed to educate employees and agents about false claims, false statements, and whistleblower protections under applicable federal and state fraud laws.
- b. Process to monitor and verify funds allocated to TANF and SNAP participants are used for the approved services.

Describe how the Applicant will provide these services and the relationship between project personnel and the specific tasks, assignments, and deliverables.

#### ***Applicant Response***

- C. Turnover.** Turnover is defined as those activities that the selected Applicant shall perform at the end of the grant term, to turnover service delivery to a successor grantee, or to Commonwealth resources.

During the turnover period, the selected Applicant shall work cooperatively with any successor grantee and the Department with the goal that program stakeholders do not experience any adverse impact from the transfer of services. Six months prior to the end of the grant term, or upon the Department's request, the selected Applicant shall develop and submit a Turnover Plan, which specifies the proposed transition schedule, activities, and resource requirements for the necessary turnover tasks to be implemented upon the Department's request.

The selected Applicant shall:

1. Execute the approved Turnover Plan in cooperation with the incoming selected Applicant's Transition Plan.
2. Maintain service delivery staffing levels during the turnover period unless otherwise expressly approved by the Department's Grant Administrator.
3. Work closely with the Department to ensure that this turnover of responsibilities and the necessary knowledge transfer are completed by the end of the grant period.
4. Respond in a reasonable time to all Department requests regarding turnover information.

Describe how the Applicant will comply with each of the Turnover responsibilities.

#### ***Applicant Response***

### **III-6. Requirements.**

- A.** The selected Applicant shall adhere to the following requirements specific to this RFA:

1. Comply with the Limited English Proficiency ("LEP") language requirements of 42 C.F.R. §438.10(d). Upon request, the selected Applicant shall provide, at no cost to the participant, oral interpretation services in the requested language, written translations in prevalent non-English languages, sign language interpreter services, or other alternate forms of communication to meet the needs of the participants.
2. Comply with Commonwealth procedures for information handling and sharing. The selected Applicant shall implement and maintain adequate measures to prohibit unauthorized access, copying, and distribution of information during work on this Project.

3. Retain all records related to the clients served for five years after becoming fully inactive or until the disposition of court hearings, audits, and appeals. The selected Applicant shall follow record retention procedures for all applicable federal, state, and local government agencies;
4. Utilize the Commonwealth system as prescribed by the Department, and contact the Department when technical assistance or training is needed; and,
5. In the absence of the director or other essential staff, appoint a designee or designees with authorization to implement any requests directed by the Department as well as to provide all requested information to the Department within time frames established by the Department.

### ***Applicant Response***

#### **B. Emergency Preparedness.**

To support continuity of operations during an emergency, including a pandemic, the Commonwealth needs a strategy for maintaining operations for an extended period of time. One part of this strategy is to ensure that essential agreements that provide critical business services to the Commonwealth have planned for such an emergency and put contingencies in place to provide needed goods and services.

1. Describe how you anticipate such a crisis will impact your operations.
2. Describe your emergency response continuity of operations plan. Please attach a copy of your plan, or, at a minimum, summarize how your plan addresses the following aspects of preparedness:
  - a. Employee training (describe your organization's training plan, and how frequently your plan will be shared with employees).
  - b. Identified essential business functions and key employees necessary to carry them out.
  - c. Contingency plans for:
    - i. How your organization will handle staffing issues when a portion of key employees are incapacitated due to illness.
    - ii. How employees in your organization will carry out the essential functions if measures prevent them from coming to the primary workplace.
  - d. How your organization will communicate with staff and suppliers when primary communications systems are overloaded or otherwise fail, including key contacts, chain of communications (including suppliers), etc.
  - e. How and when your emergency plan will be tested, and if the plan will be tested by a third-party.

### ***Applicant Response***

- C. Bolstering Service Delivery through a Digital Experience Strategy.** The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania ("Commonwealth") is committed to improving digital interactions with Pennsylvanians,



individuals, and entities that conduct business with or on behalf of the Commonwealth, (each a “Business Partner”).

Executive Order 2023-08 - *Bolstering Service Delivery Through a Digital Experience Strategy* calls for the enablement of an online service delivery system that would provide a universal entry way to all Commonwealth programs, services, and resources organized by users’ needs and life experiences rather than agency program areas.

More information about the Executive Order is available at the following location: [Executive Order 2023-08 – Bolstering Service Delivery through a Digital Experience Strategy](#).

