Homeless Housing Placements Evaluation
Notes, Questions, and Answers

Note # 1

HDC has changed the Finalist Interviews date from Friday 3/3/2023 to Thursday 3/2/2023. Please hold the entire day for interviews. HDC plans to schedule interview time slots as soon as possible in the days leading up to 3/2/2023.

Question # 1

Reference: The RFP states in Appendix #4 "Local Law 34 Compliance" that "The Data Form should be sealed in a separate envelope marked "Doing Business Data Form"

Question: Given the email submission requirement, will NYC HDC/HPD please clarify the instructions for submitting the Data Form?

HDC Answer: The respondent can include the "Doing Business Data Form" with the emailed submission. In this case, it does not need a separate envelope.

Question # 2

Reference: The RFP states in the Submittal Requirements list that "Engagement Letter/ Contract" are required as part of respondents' proposal submission.

Question: Will NYC HDC/HPD please clarify how respondents should address this requirement?

HDC Answer: HDC is looking to review, as part of the submission, any terms and conditions that proposers will require in their contract between the parties. Since HDC has strict parameters regarding certain contract provisions, we want to review the terms of all engagement letters and/or forms of contracts as part of the selection process to avoid issues after selection. If there are terms that are not acceptable and we are considering choosing you, we will contact you to discuss whether those terms can be modified or removed.

Question # 3

Reference: The RFP states: "All documents presented in response to this RFP will become the property of HDC. The Corporation is subject to the New York State Freedom of Information Laws ("FOIL") and as such HDC shall release all records subject to FOIL without notice or consent of responder."

Question: Consistent with FOIL Section 89(5), specifically the ability for submitters to request that an agency excerpt certain information from disclosure, do responders have the ability to submit a redacted version of the proposal that will indicate proprietary information that shall remain confidential during a FOIL request?

Question: Consistent with FOIL Section 89(5), if submitters are unable to provide a redacted version of the proposal, will the Corporation provide submitters with predisclosure notice of a FOIL request for their information?

HDC Answer: In accordance with FOIL, upon receipt of a FOIL request seeking a proposal(s), HDC will redact only the information that is not subject to FOIL. This decision will be made by HDC in its absolute and sole discretion, without notice or consent of the proposer(s). In the interest of promoting transparency in government, HDC construes the FOIL laws very broadly. Considering the scope of this RFP, it is unlikely that HDC will conclude that any materials included in your proposal are proprietary. Please assume that only personally identifiable information will be redacted from your proposal and that all other information will be subject to FOIL. HDC cannot agree in advance to keep anything you submit confidential.

Question # 4
Question: We had one question pertaining to the weekly meetings with the task force as we draft our budget for the proposal. Will the weekly meetings be in-person or over Teams/Zoom?

HDC Answer: The meetings will be on Teams. The weekly meetings will be with your main point of contact, the Director of Process Improvement for Housing Placements at HDC and a small team of representatives from the other agencies on the Task Force. These weekly meetings aim to help the consultants determine their tasks and allocate resources. The check-ins will ensure alignment on success criteria, planning for stakeholder involvement, and setting markers for what is in and out of scope.

Question # 5
Question: Should there be a comma between "program design" and "technology" in the 6th bullet under Objective? I'm trying to understand if this is one recommendation or two recommendations.

HDC Answer: Yes, there should be a comma between "program design" and "technology".

Question # 6
Question: Could you please provide more detail of what you are looking for in an Engagement Letter/Contract, listed under Submittal Requirements?

HDC Answer: HDC is looking to review, as part of the submission, any terms and conditions that proposers will require in their contract between the parties. Since HDC has strict parameters regarding certain contract provisions, we want to review the terms of all engagement letters and/or forms of contracts as part of the selection process to avoid issues after selection. If there are terms that are not acceptable and we are considering choosing you, we will contact you to discuss whether those terms can be modified or removed.

<u>Question # 7</u>
Question: Will you allow for multiple payments based on contract deliverables or intend to pay in one lump sum upon completion of all the work?

HDC Answer: HDC prefers one lump sum payment upon work completion. Less well-capitalized respondents may request multiple payments, but HDC does not commit to accepting this request.

