

**Updated 7/15/2021 – please disregard prior edition.**

## Social Security Advocacy Pay-for-Performance Grants

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), through its Housing and Support Services Division (STATE), is seeking Proposals from qualified Responders to provide Social Security Advocacy services. The term of any resulting contract is anticipated to be up to five (5) years, from January 1, 2022 until June 30, 2027. **NOTE:** This Request for Proposal is open for one year. Applicants will be able to apply at four different times to become a contracted grantee between June 28, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

DHS' Social Security Advocacy Team's Mission is: We assist people with the Social Security disability process so they can live in dignity and achieve their highest potential.

Social Security Advocacy services help individual's apply for or maintain Social Security Administration disability benefits if you are if you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and have a disability expected to last a year or more.

To learn more about DHS' Social Security Advocacy Services, visit the Team's [webpage](#).

### Goals of RFP:

- Expand the number of contracted Social Security Advocacy services agencies throughout Minnesota; and
- Improve access to Social Security disability benefits for individuals experiencing or at-risk for homelessness; and
- Meet an individual where they are at in the Social Security disability application process; and
- Allow Social Security Advocacy applicants one year to apply to become a DHS contracted advocate.

In this RFP, we are focused on growing Social Security Advocacy services and acknowledging that intensive advocacy services are sometimes required to assist vulnerable individual's through the complexities of the Social Security disability benefits application process. DHS' Social Security Advocacy services allow agencies the flexibility to use a variety of best practices and person-centered service models depending on an individuals need. Awarded applicants must meet all Social Security Advocacy services duties and expectations as outlined in the Program Overview (PDF) and are encouraged to work closely with their local Social Security Administration field office staff and Disability Determination Services staff.

### Who can apply?

Anyone with experience helping individuals apply for Social Security disability benefits including but not limited to: Minnesota county agencies and Tribal Nations, for-profit agencies, law offices, legal aid services, nonprofits, and sole proprietors. Everyone applying must complete the Social Security Advocacy Services RFP application, and be able to meet the contract requirements and service expectations (see Social Security Advocacy Services Overview (PDF)). Partnerships are encouraged.

Additionally, all currently contracted DHS Social Security Benefits Advocacy and SOAR grantees are encouraged to apply. Current grantee contracts expire on 12/31/2021.

### How and when can I apply?

Complete the RFP Application for Social Security Advocacy Services and all required documents at <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-7750-ENG>

RFP applications must be either emailed or mailed and physically received (not postmarked) by 4:00 p.m. Central Time on one of the following dates:

- September 30th, 2021
- December 31st, 2021
- March 30th, 2022
- June 30th, 2022

Late Proposals will not be considered and will be returned unopened to the submitting party. Faxed Applications will not be accepted.

Email all required documents to [DHS.SSAadvocacy@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.SSAadvocacy@state.mn.us) with the following text in the subject line: RFP Application for Social Security Advocacy Services.

If mailing, please send to:

Attention: Laura Fox  
Housing and Support Services Division  
Department of Human Services  
540 Cedar Street P.O. Box 64842  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0842

It is solely the responsibility of each Responder to assure that its application is delivered at the specific place, in the specific format, and prior to the deadline for submission. **Failure to abide by these instructions for submitting Applications may result in the disqualification of any non-complying Proposal.**

This Request for Proposal (RFP) does not obligate the STATE to award a contract or complete the project, and the STATE reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. All costs incurred in responding to this RFP will be borne by Responder.

### When will the Responders' Conferences be held?

Responder conferences will serve as an opportunity for Responders (applicants) to ask specific questions of State staff concerning the RFP and contract. Attendance at the Responders' Conference is not mandatory but is recommended. Oral answers given during the Responder conferences will be non-binding. Written responses to questions asked at the conferences will be sent to all registered individuals who signed up for the Responders conference after the conference.

Responders' Conferences will be held on the following dates and times:

- September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 from 1:30-3pm Central Time via WebEx. To register for this responder's conference, go to:  
<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/onstage/g.php?MTID=e3811e9544b546ea9785610cd3d645091>
- December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at 10-11:30am Central Time via WebEx. To register for this responder's conference, go to:  
<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/onstage/g.php?MTID=e95fd60924ad935993452e862693826df>
- March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 at 1-2:30pm Central Time via WebEx. To register for this responder's conference, go to:  
<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/onstage/g.php?MTID=edbcd818693f705a550bd5f628543d313>
- June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 at 10-11:30am Central Time via WebEx. To register for this responder's conference, go to:  
<https://minnesota.webex.com/minnesota/onstage/g.php?MTID=e93176a29b9d42010aca5d3aded0b1702>

When do I need to submit my Responders' questions by?

Responders' questions regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing prior to 4:00 p.m. Central Time on the following dates:

- August 25th, 2021
- November 25th, 2021
- February 25th, 2022
- May 25th, 2022.

All questions must be emailed to [DHS.SSAadvocacy@state.mn.us](mailto:DHS.SSAadvocacy@state.mn.us) or mailed to:

Request for Proposal Response  
Attention: Laura Fox  
Housing and Support Services Division  
Department of Human Services  
540 Cedar Street P.O. Box 64842  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0842  
Phone (651) 431-2306  
FAX #: (651) 651-431-7476

Other personnel such as STATE staff are NOT authorized to discuss this RFP with Responders before the Proposal submission deadline. **Contact regarding this RFP with any State personnel not listed above could result in disqualification.** STATE will not be held responsible for oral responses to Responders.

