



## **REQUEST FOR CONSULTING SERVICES – COURT SYSTEM STRENGTHENING**

Vital Strategies, headquartered in New York City, is an international public health organization. Our programs strengthen public health systems and address the world's leading causes of illness, injury and death. We currently work in 73 countries, supporting data-driven decision making in government, advancing evidence-based public health policies and mounting strategic communication campaigns. Vital Strategies' priorities are driven by the greatest potential to improve and save lives. They include non-communicable disease prevention, cardiovascular health promotion, tobacco control, road safety, obesity prevention, epidemic prevention, environmental health, vital statistics systems building and Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis treatment research. Our programs are concentrated in low- and middle-income countries and cities in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific. Please visit our website at [www.vitalstrategies.org](http://www.vitalstrategies.org) to find out more about our work.

### **The Consultancy**

Vital Strategies is seeking to contract with a consultant to work on court systems strengthening and overdose prevention in Allegheny County, PA. Allegheny County is the second largest county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Its seat is the City of Pittsburgh. Following a meeting held in November 2019, the Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania known as the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas (FJD) decided to establish a task force known as the "Task Force to Advance a Public Health Approach to Substance Use Among Court-Involved Populations" ("the Task Force") to focus on more effective responses to court-involved populations with substance use disorder and strategies to reduce overdose in Allegheny County. The meeting in November 2019 led to multiple priority areas, including: 1) evidence-based use of medications for opioid use disorder among court-involved populations; 2) education and training on substance use disorder for court stakeholders; 3) supporting people with substance use disorder in the community, including families and people under community supervision; and 4) data, coordination, and multidisciplinary collaboration.

The consultant sought will coordinate stakeholder engagement and strategic planning to enhance the work of the Task Force. As such, the consultant will manage initiatives of the Task Force by creating implementation plans, assisting with oversight of Project Deliverables (as applicable), tracking and reporting on implementation of activities across departments and stakeholders, and collecting and presenting data. Reporting to Kate Boulton at Vital Strategies and Erin Dalton in Allegheny County, the

consultant also will also work in collaboration with Task Force members and other FJD, County, and City of Pittsburgh officials to:

- assess how overdose risk and the needs of court involved individuals are currently being conceptualized and addressed across the court and criminal justice system;
- identify programmatic and systemic gaps and barriers to evidence-based treatment, services, and community integration for court-involved populations; and
- develop action steps Task Force members can work to advance within their agencies and broadly within Allegheny County to effectuate Task Force objectives.

### **Qualities and Qualifications**

- 5+ years professional and/or work experience in law, public policy, criminal justice reform, harm reduction, health and human services, or related field. If graduate degree, then 3 years' experience.
- Graduate or undergraduate degree in law, public health, public policy, social work or other relevant field.
- Familiarity with and proven expertise and experience navigating court and criminal justice operational policies and procedures, preferably with knowledge of human services landscape in Allegheny County. Knowledge of substance use related frameworks, operations, services, and policy related to courts and criminal justicesystems preferred.
- Project management expertise, with the ability to manage upward, exercise independent judgment and maintain appropriate deadlines.
- Ability to apply an intersectional racial justice lens.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Strong interpersonal skills, with demonstrated ability to build and maintain collaborative relationships with internal and external partners.
- Experience in standard evaluation, research and/or investigation methodologies, practices, and procedures.
- Demonstrated ability to analyze data and basic understanding of evaluation and its role in supporting evidence-based programs.
- Self-starter with ability to work independently.
- Excellent computer skills (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).

### **OTHER INFORMATION:**

This work of the consultant will be funded through September 30, 2022. Estimated total work hours will be approximately 680 hours over 36 weeks, at the rate of \$90.00 to \$100.00 per hour. This work will require both community-based and remote services. The consultant selected assumes all COVID-19 related risks in completing community-based activities contained in the scope of work.