<u>Question # 8</u>
Question: This project aims to evaluate placements of DHS clients in specific housing destinations supported by HDC or HPD, but we know DHS clients move out of shelter utilizing a variety of subsidies. Does the already-completed analysis that will be provided to the consultant (per What you Will Have Bullet 3) include an analysis of different subsidies and/or will HDC provide a baseline summary of process flows for DHS clients who exit shelter using a multitude of subsidies? Being provided this baseline information will greatly impact our scope of work.

Answer: The agencies commit to providing existing workflows and analysis of DHS shelter exits if it advances the consultant's work. The agencies will not create new workflows in service of this project.

<u>Question # 9</u>
Reference: The RFP section "Project Objectives" states the consultant should "help inform the creation of a messaging strategy and communication plan around the effort."

Question: What role is the selected consultant expected to plan in creating this messaging strategy and communication plan? Is the consultant the primary owner of this plan? Or will this task be driven by another team with the consultant offering recommendations to that larger effort?

HDC Answer: The consultant is not the primary owner of the messaging strategy and communication plan. The consultant will offer recommendations to that larger effort.

<u>Question # 10</u>
Reference: The RFP section "Scope of Work" states the consultant should develop "recommendations to improve the client experience, reduce redundancies, and increase efficiency, along with an estimate of time and other resources savings."

Question: What methods are expected to drive the estimates of time and resource savings? Is this expected to be a qualitative, qualitative, or mix-methods assessment?

HDC Answer: A mix-methods approach that uses qualitative and quantitative methods is appropriate. Quantative analysis will likely be limited to spreadsheet work using estimates derived from a combination of the in-house analytics team's novel statistical analysis of client- or unit-level data, agency materials, and consultant-conducted interviews. The respondent itself should not expect to do novel statistical analysis of client- or unit-level data.

<u>Question # 11</u>
Reference: The RFP section "What You Will Have" states the consultant will have "access to a draft process flow analysis with estimated cycle times built on statistical analysis of client- and unit-level data completed by sophisticated in-house analytics team."

Question: What method(s) or tools were used to conduct statistical analysis and estimate cycle times? Will the referenced in-house analytics team be part of the project and accessible to the consultants for collaboration/iteration on the statistical model?

HDC Answer: The analytics team will use a range of analytical approaches, including time-to-event/survival analysis to understand the length of time it takes for cases to progress through the homeless housing placement process. The analysis will focus on attrition rates, median completion times, and the distribution of completion times by case characteristics. The analytics team will share analyses with the consultant as appropriate and be able to set aside approximately 1-2 hours per week to meet and discuss approaches with the consultant.

<u>Question # 12</u>
Question: Is there a budget assigned to this project?

Answer: Yes, HDC has assigned a budget to this project that will be sufficient to cover the costs of a consultant completing this 90-day review.

<u>Question # 13</u>
Question: Is there an expectation or preference for activities such as interviews and presentation of results be in person or virtual?

Answer: The consultant should expect interviews and other activities to occur virtually. If the consultant cannot cost-effectively travel to New York City, HDC requests that travel costs for the final presentation not be included in the proposed budget. If the consultant is based within a distance to allow a trip without an overnight stay at a reasonable cost, we may ask that at least one of the final presentations be in person. HDC will not request an in-person presentation if it entails significant travel costs and requests that respondents not include travel costs if they are substantial.

<u>Question # 14</u>
Question: Are there any required human subject approvals or other city agency approvals needed with regard to interviewing applicants, caseworkers, and/or building marketing agents?

Answer: Yes, the agencies will need to grant approvals for interviews. These may include, but are not limited to, the Department of Social Services' Procedure No. 18-03 ("Procedure for Approving External and Internal Research Evaluations and Studies") and non-disclosure agreements. You can find DSS Procedure No. 18-03 at the end of this document.

Question 15

Question: Can you please clarify the following statement, given the proposal submission instructions ask for an email submission: The Data Form should be sealed in a separate envelope marked "Doing Business Data Form"? Is it sufficient to have Doing Business Data Form submitted as a separate PDF attachment?

Answer: HDC Answer: The respondent can include the "Doing Business Data Form" with the emailed submission. In this case, it does not need a separate envelope.

