

CDGA DFSS Homeless Services FAQ

These are the responses to the questions received during the webinar held on April 20 and any other additional questions received prior to the release of the CDGA application on May 3, 2021.

eProcurement/iSupplier Questions

1. How do I set up an account in eProcurement, do we click the login assistance to set up a username and password?

All new users will need to register in the iSupplier system in order to access eProcurement. The only way to do this is through this link:

https://eprocurement.cityofchicago.org/OA_HTML/OA.jsp?page=/oracle/apps/pos/onboard/webui/ProcRegPG&OAHP=POS_GUEST_REG_HP&OASF=POS_SUPPREG_REGISTER&OAPB=POS_ISP_BRAND&oid=5C82DBCBF1AAFF5

To register, you must have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and an IRS W-9 for registration and confirmation of vendor business information.

2. What is the difference between an eProcurement account and an iSupplier account?

While we often use the terms eProcurement and iSupplier interchangeably, eProcurement is the City of Chicago online platform used to manage its procurement functions from RFPs to vouchers. iSupplier is the platform that manages all vendors (including delegate agencies), potential and awarded. An iSupplier account is necessary to access the eProcurement system.

3. I'm searching for the RFP in view only mode but if I search by number, nothing is coming up?

RFP's are only available for viewing in eProcurement when the application has been posted. In the case of CDGA, the program booklet was released on April 12, but the application was not posted until May 3. To view all posted applications, go to the City of Chicago's eProcurement page:

https://eprocurement.cityofchicago.org/OA_HTML/OA.jsp?OAFunc=PON_ABSTRACT_PAGE&PON_NEGOTIATION_STATUS=ACTIVE

To view the RFP document itself, click on the glasses' icon under the "details" column.

4. Does there need to be a different iSupplier user ID for each application? If so, if one person is submitting multiple applications for an agency, is it okay for them to have multiple iSupplier accounts?

You are correct. Multiple applications to the same RFP must be submitted by unique iSupplier user login. One iSupplier organizational account can host multiple user logins, so there is no need to set up more than one account per organization. User logins must have unique names, but can all share one email address.

About our RFPs, selection criteria, and application process overall

5. Can we save our application and come back to it later?

Yes, you can save your application and come back to it as well as "submit" your application and amend it later up until the due date of June 17th at noon.

6. Will the webinar slides and recording be available?

Yes are available on the DFSS CDGA website https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/dfss-cdga-information.html and the recording link for the DFSS Homeless Services CDGA RFP Applicant Webinar can be found at <https://youtu.be/RRZfBmJTA3k>

7. 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 May 3, 2021. Applications are due on June 17, 2021 at 12pm. No late applications will be accepted.

8. When will the awards be announced?

The way the process works is the applications are reviewed and funding recommendations are made as part of the City's budget process. Announcements on awards typically happen after the Mayor's budget passes City Council, which can be anywhere between late October to November. Once that passes, departments may issue awards letters. You can expect final confirmation of awards towards the end of 2021.

9. How many people are on the review panel for project selection?

Each application will be scored by two reviewers and a third reviewer will score the application if there are any discrepancies in scores between the first two reviewers.

10. Will there ever be any funding for those who specialize in serving the LGBTQ+ community

At this time, we can't forecast what special initiative opportunities might be available, but we encourage applicants to review all of the program models because many of them invite applicants to apply for specific target populations and that can include the LGBTQ+ population. We encourage you to review and think through ways the application can be used to support what you are looking to do. The Outreach model and Shelter Model allow for more of this. Please review the Target Population section of the RFPs to see if we are seeking programs that support subpopulations.

11. We currently have three Purchase Orders (PO's) for our Domestic Violence shelter - all for the same program. Are these going to be combined now? Do we include the total amount of these PO's in our current request?

Please submit one requested grant amount per application. We suggest that the suggested grant amount should reflect the true cost of operating your program. Applications selected for funding may receive multiple sources of funding, which will be communicated during the contracting process.