Applicants shall acknowledge and conform to the following six design principles and requirements when proposing solutions within applications and/or during product demonstrations in response to Commonwealth procurement solicitations. The selected Applicant shall align its performance and deliverables with these principles and requirements under any agreement that may be awarded from the procurement solicitation.

#### Design Principles and Requirements.

1. Delivering a consistent and friendly user experience across all Commonwealth agencies informed by human-centered design principles and user research.

A consistent and friendly user experience will enable Pennsylvanians, individuals, and Business Partners to locate services and conduct business with the Commonwealth, even if they do not know which agency to contact. Pennsylvanians, individuals, and Business Partners will continue to be able to navigate directly to services on agency websites, if they wish.

PA.GOV is the Commonwealth’s single state government destination. By using PA.GOV, Pennsylvanians, individuals and Business Partners will know that they are utilizing official services from the Commonwealth.

The selected Applicant must use the PA.GOV domain for proposed websites and digital services. Refer to the following Commonwealth Information Technology Policy (“ITP”) and Supporting Documents: [Network Policy](#); [Network Technology Standard](#); [DNS Design Standard](#); [DNS Record Service Request Procedure](#); [Domain Exception Request Form](#); [Wireless LAN Authentication Procedure](#); and [Wireless Security Control Standard](#). Applicant shall acknowledge its understanding of and compliance with this requirement in its application.

Each Applicant’s application must include a description of how the Applicant plans to integrate a consistent and friendly user experience, starting with [PA.GOV](#). The selected Applicant shall be able to receive and validate the credentials of a Pennsylvanian, individual or Business Partner that were previously authenticated from an active session.

The Applicant’s solution must integrate with existing PA.GOV and be able to receive and validate credentials among Commonwealth websites, applications, and digital services to allow seamless navigation to and from PA.GOV.

Keystone Login is the Commonwealth’s single login solution. Keystone Login provides a consistent and secure approach to account administration by offering Pennsylvanians, individuals, and in the future, Business Partners, a single online point of access to services offered by multiple



Commonwealth agencies or other Business Partners. It is critical that by using Keystone Login any Pennsylvanian or Business Partner can work with any Commonwealth agency or other Business Partner through the Commonwealth's public facing applications using a single login credential.

The consistent and modern authentication standards available through Keystone Login will increase convenience for Pennsylvanians and Business Partners by simplifying account management and eliminating the need to remember multiple usernames and passwords, while also strengthening the Commonwealth's security posture.

In addition, Keystone Login provides the capability for a Pennsylvanian or a Business Partner to create a single profile managed by Keystone Login.

The selected Applicant shall register with and utilize Keystone Login. Applications that utilize Keystone Login can leverage authentication methods through one of the following: (1) via a series of Application Programming Interfaces ("APIs"), (2) as a redirect to the Keystone Login Portal, or (3) a hybrid of both approaches.

A detailed Developer Integration Guide will be provided to the selected Applicant; however, to assist Applicants in preparing their applications, a summary version of the Developer Integration Guide and Keystone Login Branding Guidelines are available at the following location: <http://keystonelogindevelopers.pa.gov>.

The summary version of the Developer Integration Guide and Keystone Login Branding Guidelines should be reviewed by the Applicants prior to responding to this solicitation to ensure the Applicants understand the mandatory APIs and services that shall be made available to Pennsylvanians and Business Partners.

The Applicants shall include in their applications an acknowledgement that they will utilize Keystone Login for Pennsylvanians. If the Applicant requires any additional information to verify the identification of Pennsylvanians through the authentication process provided by Keystone Login, the Applicant must identify the additional required information the Applicant needs in its application.

Additionally, the Applicant must commit to utilizing Keystone Login for Business Partners when required by the Commonwealth. The timeframe for implementation of Keystone Login to Business Partners will be mutually agreed upon by the selected Applicant and the Commonwealth and will be documented through the change order process of the agreement.

2. Incorporating user feedback continuously into digital applications to ensure users' expectations and needs are better met.

Applicants must develop user-focused requirements that tie back to all personas that will be leveraging the solutions being suggested.

Applicants must include within their applications a reporting strategy and specific mechanisms for how the solution would measure its success in meeting the needs of users (e.g., reducing time to complete for end-users by XX%).

When designing any digital interface, a plan for user research and iterative prototype development must be included within their applications. The Applicant must plan for written sign-off on a finalized prototype prior to beginning any development work, and such must be acknowledged within their applications.