Question 16

Question: One of the objectives noted is "help inform the creation of a messaging strategy and communication plan around the effort." Should the creation of a communications plan be included in the proposed approach? If so, does HPD and HDC envision this being completed within 90 days?

Answer: Yes, the respondent should include the creation of the communications plan recommendations in its proposal. The consultant must complete all project elements by 90 calendar days after the 4/17/2023 start date.

Question 17

Question: Is there a target number of stakeholders within the mentioned groups (applicants, caseworkers, building marketing agents, City personnel) that HDC & HPD would like interviews completed with during the 90-day assessment timeframe?

Answer: The consultant should propose the number of external focus groups and interviews it believes will lead to a quality work product. HDC does not expect an exhaustive number of external interviews. We expect a focused amount of interviews necessary to illustrate the pathways and mechanisms explaining the causes of delays that the analytics team has identified through its data analysis.

Question 18

Question: Do you anticipate the members of the Task Force, and thus the scope of homeless housing options discussed, to change at any point?

Answer: No.

Question 19

Question: Will the consultant be able to ask the in-house analytics team for additional quantitative analysis if new data questions arise during the course of the evaluation?

Answer: Yes, but the Director of Process Improvement for Housing Placements and the head of the analytics team may deny requests they deem out of scope or to have a low analytical return on investment. The client team welcomes recommendations and will act upon requests it thinks are useful.

<u>Question 20</u>
Question: Additionally, I have a quick question of clarification on the Doing Business Data Form. The RFP states that "The Data Form should be sealed in a separate envelope marked "Doing Business Data Form". The Data Form will be submitted to the Mayor's Office of the City of New York (the "City")." I assume I should send a completed Data Form with the emailed proposal, but should I then send a hardcopy somewhere or does that happen at a later time?

Answer: The respondent can include the "Doing Business Data Form" with the emailed submission. In this case, it does not need a separate envelope.

<u>Question 21</u>
Question: Has the department authorized or secured funding for this project? If so, can you give an idea of the expected level or amount of funding available?

Answer: Yes, HDC has assigned a budget to this project that will be sufficient to cover the costs of a consultant completing this 90-day review.

<u>Question 22</u>
Question: When working with the Director of Process Improvement for Housing Placements at HDC, will this person have time set aside or otherwise be available for feedback and collaboration beyond weekly check ins? The internal capacity of the task force to participate will help to scope and plan the work.

Answer: The consultant should expect frequent contact with the Director of Process Improvement for Housing Placements, including his participation in stakeholder and others meetings led by the consultant. The weekly check-in will be a formal meeting for the consultant to report on progress, identify bottlenecks that need the Director's attention, and hear feedback from the Director.

<u>Question 23</u>
Question: Are the in-house analytics team's process and time estimates (mentioned in the RFP) available now or publicly for the purpose of estimating the size of the review and incorporation?

Answer: No, the in-house analytics team's process and time estimates are unavailable. We will share these analyses with the selected consultant between the 3/10/2023 Notice of Award issued and 4/17/2023 Begin Work dates.

<u>Question 24</u>
Question: Will budget information and cost estimate be provided to the consulting team in order to carry out the cost efficiency/savings portion of the deliverable?

Answer: Yes.

<u>Question 25</u>
Question: For the interview portion the RFP notes the following parties: tenant applicants, caseworkers, supporting tenants, and building marketing agents processing applications, feedback from interviews

with City agencies, non-profit homeless services providers, affordable housing providers, providers of rental subsidies, and others. Will this project include or account for the perspective of those with lived experience in homelessness who are not currently applying for tenancy?

Answer: The consultant may propose how including DHS shelter residents not participating in the process under review by the Homeless Housing Process Inter-Agency Task Force will advance the task force's goal. The Task Force focuses on HPD's placement of DHS-shelter residents in HPD- and HDC-financed and assisted housing with an HRA voucher. The consultant's mandate is to develop a report with proposals to reduce dramatically this process's time.

Question 26
Question: When accounting for the customer experience - is this largely meant to mean supporting service providers or those experiencing homelessness, or both?

Answer: The consultant should analyze the perspective of DHS shelter residents, building owners, and their marketing agents, and DHS contracted shelter providers participating in the homeless housing placements process. The goal should be to take a human-centered approach to understand the processes, the process steps, sequencing, and documentary (and other) requirements that the agencies can modify to speed up the process.