12. We currently operate a family interim housing program and would like to add single women in the same facility. Will I need to do two applications which would result in, if funded, two contracts?

No, you may submit one application for the facility, under the first category of programs: "General population - Families with children OR families with children and individuals."

In general, respondents must submit a separate application for each population category they are applying to serve. If an agency is applying to operate multiple shelter programs within a population category, they may submit one application for all programs serving that population. All population categories are below:

- General population - Families with children OR families with children and individuals
- General population – Individuals
- Domestic violence specialization - Families or individuals
- Youth specialization (age 18-24 or 14-24) - Families or individuals
- Medically vulnerable specialization - Families or individuals
- Other specialization (please explain)

13. What are you considering a low-barrier shelter?

DFSS considers a low-barrier shelter a program that implements low-barrier strategies and practices particularly focused on the common reasons someone experiencing unsheltered homelessness may decline shelter, including removing curfews, accommodating pets, accommodating couples staying together, and accepting clients under the influence of drugs or alcohol. These reductions in barriers should be balanced with adequate staffing support and services to maintain a safe environment.

14. Are Emergency Shelters (ages 18-24) and Interim Shelters (ages 14-24) considered two populations and need two separate applications?

No, both populations fall under the population category "Youth specialization (age 18-24 or 14-24) - Families or individuals." Therefore, you have the option to either (1) submit one application under this category for both programs or (2) submit two separate applications under this category for the two programs. We suggest that you decide on an approach that will help you prepare a strong application and easily administer the resulting contract. Note that if you decide to include multiple projects in one application, you'll be asked to provide details about the sub-populations, locations, nature of services, and breakdown of costs across projects.

15. Is there a plan to address the fact that our zoning is for an emergency shelter use operating 12 hours/day? Should I mention this in our response?

Yes, for overnight shelter programs that are interested in operating 24/7, there will be an optional, information-only question asking you to indicate if your program would be interested in expanding to offer services 24/7 and if so, to include detail on what changes or supports would be necessary. Any information on zoning or other challenges should be mentioned there.

16. Will the response to the question on opening 24/7 be part of the evaluation of our grant application? Or, is this just for informational purposes?

No, this question is only for informational purposes and will not be used in evaluating applications.

17. Will shelter building acquisition be an allowable expense in the application for expansion of services?

No, funding for building acquisition is not available through this RFP.

18. We have been receiving funding through Permanent Housing with Short-Term Supports (PHwSS). Would this now fit under the Rapid Re-Housing or Permanent Supportive Housing Support Services program?

DFSS is working with PHwSS providers on transition plans for these contracts. One option is to transition to rapid re-housing. If your organization has additional questions about this, please reach out to DFSS-Homeless@cityofchicago.org to schedule time.

19. Can agencies apply for new Permanent Supportive Housing support service projects? If so, would this be on the same application as current renewal projects or a separate application?

We are not funding any new initiatives, so any new applications need to fit under the categories that are outlined in the RFP.

20. For the Permanent Supportive Housing Support Services are the funds for services and subsidies or just services?

The Permanent Supportive Housing with Support Services program model only funds the supportive services. It does not fund the subsidies in permanent housing.

21. How will the data be tracked with the HMIS vendor transition?

There is an overlap in timeline of the HMIS transition and the CDGA process. We are not asking agencies to download anything from HMIS as in the past such as ART reports. There are still places on the application that we are asking for performance data, so please make sure you pull the needed information prior to the HMIS transition.

22. Will tracking of SOAR, legal, or education/training referrals be looked at?

Overall, the performance metrics that are mentioned in the RFP's are the key metrics and DFSS reserves the right to look at or add additional metrics while working with providers to discuss additional metrics. We are interested in working with key partners to see what other metrics should be considered.

23. We operate two Engagement Services programs. Both follow the Outreach model. Is submitting one application an option or a requirement? May we submit two applications if we prefer?

Respondents interested in applying for more than one program model within this RFP should submit separate applications for each program model. Agencies administering multiple projects within one program model may include all projects in the same application.