Developed prototypes must be informed not only by design best-practices, but also the feasibility of the back-end technical integrations that would be required to enable the front-end experience, so user feedback is informed by realistic examples. Applicants must outline in their applications the best design practices and technical integrations that would enable the front-end experience.

All existing user research completed by the Commonwealth related to this procurement will be provided, if available and permissible by law. If the Applicant does not have the ability to provide user research or prototype development, it must explicitly be called out in their application so that the Commonwealth can anticipate resources that will be required outside of the scope of the awarded agreement.

3. Sharing and integration of data across agencies to glean users' insights and measure experience, including satisfaction and trust across Commonwealth services.

The universal entry way outlined within the Executive Order will establish capabilities to connect Residents to existing systems of records using a consent-based approach that will enable Residents to view and update their data across agencies and program areas in a seamless fashion using a common technology identity.

An enterprise data management program strategy was established that focuses on democratization of data, efficiency of data transactions, and increasing data quality, availability, integrity, and security measures. The strategy also combines functional and cultural changes to the data habits and literacy of people, establishes standardized data processes, and deploys technologies to ensure optimal practices and business processes are used to collect, create, maintain, and/or disseminate data.

To accomplish the strategy, the Commonwealth is standardizing and deploying the following technology solutions in support of a centralized enterprise data hub.

- Core Resident and Business Profiles (“Golden Records”)
- Universal Identifiers and ID Linkage
- Master Data Management
- Enterprise Messaging and Queuing Services
- Data API / Data Integration Services
- Enterprise Data Catalog

The Applicant shall provide within their applications a detailed overview of data available from the proposed solution, along with data format and all methods in which the data can be accessed by Commonwealth solutions and reporting tools (e.g., Enterprise Data Catalog, Power BI).

The Applicant shall also include in the application how the proposed solution can contribute to the centralized enterprise data hub. This information must include field-level data (e.g., profile/demographics/preferences of users) and outcomes data from the proposed solution (e.g., user logins, user journey history, completed applications).

The data is owned by the Commonwealth and cannot be used by the awarded Applicant without written consent of the Commonwealth.

4. Consolidate or eliminate outdated technologies and systems that are costly or challenging to maintain, insecure, or no longer impactful with the goal of minimizing or preventing the Commonwealth from incurring technical debt.

Applicants must acknowledge within their applications if the proposed solution has a roadmap that showcases a progression plan for sustaining, enhancing, and maturing the proposed solution into the future. Applicants must include the roadmap within their applications, if available.

Applicants must explain within their applications how solution enhancements and/or version releases are handled, and at what cyclical intervals.

Applicants must acknowledge within their applications the timeframe (e.g. years, months) the proposed solution has been implemented for other clients or if new and/or emerging technology(ies) is being proposed.

5. Designing digital services that incorporate best practices regarding data exchange, data privacy, security, records management, language translation, and accessibility associated with Commonwealth data, devices, and materials to provide comprehensive protections and manage risk.

Applicants shall acknowledge within their applications compliance with the Commonwealth's electronic information privacy standards. Refer to the [Privacy Policy](#) for more information.

Applicants shall acknowledge within their applications compliance with the Commonwealth's websites, applications, and digital content and services design standards. Refer to following the Policy and Supporting Documents: [Software Development Life Cycle Policy](#); [Non-Negotiated Software Agreements Procedure](#); [Software Contracts Procedure](#); [Software Development Life Cycle Standard](#); and [Software Licensing Risk Assessment and Acknowledgment Form](#).

Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Title VI applies to all state agencies that receive Federal financial assistance.”<sup>1</sup>

Applicants shall demonstrate how they will support the Commonwealth in making vital digital information available to people with limited English proficiency with accurate digital language translation in frequently encountered languages.

Applicants must acknowledge within their applications and, if requested by the Commonwealth, demonstrate during product demonstration sessions, solution and deliverable compliance with relevant federal, and state laws, regulations, and rules including, but not limited to, the following.

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<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 2000d (1964), “Title VI” includes this statute and its regulations.

- Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability;
- Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires all Federal agencies' electronic and information technology to be accessible to those with disabilities; and
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability for entities receiving federal funds.

In addition, Applicants must acknowledge within their applications and product demonstration sessions compliance with the revised Section 508 Standards and the current version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (“WCAG”), which are industry standards. The selected Applicant must provide as a deliverable of the awarded agreement quarterly reports that demonstrate compliance with WCAG. Refer to the [Digital Accessibility Policy](#) for additional information.