Question 27
Question: Is there an incumbent for this work, or a vendor that NYC already has from previous projects?

Answer: The agencies do not have a vendor from previous projects supporting the Homeless Housing Placements Inter-Agency Task Force.

Question 28
Question: For the process efficiencies: can you speak to the extent that the lack of efficiency (getting through the process of finding housing) vs. a lack of capacity (as in there are not enough available units) is a factor within the scope of the findings from the consulting team?

Answer: The availability of units is not within the scope of the consultant's project. The project focuses on improving the speed at which a household moves through HPD's placement of DHS-shelter residents in HPD- and HDC-financed and assisted housing with an HRA voucher. This process does not include households finding a home on the open market since the units are set-aside affordable housing units.

Question 29
Question: Who is the report ultimately delivered for and written to? (Governor, task force, or their four departments)

Answer: The consultant will deliver the report to the Director of Process Improvement for Housing Placements. The Director may ask the consultant to present the report to City Hall and agency policymakers, the Task Force, or other parties.

Question 30
Question: Is there a target budget for this evaluation?

Answer: The proposals will be evaluated based on their proposed services and budget. The respondent with the lowest proposed budget should not assume they will win the contract if the services associated with that proposal are insufficient to achieve the RFP's aims.

Question 31
Question: Is there an expectation that this evaluation will feed into a larger citywide effort that has a timeline associated with it?

Answer: The consultant should not factor in citywide efforts outside of the scope of the RFP.

Question 32
Question: Can you confirm the housing programs in scope for this evaluation?

Answer: The project focuses on improving the speed at which a household moves through HPD's placement of DHS-shelter residents in HPD- and HDC-financed and assisted housing with an HRA voucher. DHS identifies clients to participate. HPD's Homeless Placement Services (HPS) unit manages the placement of DHS shelter residents into units set aside for this purpose. Property owners either set aside these units to comply with homeless set-aside requirements included in their underwriting with HPD and HDC or have volunteered these units. HPD removes volunteered units from the HPD Housing Connect lottery system so that they can be set-aside for homeless placements. Most DHS shelter residents moving into homeless set-aside units do so with an HRA CityFHEPS voucher.

Question 33
Question: Are non-DHS shelters in scope for this evaluation?

Answer: No.

Question 34
Question: Is supportive housing in scope for this evaluation?

Answer: No.

Questions 35, 36, and 37
Question: How many HPD and HDC funded units are in the portfolio?

Question: How many of these units are available for shelter placement?

Question: What percentage do they make up of the overall portfolio?

Answer: HDC and its partner agencies can share this data with the selected consultant.

Question 38
Question: To what extent if any will prior analysis of CAPS need to be considered (embedded here is a question about whether CAPS will be a part of the analysis)?

Answer: HDC and its partner agencies do not expect CAPS to be a significant part of the analysis. If a respondent has prior experience in CAPS, they may propose how the inclusion of CAPS in the project will significantly increase how quickly a household moves through HPD's placement of DHS-shelter residents in HPD- and HDC-financed and assisted housing with an HRA voucher.

Question 39
Question: How does this initiative fit in with the Administration's broader priorities?

Answer: The Administration seeks to reduce administrative burden in government. This initiative seeks to advance this goal in HPD's placement of DHS-shelter residents in HPD- and HDC-financed and assisted housing with an HRA voucher.

Question 40
Question: Would the consultant support and manage the Task Force?

Answer: No, the consultant will not support and manage the Task Force. The consultant's deliverable is an important component of the Task Force's mandate, and as such will work closely with the members of the Task Force. However, the consultant will not run Task Force meetings, assign work to Task Force members, project manage Task Force's work, or produce performance management tools (i.e., dashboards).

Procedure No. 18-03 — ***THE CITY OF NEW YORK***
April 11, 2018 — *Department of Social Services*

PROCEDURE FOR APPROVING EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STUDIES

TO: Distribution I through VI

FROM: Kinsey Dinan
Deputy Commissioner
Office Research and Policy Innovation

I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Social Services (DSS), the Human Resources Administration (HRA), and the Department of Homelessness Services (DHS) receive numerous requests from outside organizations and individuals for assistance with research projects and studies on subjects related to DSS/HRA/DHS and agency clients. In addition, agency program areas conduct and/or contract out research studies or program evaluations to meet their own analytic needs. This procedure outlines the review process for any requests to conduct research or program evaluations using Agency data or information by both external researchers and internal agency program areas. The requests covered under this procedure differ from requests for basic information and facts, already available to the general public.

