



Dane County Department of Human Services

Dane County Executive – Joe Parisi
Interim Director – Astra Iheukumere

1202 Northport Drive, Madison, WI 53704-2092
PHONE: (608) 242-6200 FAX: (608) 242-6294

TO: Dane County Board, Health and Human Needs Committee

FROM: Astra Miriaku Iheukumere, Interim Director, Dane County Department of Human Services

DATE: Monday, January 9, 2023

SUBJECT: 2024 Bid Waivers and Requests for Proposals

The purpose of this memo is to describe the procurement changes DCDHS has made over the past several years, describe the process by which DCDHS has arrived at the list of Request for Proposals (RFPs) and Bid Waivers for 2024, and to connect those decisions to the Dane County Ordinances.

Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) has made changes in its annual purchasing process since 2019. These changes reflect the **Department's continued focus on data-driven decision-making and its values of transparency and accountability**. Our intention is to continue reviewing and modifying our purchasing processes with the goals of 1) expanding our Purchase of Services (POS) network to include more providers of color ([Vision: Next 2021-2026](#), Priority 1 – Advance Racial Justice) and 2) supporting the development of contracted and non-contracted providers to strengthen their performance (Vision: Next 2021-2026, Priority 4 – Strengthen Our Partnerships).

DCDHS Procurement Changes:

The work of incrementally and systematically improving DCDHS bid waiver process has been a significant undertaking for many staff throughout the Department, especially our DCDHS Grants Manager (who manages the RFP process) and FMS staff.

Early 2020 (for 2021 procurement cycle):

- All bid waivers submitted to P&F at the same time (six weeks prior to RFP draft deadlines) for sufficient time to procure services through an RFP if the bid waiver is denied.
- P&F requested all bid waivers go through HHN prior to P&F meeting. P&F has authority over purchasing activities, so HHN oversight is strictly informational.

The table below provides information about the number of bid waivers, their totals, and of RFPs released (or expected to be released).

Procurement Year	Number of Bid Waivers	RFPs released
2021 (P&F only)	23	Approx. 18
2022 (Jan. 2021 HHN review & P&F approval)	9	Approx. 19
2023 (Jan. 2022 HHN review & P&F approval)	19	17 on-cycle RFPs for about 25 programs 11 off-cycle RFPs
2024 (Jan. 2023 HHN review & P&F approval)	8	Estimated 16 on-cycle RFPs for about 23 programs

2022:

- Department contract managers and FMS staff modified the RFP budget template that applicants complete to more clearly define units of service for all services that were put out for bid.
Benefits to the process:
 - The Department can now evaluate RFP responses on a per unit cost basis
 - DCDHS can now assign cost evaluation to one DCDHS staff person, Grants Manager who also oversees RFPs and Bid Waivers
 - Increased clarity in for the RFP evaluation teams
 - Ability to shift some services from a fixed-cost contract (1/12 contracts) to unit-based contract

2023:

- Under guidance of DOA Purchasing Division, DCDHS modified the budget template, updated documents, and developed a web-based application platform similar to that used for the local non-profit grants through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.
- Created a more systematic review of all DCDHS contracts and services for which procurements may be necessary.

2024:

- DCDHS continues to work closely with the Dane County Department of Administration (DOA) Procurement Office to launch a soft roll-out of a new electronic bidding platform that will further streamline and align procurement operations.
- FMS staff involvement has moved to earlier in the process to address lessons learned in the 2023 cycle, and is documenting and refining the process for contract negotiations and Best and Final Offers (BAFOs).
- This work has been a significant undertaking for many staff throughout the Department, especially our DCDHS Grants Manager (who manages the RFP process) and FMS staff.

Decision-making process: What needs an RFP vs a Bid Waiver?

Every fall, DCDHS reviews all program numbers to determine those that have not been put out to bid in the last five years and therefore are due for RFP or a bid waiver. This list is carefully reviewed by procurement and fiscal staff to remove programs which are no longer operating and programs for which the Department does not need to solicit competitive bids due to the low dollar amount, per Dane County Ordinance 25.08(4). This shortened list is sent to contract managers and Division Administrators in late October. They review the list to determine which programs have ended and can be removed and the recommended procurement approach (bid waiver or RFP) for the remaining programs.

Dane County Ordinances 25.08(18)(b) outlines circumstances where the Controller or P&F may waive the requirement for competitive bids (aka a bid waiver), which is directly copied in the list below. The exceptions are broad and allow discretion in their application.

1. When he or she determines that only one vendor possesses the unique and singular available ability to meet the County’s requirements;
2. Unique and specific technical qualifications, the ability to deliver at a particular time, or services from a public utility are required;
3. When special adaptation for a special purpose is required;
4. When a unique or opportune buying condition exists.

In early December of 2022, DCDHS leaders and contract managers met to discuss each program and the recommended procurement approach, critically considering all justification reasons in light of the unique nature of services provided through DCDHS contracts and our ever-changing policy landscape. 58 programs, under 26 contracts were reviewed. For 2024, DCDHS made an intentional effort to avoid the first bid waiver reason as much as possible to reflect the early 2022 conversation DCDHS had with HHN for the 2023 procurement cycle. With all of these variables considered, DCDHS is requesting 9 bid waivers, 8 of which need P&F approval.

2024 Bid Waiver Overview

DCDHS is providing the full bid wavier form to HHN and P&F. The summary below is a shorter synopsis of what is found in the bid waiver form, organized by reasons then bid waiver number, for the convenience of HHN committee members.