6. Follow Commonwealth data source standards to facilitate better connections and access of user data.

The purpose of the citizen and business data models are to standardize and promote common glossary definitions for the data elements and their associated attributes. A common understanding of data entities and elements across the enterprise is an essential first step in developing integrated processes and moving away from ‘silo’ systems, solutions, applications, and digital services.

Applicants must acknowledge within their applications and, if requested by the Commonwealth, demonstrate during product demonstration sessions compliance with the following Policy and Supporting Documents: [Data Management Policy](#), [Data Management Standard](#), [Data Management Guideline](#), [Migration Audit Checklist Standard](#), and [Data Migration Planning Procedure](#).

Applicants must provide within their applications the availability of APIs to add, update, and/or exchange resident, business, and solution/system/application data in real-time with centralized data hubs managed by the Commonwealth.

### ***Applicant Response***

- D. **Lobbying Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** This Project will be funded, in whole or in part, with federal monies. Public Law 101-121, Section 319, prohibits federal funds from being expended by the recipient or by any lower tier sub-recipients of a federal agreement, grant, loan, or a cooperative agreement to pay any person for influencing, or attempting to influence a federal agency or Congress in connection with the awarding of any federal agreement, the making of any federal grant or loan, or entering into any cooperative agreement. All parties who submit applications in response to this RFA must sign the **Lobbying Certification Form**, attached as **Appendix D**, and if applicable, complete the **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities Form**, also attached as **Appendix D**.

### ***Applicant Response***

- E. **Worker Protection and Investment.** Pursuant to Executive Order 2021-06, *Worker Protection and Investment* (October 21, 2021), the Commonwealth is responsible for ensuring that every Pennsylvania worker has a safe and healthy work environment and the protections afforded them through labor laws. To that end, agreementors and grantees of the Commonwealth must certify that they are in compliance

with all applicable Pennsylvania state labor and workforce safety laws. Such certification shall be made through the Worker Protection and Investment Certification Form (BOP-2201) and submitted with the bid, application or quote. This form is attached as **Appendix I**.

#### ***Applicant Response***

- F. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (“HIPAA”).** The selected Applicant must comply with all federal and state laws related to the use and disclosure of information, including information that constitutes Protected Health Information, as defined by HIPAA. The selected Applicant must comply with the Business Associate Addendum, **Appendix H**.

#### ***Applicant Response***

### **III-7. Reports and Project Control.**

The selected Applicant shall participate in site visits and prepare reports as detailed in this section and shall submit the reports to the Department via a secure Commonwealth system.

- A. Site Visit.** The selected Applicant shall be subject to a yearly monitoring site visit by the Department at the centralized location in Allegheny County.

- B. Monthly Reports.** The selected Applicant shall complete monthly reports to be submitted by the **15<sup>th</sup> day of each month** for the prior month. The report shall document the issuances of all individual transportation allowances, as well as the cost and savings. At a minimum, the selected Applicant shall include in its monthly reports the following key fields:

- Date of approval;
- Client name;
- Social Security Number (“SSN”);
- CAO;
- Recipient identification number;
- Date of Birth;
- County or Record Number;
- Program which authorized participation;
- Timeframe of issuance;
- Transportation type;
- Cost authorized;
- Actual cost issued;
- Card replacement fees, if applicable; and
- Any other cost measures such as rounding or bulk discount.

The selected Applicant shall track any cost savings monthly and include fields that document cost savings including, but not limited to, partial issuances; duplicate issuances; no-shows; ineligible clients; and dates of service.

- C. Status Reports.** A periodic **semi-annual** progress report covering activities, problems and recommendations must be submitted to OIM no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> calendar day of April and October each year.

**D. Problem Identification Reports.** Upon request by the Department, the selected Applicant shall submit an “as required” report, identifying problem areas. The report should describe the problem and its impact on the overall project and on each affected task. It should list possible courses of action with advantages and disadvantages of each, and include selected Applicant’s recommendations with supporting rationale.

**E. Annual Reports.** The selected Applicant shall submit a cumulative annual federal fiscal year report (October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>) that includes the yearly totals of the monthly reports no later than October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year. This report should include the same required content fields as indicated in **Part III, Section III-7.B.** for both individual transportation allowances as well as costs and savings.