The types of research covered under this procedure include studies by both outside organizations and agency program areas that require access to agency clients, administrative data, data tools, and/or agency staff, for the purposes of analyzing a research question or conducting a program evaluation. Because agency program areas routinely access agency data and information for the purposes of program tracking and assessment, agency program areas only need to go through this approval process when they access this information for the specific purpose of conducting a research study or a program evaluation. Adherence to this procedure is critical to ensure that the agency complies with all ethical and regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects research.

II. APPROVAL OF REQUESTS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH – EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL

All requests for research projects, research activities, and evaluations must be forwarded to the Commissioner's Office of Research and Policy Innovation. This includes all external requests that require access to clients, client information, records, files, agency staff, and/or administrative data beyond the scope of what is generally available to the public. It also includes all internal plans to conduct or contract out a research study or program evaluation. Examples of studies and/or research activities covered under this procedure include, but are not limited to:

- A survey, focus group, or other data collection effort involving DSS agency clients or other stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of a program or service and/or to address a research question;
- Analysis of caseload/client administrative data for the purposes of addressing a research question or conducting a program evaluation;
- Interviews or surveys of agency staff or agency-contracted providers to evaluate the effectiveness of a program or service, including a pilot program or demonstration project; and
- Use of information regarding agency policy and procedures for the purposes of conducting a program evaluation or addressing a research question, including a pilot program or demonstration project.

Requests for information related to caseload statistics, such as engagement reports, agency Fact Sheets, program participation reports, etc. that is already available to the public, do not need to follow this approval process. In addition, audits and routine internal program monitoring efforts are not subject to this approval process.

Research requests will be evaluated and ultimately approved or rejected based on four related criteria. Proposals must meet each of these four criteria, described below.

- **Methodological rigor.** Proposed research must be methodologically sound and include clear research question(s) that can be addressed through described research methods. Methodological rigor will be assessed by the Office of Research and Policy Innovation.
- **Research subject privacy.** The proposal must take necessary safeguards to protect research subject privacy. Privacy is assessed by the DSS Office of Legal Affairs.
- **Agency burden.** Research activities must not be unnecessarily burdensome of agency staff or client time and effort. Feasibility is assessed by the impacted program area's Responsibility Area (RA) head(s).
- **Value to DSS.** Proposed research must be expected to be useful to the agency in its mission to fight poverty and income inequality by providing New Yorkers in need with essential benefits and services. The value of the research to the agency will be evaluated by the impacted Responsibility Area (RA) head(s).

A. Research Request Submission Criteria

The following information must accompany all research requests when submitted for review to the Office of Research and Policy Innovation. This information will be used to evaluate proposals based on the four criteria described above.

1. Research Design

A full research design that describes the purpose of the study and/or research activity, the research or evaluation question(s), the proposed methodology, and the intended use of the findings must be included in the proposal. Specifically, the research design section of the proposal must include, but is not limited to:

a. Synopsis

The synopsis must contain the following information:

- sponsoring organization an/d or program area,
- description of the project,
- the purpose of the study and/or research activity,
- the requester's past research in the area,
- the research or evaluation question(s),
- the research methodology to be used,
- the data, information, and/or agency resources needed for the study, and
- the intended use of the findings.

b. Data Collection Methods and Analysis

The research design must also include a detailed section on the data collection methods, including the data collection tool(s) if appropriate, and the proposed plan for analysis. Specifically, this section must include, but is not limited to:

- the type of data being requested, including specific data elements if requesting administrative data,
- the analytic techniques that will be utilized to answer the research or evaluation question(s),
- the name of the supervisor (in the case of student research), and
- an estimate of how long the study will take to complete.