24. Will special initiatives such as FIT continue to be funded at this time? Will funds be reduced in the future?

For the remaining Long-Term Rental Assistance (LTRA) agencies receiving DFSS PSH funds, DFSS will begin reducing funds through a funding cap with a longer-term goal of no longer funding services for LTRA programs as we align funding for this portfolio to City-led special initiatives. We will do this over time in coordination with the CoC. DFSS will continue to fund programs associated with the following ongoing special initiatives:

- Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative
- Frequent Users Service Engagement
- CPS Families in Transition
- Homeward Bound and Chronic Homeless Pilot
- CoC Supportive Housing Initiative
- Transition-Age Youth
- Youth Permanent Support Housing (PSH) programs

25. Are new applications being accepted for Safe Havens?

DFSS will not fund new initiatives through this RFP, but will continue to fund programs associated with the following ongoing special initiatives:

- Ending Veteran Homelessness Initiative

- Frequent Users Service Engagement
- CPS Families in Transition
- Homeward Bound and Chronic Homeless Pilot
- CoC Supportive Housing Initiative
- Transition-Age Youth
- Youth Permanent Support Housing (PSH) programs

26. We currently have multiple awards for one of our programs. Is this a decision that is made after the application is approved? Or are these RFP's for a specific funding source only?

These are decisions are made after the applications are approved and then the specific funding source will be assigned to each program. There is no way to apply for a specific funding source.

27. Our program helps people locating housing, can our program benefit from the rental assistance RFP?

With the Rental Assistance Program RFP, we are seeking one agency to play a critical administrative role in disbursing rental assistance payments in collaboration with DFSS' network of six Community Service Centers. This program manager is responsible for quickly providing rental assistance payments, housing inspections, payment to property owners/managers, and monitoring fiscal activity and other administrative duties.

General questions about preparing applications

28. Are matching funds required for any of the grants?

Please read the eligible respondent's section of each RFP for guidance. There are program models where individual agencies or subcontractors to lead agencies must be able to demonstrate a minimum 10% percent in-kind match. Administrative costs will be capped at 10% percent per application or agency's federally approved indirect rate (if applicable).

29. Am I eligible to apply to this RFP if my nonprofit was established in May 2020?

Yes, this is a competitive process open to not-for-profit community-based organizations. Applicants must provide their federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt designation and State of Illinois articles of incorporation as verification of their not-for-profit status. We cannot enter into a contract if your status is pending. You must have a FEIN number to enter into a contract with the City of Chicago. If your designation is pending in any way, please consider finding a fiscal agent make the application on your behalf and we can enter into the contract that way.

30. Will there be budget guidance in the RFP relative to our current funding levels?

In the RFP book you will see the range of awards by program model. Typically, the Homeless Services Division budget has remained level with modest increases over the last few years. We encourage you to apply for what it will cost your agency to provide the services that you are applying for. Think through what you are putting in your proposal and what the budget would be in order to deliver on those services. The general ranges are included at the end of each RFP in the RFP book.

31. Does DFSS anticipate an increase in available funding for year 2 to accommodate the increased personnel costs resulting from the imminent minimum wage hike? Costs of living and the minimum wage have increased over the years, but there has been no commensurate increase in funding.

Our budget process happens in parallel to the CDGA application process. We have remained relatively level in terms of our funding. We encourage applicants to submit applications that reflect the cost of providing your services. This helps us understand the changes from year to year and helps in making funding and budget requests.

32. What type of notice will likely be part of this transition from overnight shelter to operating 24/7 if additional funding is located by DFSS? Although we have risen to the challenge these last few months, it has been difficult to locate and hire staff on short notice, including staff needed to clean and operate the building itself.

Once the Mayor's budget passes City Council, which can be anywhere between late October to November. Award letters will be issued towards the end of 2021. DFSS understands there may be a transition period if an agency's program model changes. The agency will need to have a plan in place to staff up and DFSS will work collaboratively with delegates to establish timelines for such a transition.