Questions will be addressed in writing and distributed to all identified prospective Responders. Every attempt will be made to provide answers timely, within ten (10) days of receiving the question or no later than 4pm Central Time on the following dates:

- September 5th, 2021
- December 5th, 2021
- March 5th, 2022
- June 5th, 2022

Responder’s questions will also be posted weekly, as needed, at <http://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/grants-rfps/open-rfps/index.jsp?id=1053-486825>

### RFP Application Timeline Summary

RFP Process:	Dates:
RFP published	June 28, 2021
Responder’s Conferences will take place on the following dates/times:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 1st, 2021 at 1:30-3:00pm Central Time</li> <li>• December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at 10:00-11:30am Central Time</li> <li>• March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 at 1:00-2:30pm Central Time</li> <li>• June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 at 10:00-11:30am Central Time</li> </ul>
Responder’s questions must be submitted by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August 25th, 2021</li> <li>• November 25th, 2021</li> <li>• February 25th, 2022</li> <li>• May 25th, 2022.</li> </ul>
Responders’ questions will be answered in writing on the following dates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 5th, 2021</li> <li>• December 5th, 2021</li> <li>• March 5th, 2022</li> <li>• June 5th, 2022</li> </ul>
RFP Applications are due by 4:00pm on one of the following dates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 30th, 2021</li> <li>• December 31, 2021</li> <li>• March 31st, 2022</li> <li>• June 30th, 2022</li> </ul>
RFP closes	June 30, 2022

### When will this grant take place?

Grant contract terms begin January 1, 2022 and go through June 30, 2027. **Note:** Social Security Advocacy Services contract work may only begin after all parties have signed the contract.

### How will RFP applications be evaluated?

DHS will recruit and select an evaluation team composed of state agency staff, Social Security Administration staff, past grantees who are not applying, and people looking to gain evaluation experience to evaluate all Responder RFP applications. All RFP Application sections will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis:

RFP Application Section	Score
<b>1. Applicant Organization</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>2. Application Type</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>3. Applicant Experience</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>4. Service Description</b>  a. Proposed Social Security Advocacy Services Service Goals  b. Proposed Social Security Advocacy Personnel:  c. Current Social Security Advocacy Personnel, if applicable.  d. Describe your plan to implement Social Security Advocacy services within first 6 months of a fully executed contract.  e. Social Security Advocacy Service Delivery Model  f. Community Planning & Collaboration	Pass/Fail
<b>5. Required Statements and Forms</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>6. Final Certifications</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>7. Signature</b>	Pass/Fail
<b>TOTAL</b>	Pass/Fail

## Contract Negotiations and Unsuccessful Applicant Notice

If an Applicant(s) is selected, DHS will notify the successful Applicant(s) via email of their selection and DHS' desire to enter into contract negotiations. Until DHS successfully completes negotiations with the selected Applicants(s), all submitted applications remain eligible for selection by DHS. Data created or maintained by the DHS as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Stat. § 13.37](#)) will be public data when contract negotiations have been successfully completed. If DHS determines that it is unlikely that an applicant will be selected for contract negotiations, DHS may, as a courtesy, notify the Applicant that it has not been selected for contract negotiations.

In the event contract negotiations are unsuccessful with the selected Applicant(s), the evaluation team may proceed with the next highest scorer.

After DHS and chosen Applicant(s) have successfully negotiated a contract, DHS will notify the unsuccessful Applicants in writing that their RFP Application has not been accepted. All public information within RFP Applications will then be available for Responders to review, upon request.

DHS may:

- A. Reject any and all RFP applications received in response to this RFP;
- B. Disqualify any Responder whose conduct or Application fails to conform to the requirements of this RFP;
- C. Have unlimited rights to duplicate all materials submitted for purposes of RFP evaluation, and duplicate all public information in response to data requests regarding the Proposal;
- D. Select for contract or for negotiations a Proposal which best represents "best value" as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 16C.02, subdivision 4 and in this RFP document;
- E. Consider a late modification of an Application if the Application itself was submitted on time and if the modifications were requested by DHS, and the modifications make the terms of the Application more favorable to DHS, and accept such Application as modified;
- F. At its sole discretion, reserve the right to waive any non-material deviations from the requirements and procedures of this RFP;
- G. Negotiate as to any aspect of the Application with any Responder and negotiate with more than one Responder at the same time, including asking for Responders' "Best and Final" offers;
- H. Extend the grant contract, in increments determined by DHS, not to exceed a total contract term of five years;
- I. Cancel the RFP at any time and for any reason with no cost or penalty to DHS; and
- J. DHS will not be liable for any errors in the RFP Application or other responses related to the RFP.

## [How does DHS pay for Social Security Advocacy Services?](#)

Funds are reserved annually for payments of the provision of Social Security Advocacy services as authorized by [MN Statute 256D.06](#) (Subd. 7).

This RFP for Social Security Advocacy Services is a pay-for-performance grant with payments made to contracted advocates upon notice of Social Security Administration approval of an individual's Social Security disability benefits with receipt of electronic invoice and supporting documentation.

## Resource Quick Links

[Request for Proposals Application for Grantees to Provide Social Security Advocacy Services DHS-7750](#) (PDF)

DHS' Social Security Advocacy Team's:

- [webpage](#)
- [fact sheet](#) (PDF)
- [current grantee directory](#)

[Social Security Advocacy Services Overview](#) (PDF)

[DHS Social Security Advocacy Services Grant Sample contract](#) (PDF)

[Social Security Advocacy Services Insurance Requirements Overview](#) (PDF)

[Social Security Advocacy Services and Payment Rates](#) (PDF)