In addition, if the proposal involves data collection from agency clients, staff, and/or contracted providers, this section must also include:

- the method of data collection, including a copy of the data collection tool to be used,
- the recruitment methods for research subjects,
- where participants will be recruited, where the data will be collected, and who will collect the data, including the qualifications of the data collectors,
- how long the interview or questionnaire will take for the respondent to complete,
- what arrangements will be made for non-English speaking clients,
- the sample size (for both quantitative and qualitative research),
- how the sample will be selected,
- an estimate of error rate and confidence interval based on the projected sample size (if appropriate), and
- a power analysis (if appropriate).

If the researcher intends to interview or survey clients, the interview questions, focus group guides, and/or survey questionnaire *must* be included in the research design.

c. Researcher's Affiliation and Qualifications

Information on the Researcher's affiliation and qualifications must be also included in the research design. The Researcher's resume or vitae will suffice. In the case of a graduate student request, information on the student's faculty advisor and a letter from the advisor must be provided.

2. ***Client Confidentiality***

The proposal must also include a description of how client confidentiality will be addressed throughout the research project/study. The protection of clients' rights and privacy will be a primary consideration in the review of research requests. The research design must specify how the clients' confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected.

Consent must be obtained from research subjects in order to conduct primary data collection (e.g., interviews or surveys). The consent must meet the specific requirements of the privacy laws to which agency is subject. A copy of the written consent form must be enclosed with the request and approved by the Office of Research and Policy Innovation and the Office of Legal Affairs. The consent form must notify the potential participant:

- about the nature of the study,
- about the researcher's affiliation,
- that involvement in the study is completely voluntary and that non-participation will not affect the client's benefits or services, and
- that the client's identity will be strictly protected.

In addition, the consent form must be HIPAA compliant, and if requesting confidential HIV information, it must be approved by the New York State Department of Health.

Unless verbal consent is deemed sufficient by the Office of Research and Policy Innovation and the Office of Legal Affairs, the proposal must also state that the researcher agrees to:

- obtain a signed consent form from each study participant,
- give the participant a copy of the signed consent form, and
- keep the signed consent forms on file for at least three years.

Consent may also be required in order for agency to disclose confidential, individually identifiable administrative data (i.e., when primary data collection is not involved). The confidentiality section of the proposal must include the researcher’s intent related to client consent if requesting administrative data. The Office of Legal Affairs will determine whether client consent is required for agency to disclose administrative data. If client consent is required, the consent must meet the specific requirements of the privacy laws to which agency is subject. In addition, in certain circumstances, researchers conducting interviews, observing in DSS facilities, or using or evaluating agency administrative data for purposes of a proposed study may be required to sign a confidentiality statement provided by

DSS, as determined by the Office of Legal Affairs.

3. ***Release of Study Findings and Final Report***
The proposal must also include a section that describes the proposed dissemination of the findings of the research and/or research activities. All researchers who receive approval to conduct research through this process must submit preliminary findings to the Office of Research and Policy Innovation for review and comment prior to release. The proposal must include a statement that the researcher(s) agree to provide agency with the preliminary findings prior to public release, including all relevant materials (e.g., tables, statistics, etc.).

4. ***Description of Value to DSS***
The proposal must also include a section describing the value of the research to the DSS in realizing its mission to fight poverty and income inequality by providing New Yorkers in need with essential benefits and services.

5. ***Institutional Review Board (IRB) Materials***
If this project is being reviewed by an IRB, submit a copy of the IRB application and IRB decision, including a copy of any stamped consent forms (the decision does not need to be included with the initial proposal if it is not yet available, but should be submitted when received). Any proposal submission criteria described above that are fully addressed in the IRB application do not need to be repeated elsewhere in the proposal. As applicable, also submit materials related to any IRB modifications, revisions, and extensions.

6. ***Timeline and Status Updates***
The proposal must also include a timeline for the research project, including an expected date of completion, along with interim milestones. In addition, the proposal must include a statement committing researchers to annually update the Office of Research and Policy Innovation, in writing, about the status of the project, until the completion of the project and related deliverables.

B. Approvals

All research requests must obtain approval from the Office of Research and Policy Innovation; the Office of Legal Affairs; and all impacted areas, including relevant program areas as well as the Office of Planning and Performance Management for proposals that include administrative data requests. All requests will also be reviewed by the Office of Communications. Additionally, depending on the request, final approval may require execution of a Memorandum of Understanding between the parties.