### **HOW TO APPLY**

To be considered for this consultancy, please submit the following items to [overdose@vitalstrategies.org](mailto:overdose@vitalstrategies.org) with subject line RE PA-CONSULTANT.

1. Letter of interest detailing relevant work experience.
2. Resume.
3. Two professional references with contact information.

## **CONSULTANT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The consultant shall provide the following services:

1. Design and conduct an analysis of how overdose risk and the needs of court-involved individuals are currently being conceptualized and addressed by the courts in the County and across the criminal justice system
  - Design and conduct process assessments of court and criminal justice practices, policies, protocols. Review and analyze agencies' background materials, planning documents and available data of their client population and system interactions between the agencies, clients and service providers.
  - Observe agency meetings and interview employees at all levels to analyze policies, work procedures and operational methods for needs assessment regarding substance use, overdose risk, and court involvement in Allegheny County. Interview at minimum 15 relevant staff within the Task Force member agencies.
  - Interview service providers and community members that have been engaged with the local court and criminal justice systems regarding their experience with these systems as it relates to substance use among the court-involved population
2. Based on these analyses and assessments, produce findings and a needs report identifying the programmatic and systemic gaps and barriers to evidence-based treatment, services and community integration for Court-involved populations that include the following:
  - Define the problems, issues or trends affecting overdose risk among Court involved populations in Allegheny County and makes recommendations about options for improving policies, systems and processes to reduce overdose among Court-involved populations in Allegheny County.
  - Assess and describe how the County and the Court can adopt a racial equity framework in the advancement of the recommendations.
  - Identify the changes needed to support the recommendations; and facilitate Task Force planning discussions to establish action steps.
  - Support the Task Force in setting up monitoring, benchmarking and accountability processes to support implementation of action steps and advancement of the Task Force's goals and objectives.
  - Assist Task Force members in developing a sustainability plan and identifying funding sources to expand activities.
3. Coordinate and lead the development of the Task Force's strategic plan including refinement of the Task Force goals and objectives for improving outcomes for Court-involved individuals in Allegheny County.
  - Coordinate bi-monthly meetings of the full Task Force and assist sub- committee chairs in the coordination of bi-monthly subcommittee meetings: prepare agendas, schedule meetings, take minutes; solicit input and materials from Task Force members; and prepare presentations to and by Task Force.
  - Identify information needed for strategic planning and collaborate with Task Force

members to fill these knowledge gaps.

- Facilitate meetings and strategy formulation, aligned with the principles of harm reduction, culminating in clear SMART goals and objectives within each of the Task Force's priority areas.
- Deliver strategic written and verbal communications about project strategy, goals, activities and progress to internal and external audiences.
- Review and analyze national, state and local Opioid Use Disorder and Substance Use Disorder related data, policy proposals, activities and initiatives and communicate impacts, orally and in writing, to support the Project and the purpose of the Agreement.
- Desktop research on best practices in Court system responses to substance use disorder and overdose.
- Coordinate with the Court's President Judge, Vital Strategies, Task Force members, and additional agencies and stakeholders, as needed.

Through this effort, the consultant will produce a strategic plan with consensus and support of the Task Force that comprises of 3 primary deliverables (collectively the "Deliverables"):

1. Findings and needs report identifying the programmatic and systemic gaps and barriers to evidence-based treatment, services, and community integration for court-involved populations (**Projected work hours: 280- 320 hours**).
2. Tailored and specific recommendations, with action steps, for incorporating evidence-based harm reduction approaches and a racial equity framework to supporting court-involved populations with substance use (**Projected work hours: 180- 200 hours**).
3. Clear SMART goals and objectives of the Taskforce in a Strategic Plan (**Projected work hours: 120-160 hours**).

**Projected total work hours: 580-680**

**Anticipated Project start-date:** January 1, 2022

**Anticipated Project due-dates:**

**Deliverable 1:** March 2022

**Deliverable 2:** May 2022

**Deliverable 3:** July 2022

**Final Deliverable review and approval:** September 2022