The Department will consider the failure to submit accurate reports within the required timeframes, or provide additional information as required, as a serious administrative failure and may terminate the agreement with the selected Applicant, or request a Corrective Action Plan (refer to **Part III, Section III-8. Key Performance Standards**).

Describe the Applicant’s ability to provide required reports and include sample reports or report templates.

### ***Applicant Response***

**III-8. Key Performance Standards.** The Commonwealth has developed a set of minimum Key Performance Standards defined below, which the selected Applicant shall meet, or exceed. The first three months are a transition period and the Department will not impose damages based on a failure to meet performance standards. Where an assessment is defined as an “up to” amount, the dollar value will be set at the discretion of the Department.

The selected Applicant’s performance will be reviewed and assessed as outlined below. The Department’s Grant Administrator will give written notice of each failure to meet a performance standard to the selected Applicant. The Department may impose financial assessments for a selected Applicant’s failure to meet the performance standards. If the Department does not assess liquidated damages in a particular instance, the Department is not precluded from pursuing other or future assessments relating to those performance standards and their associated damages.

Describe your ability to meet or exceed these minimum performance standards.

CATEGORY	CRITERIA	IF NON-COMPLIANT
Timeliness	The selected Applicant shall submit the reports outlined in <b>Part III, Section III-7</b> within the timeframes established in that section.	The Department may elect to utilize one or more of the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Corrective action;</li><li>• Additional training; or</li><li>• Shorter reporting timeframes.</li></ul>

Accuracy	The selected Applicant shall submit reports that include all elements outlined in <b>Part III, Section III-7. B. Monthly Reports</b> and include accurate data.	<p>The Department may elect to utilize one or more of the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corrective action;</li> <li>• Additional training; or</li> <li>• Shorter reporting timeframes.</li> </ul>
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- A. For any deficiency, including ones relating to the performance standards, the selected Applicant will prepare and submit a corrective action plan for any observation or finding contained in a notice of deficiency. The selected Applicant must submit the corrective action plan to the Department within ten business days of notification of the deficiency or such longer time as may be agreed to by the Department.
- B. The corrective action plan must include, but is not limited to:
1. Brief description of the findings;
  2. Specific steps the selected Applicant will take to correct the situation or reasons why it believes corrective action is not necessary;
  3. Name(s) and title(s) of responsible staff person(s);
  4. Timetable for performance of the corrective action steps;
  5. Monitoring that will be performed to implement corrective action;
  6. Signature of the selected Applicant's Program Manager or a senior executive.
- C. The selected Applicant must implement the corrective action plan within the timeframe agreed to by the parties for that particular corrective action plan. Failure to implement a corrective action plan, in the manner agreed to, may result in further action by the Department, including, but not limited to, a finding of default.
- D. In the event the Department determines a deficiency or repeated corrective actions to be a serious non-compliance with the selected Applicant's obligations under the agreement, the Department may find the selected Applicant in default.

Describe the Applicant's understanding of the corrective action plan process, and how the Applicant will meet or exceed the performance standards in **Part III, Section III-8**.

### ***Applicant Response***

## **PART IV**

### **COST SUBMITTAL**

**IV-1. Cost Submittal.** The information requested in this **Part IV** shall constitute the Cost Submittal. The Cost Submittal shall be submitted as a separate attachment, and shall not be submitted as part of the Technical Submittal. The total proposed cost should be broken down into the components set forth in **Appendix B – Cost Submittal Worksheet**.

- A.** Applicants may not propose costs in excess of the maximum amounts identified in **Part II, Section 11-6. E**.
- B.** The Department will reimburse the selected Applicant for eligible expenses up to the maximum agreement amount, subject to the terms of the agreement and any adjustments to available funding. Eligible expenses include:
  - The actual cost of bus passes and vouchers purchased from the Port Authority of Allegheny County, including any additional charges for an initial card or replacement card.
  - The actual cost of gas cards, transportation vouchers, or alternative transportation allowances, such as ridesharing services.

Applicants should **not** include any assumptions in their cost submittals. If the Applicant includes assumptions in its Cost Submittal, the Department may reject the application. Applicants should direct in writing to the Issuing Officer pursuant to **Part I, Section I-8**, any questions about whether a cost or other component is included or applies. All Applicants will then have the benefit of the Department's written answer so that all applications are submitted on the same basis.

**The Department will reimburse the selected Applicant for work satisfactorily performed after execution of a written agreement and the Effective Date of the agreement, in accordance with agreement requirements.**