1. ***Office of Research and Policy Innovation Approval***
The research request should be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner for the Office of Research and Policy Innovation (ORPI). Once a research request is received, the Deputy Commissioner will review it to ensure that all methodological and research standards are met. The Deputy Commissioner may work with researchers to resolve any methodological concerns. If approved by ORPI, the

proposal will be shared with the Office of Legal Affairs and relevant program area(s) for review.

2. ***Office of Legal Affairs Approval***
   The Office of Legal Affairs will review the proposal for review of research subject confidentiality and other legal issues.

3. ***Responsibility Area Head Approval***
   Each RA Head (Executive Deputy Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner, as appropriate depending on the area) will make his/her decision to approve or reject a request according to the following criteria:
   - nature of the project and whether a proposed project addresses an issue of concern to DSS,
   - value of the project to DSS and its clients,
   - disruption to DSS, their staff, and/or their clients, and
   - whether a similar project has been previously done, and if so, whether it warrants replication.

   The Office of Research and Policy Innovation and the Office of Legal Affairs will provide the RA Head(s) with all relevant information regarding the methodological and legal implications of the study.

   If an RA Head is not interested in the research project and knows that she/he will not approve the request, she/he can simply disapprove the project and inform the Office of Research and Policy Innovation of the decision prior to the start of their review.

III. DSS RESEARCH CONTRACTS

Agency program areas may contract out research and/or policy analysis studies to meet their analytic needs. However, there is the need for a central clearinghouse for all contracted research and policy studies in order to:

- Eliminate duplication of effort in research studies,
- Review the methodological requirements of the research,
- Participate in the review of submitted proposals in order to assess methodological rigor, and
- Review research deliverables and make recommendations to the contract manager on the acceptance or rejection of the deliverable.

The Office of Research and Policy Innovation will be this clearinghouse, with all contracts following the same guidelines and approvals described for external and internal research requests in Section II above.

The chart on the next page delineates the Office of Research and Policy Innovation's role in contracting out research studies, depending upon whether they are Competitive

Bidding or Sole Source contracts. In addition, as with all research and evaluation projects, the Office of Research and Policy Innovation and the Office of Legal Affairs are responsible for reviewing and approving the specifics of the research design, any legal issues and client confidentiality procedures before the study is implemented.

Classifications: 01, 08 *Effective Immediately*

	RFP & Competitive Bidding	Sole Source
Need for contracted research	When a program area decides upon the need for contracted research, the director should notify the Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Research and Policy Innovation, in writing, of the research or policy analysis need and outline the specifics of the proposed study or research need. The Office of Research and Policy Innovation will respond to the department head on the feasibility of proposed research and analytic projects.	
Develop-ment of RFP and Contract	The proposed RFP is to be shared with the Office of Research and Policy Innovation. The Office of Research and Policy Innovation's comments, as they relate to the research, shall be incorporated into the RFP. No RFP with a research component is to be issued without the written approval and input of the Office of Research and	The program area should include the Office of Research and Policy Innovation in all preliminary meetings with the sole source contractor. The Office of Research and Policy Innovation's comments, as they relate to the research, shall be incorporated into the sole source contract.
Contract Approval	The Office of Research and Policy Innovation will be a member of the RFP review committee. No proposal will be approved for contract if the Office of Research and Policy Innovation does not approve of the research component.	No Sole Source Contract pertaining to research or policy analysis will be awarded without the written approval of the Office of Research and Policy Innovation.

Deliverable Review	The contract will spell out the Office of Research and Policy Innovation's role in the deliverable review process so that the contractor will have an understanding of the Office of Research and Policy Innovation's function in the project. The contract manager will see that all project deliverables are shared with the Office of Research and Policy Innovation. The Office of Research and Policy Innovation's comments on additional data runs or other refinements in the deliverable will be given to the contract manager – to be given to the contractor. No research-related deliverable will be accepted if the Office of Research and Policy Innovation does not approve of the deliverable.
Disagree-ments	Differences between the program area and the Office of Research and Policy Innovation with respect to the acceptance or non-acceptance of a deliverable will be resolved on the Executive Deputy/Deputy Commissioner level.