BW #	Current Provider	Program Name	BW Reason	BW # of Years	Yearly \$ Amount	TOTAL
BW02	Journey Mental Health Center (JMHC)	Individual and Group Outpatient Therapy	A special adaptation for a special purpose is required	5	468,553	2,342,765
BW01	JMHC	Case Management Services	A special adaptation for a special purpose is required	5	312,125	1,560,625
BW03	JMHC	Crisis Services	A special adaptation for a special purpose is required	2	5,179,279	10,358,558
BW07	Goodman Center	Youth Therapy and Education	A special adaptation for a special purpose is required	1	80,417	80,417
BW05	YWCA	JobRide	A unique or opportune buying condition exist	5	70,892	354,460
BW09	The Road Home	Housing Case Management for The Heart Room	A unique of opportune buying condition exist	5	50,386	251,930
BW06	RISE WI, Inc.	Early Childhood Initiative (ECI)	Unique and specific technical qualifications are required	5	869,641	4,348,205

BW08	Centro Hispano	Employment Services for Latinx population	Only one vendor possesses the unique and singular available ability to meet the Department's requirements	5	183,183	915,915
------	----------------	---	---	---	---------	---------

A Special Adaptation for a special purpose is required:

1. Individual and Group Outpatient Therapy, JMHC (BW02) - In alignment with our first and fifth Vision: Next priority, DCDHS is working to create a network of behavioral health outpatient counseling/therapy providers. This will result in greater access and choice for underserved populations. This waiver will allow DCDHS to finish working through existing contractual and systematic barriers to successfully create this open network, while leaving services in place for our clients and community members.
2. Case Management Services, JMHC (BW01) – Currently Journey provides these services in conjunction with outpatient therapy. In alignment with our first and fifth Vision: Next priority, DCDHS is working to create a network of behavioral health outpatient counseling/therapy providers. Full transition to this network is expected in 2024 and will make this service unnecessary. Open network providers may choose to connect their client to an area peer support specialist or utilize a session to assist the client in goal setting.
3. Crisis Services, JMHC (BW03) - This bid waivers seeks to delay the issuance of this RFP for up to two years to allow the planning and development of a redesigned crisis system. This work has been happening already since mid-2022. A redesigned crisis system will need to thoughtfully and intentionally weave together a system that includes new and innovative ideas that have surfaced since this RFP was put out 5 years ago and changing state guidance: recommendations from the RI Report, a Crisis Triage Center, non-law enforcement embedded mobile crisis system outside the city of Madison (Amendment HHN-O-14 of the 2023 Dane County Budget), CARES, and a national 988 crisis hotline. DCDHS has work to do to develop an IT platform for data collection and information sharing across the continuum. Our current IT infrastructure locks smaller vendors out and makes system coordination between multiple vendors challenging. People in a mental health crisis deserve a response that is timely, compassionate, coordinated, and stays with them through the end of their crisis. DCDHS needs time to thoughtfully and collaboratively plan that.
4. Youth Therapy and Education, Goodman Center (BW07) - This one year delay will allow DCDHS to align this program with others that were started in 2020 to provide youth mental health and wellness activities in community centers. This delay will allow DCDHS to review recent data about youth mental health and solicit community and youth input about programming needs.

A unique or opportune buying condition exist

1. JobRide, YWCA (BW05) – DCDHS provides only 11% of the funding necessary to provide 24/7 transportation services. If DCDHS did not work with YWCA on this project, the amount of funding available would fund less than 1 month of service.
2. Housing Case Management for The Heart Room, The Road Home (BW09) – This pilot program is a partnership with the private sector, where the request for funding from the County was initiated by Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ (ORUCC) in 2018. Partner agencies including The Road Home, Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), and Joining Forces for Families (JFF) which all provide needed

support. The project has been a success with families making progress on goals they set for themselves. The County Executive had shown his support for this program by adding an additional \$20,000 to the program in his 2023 budget to double the number of households served annually by this partnership. The County Board approved this increase in addition to the 9% with no objection.

Unique and specific technical qualifications are required

Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), RISE WI, Inc. (BW06) –The Early Childhood Initiative enjoys success and broad community support due to the lasting relationship and strong collaboration among its many partners and providers, RISE included. To pull one provider from this network would cause major disruption to continuity of services for clients and potentially set back or disrupt other funding sources (Roots and Wings Foundation, Dane County Early Childhood Zones, United Way of Dane County, the City of Madison).

Only one vendor possesses the unique and singular available ability to meet the Department's requirements

Employment Services for Latinx population, Centro Hispano (BW08) – Centro Hispano is the premier human services agency serving the Latinx population in Dane County. Their programs are integrated in such a way that they complement or “wrap around” each other. DCDHS’s Immigration Affairs Office and Joining Forces for Families programs have a well-established collaborative relationship across this and other similar programs. To make a change to this program would be disruptive to a larger system of programs.

In addition the 8 bid waivers attached to this memo, DCDHS intends to conduct approximately 16 competitive procurements through the annual RFP process. These RFPs will be posted, in two batches, on the Department’s website, announced through public notice in the Wisconsin State Journal, advertised in local publications such as Hue and Madison 365, and sent out via email announcements to several hundred agencies in March and April. Applicants will have until late May or early June to submit proposals to the Department. All complete proposals received by the application date are reviewed by a committee of at least three people and are evaluated based on pre-determined criteria. This review is typically completed by mid-July and allows time for DCDHS to interview applicants or request best and final offers or supplemental information, if needed. The Department begins to draft contracts for all programs, including those solicited through the annual RFP process, in September. The procurement process is a significant and important process, involving a substantial amount of time from many DCDHS employees.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide this update on its procurement procedures for the Health and Human Needs Committee, and looks forward to the continual improvement of this process. We remain committed to providing a fair procurement process in alignment with our strategic priorities, in order to continue providing access to effective, innovative, and evidence-based services and resources that support wellbeing, opportunities to thrive, safety, and justice to persons of all backgrounds.