



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting

April 24, 2020



General Information

As of the time of this meeting (4-24-2020 at 4:30 pm) there are 1,177 confirmed cases and 71 deaths in the County.

- These [new CMU maps](#) are getting a lot of attention.
- The Health Department's [dashboard](#) provides additional information.
- The Hospital Association of Pennsylvania's [dashboard](#) shows information such as bed utilization.

Laptop Requests for DHS Clients

DHS is providing laptops for clients who need them to access visits with caseworkers, visits with family, tele-health, tele-therapy, or school/learning. To request a laptop for a client:

- Requestor fills out this form: <https://bit.ly/DHSCOV19Form>
- DHS validates client information and need.
- DHS contacts requestor to arrange for pick-up at HSB or to make other arrangements.

There are supply issues, but we are working with our partners to provide as many laptops as possible. We are also thinking about ways to expand internet access.

Jessica Ruffin, Senior Leader for Equity and Inclusion at Allegheny County DHS, joined the call to talk about DHS's Community Engagement strategies. DHS held community listening sessions with the goal of reaching residents of color, new arrivals who are non-English speakers, and residents of low-income communities with important life-saving messages. We continue to explore ways to move beyond basic outreach and toward more collaborative engagement with our community partners.

- We held four sessions attended by a total of 187 people.
- Community concerns included: government assistance challenges; language and cultural barriers; testing site accessibility and location; releasing data by race and ethnicity; employment; accessing quarantine and housing options; technology; intimate partner violence; food access; supporting individuals being released from the jail; messaging and communication; and a desire for decision-making, transparency and continued engagement.
- Next steps include:
 - Improve translation and information dissemination through Casa San Jose, the Latino Family Center, and the African American Strategic Partnership's Protecting Black Families Initiative.
 - A LGBTQ listening session is planned for Tuesday, 4-28-2020, at 11am. Please contact DHS-Equity@AlleghenyCounty.US to access the invitation.
 - Compiling FAQs and other resources for the public based on questions asked during the listening sessions.
 - Planning a pandemic advisory group to support sustained engagement.

Russel Thomas from Community Human Services joined the call to talk about creating a recruitment platform for temporary essential human service workers, which we are hoping to launch as early as next week.

- This platform will be open to all providers, including those in surrounding counties.
- Each provider will appoint a recruiter from their organization to access the platform.

- We are working with Jazz HR to create a screening questionnaire where candidates can express their preferences.
- Providers will have access to the pool of candidates and can bring them into their own hiring process.
- Hiring and onboarding will be provider-specific.
- DHS will provide ongoing technical support.

City of Pittsburgh Data

- Compared to this same period last year:
 - Overall, 3-1-1 service requests are down about 32%.
 - Complaints about abandoned vehicles, building maintenance and potholes are down.
 - Trash pickup requests are up.
 - Arrests are down by 72%.
 - According to the Moovit app, there have been huge declines in public transit usage.

2-1-1 call data

On 4-21-2020, after a news story aired about the [URA Application for Housing](#), calls reached a new daily high of 428.

We are still seeing increases in calls about employment and income, housing and shelter, food and utilities.

- Calls for financial assistance, rent assistance and utilities are driving these increases.

Food Bank data

These data are now being captured in a dashboard format, which can be viewed in the slide presentation. Increased demands are continuing across the board.

We are continuing to improve our website, located at www.bit.ly/COVID19DHSProviders.

- The [Operational Changes Tracker](#) is now live.
- We have reorganized the site, moving all program-specific information to a menu bar at the top of the site.
- You can reach us by email at DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us. We will answer all questions and elevate issues to inform the network.

Legislative/Policy Updates

Federal updates

- COVID 3.5 stimulus bill has been enacted.
 - Legislation includes: \$320b to replenish the Paycheck Protection Program; \$50b for the SBA's disaster relief fund; \$10b for Emergency Economic Disaster grants; \$75b for hospitals and health care providers; and \$25b for testing, including \$11b to localities to scale up capacity.

- Legislation does NOT include money for or flexibility to cover state and local lost tax revenue or additional funding for SNAP.

State and local updates

- Gov Wolf commits to opening PA "county by county."
 - Threshold for easing restrictions: counties must have fewer than 50 new cases per day per 100,000 residents for a period of 14 days.
 - Northcentral and northwestern counties will most likely open first.
- Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and ACHD Director Dr. Bogen discussed reopening requirements with the state.
 - Reopening would depend on ramped up testing, as only 1% of Allegheny County residents have been tested at this point.
- On Thursday, the Board of Elections voted to reduce the number of Allegheny County polling places from 1,300 to less than 200.
 - They are attempting to limit virus spread by encouraging residents to vote by mail, rather than in person.

Food

[USDA shared some information](#) about a Food Box Distribution Program. We are still keeping a close eye on this and will share additional details as we receive them. Although an RFP was released, it was only for food suppliers.

The Food Access Provider call is on Tuesdays at 3:30 pm. See slide presentation for call-in information.

AAA food information

- No new updates since 4-22-2020.

Program Updates

AAA

- We are seeing an overall slowdown in emergency requests.

OCS

- For childcare resources, please share ELRC contact information (elrc5@alleghenycounty.us or 412-350-3577) with your essential employees.
 - On Monday, 4-27-2020, the Boys & Girls Club will open a day camp for school age children of essential personnel. Apply at <https://www.bgcwpa.org/covid-19-essential-personnel>.
- We have moved employment information and resources to [our website](#).
- Homeless network
 - Our Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing programs are seeing more households being moved into housing units in a faster time frame than this same period last year. Our providers are doing great work!

- We are also seeing a slight slowdown in exits because we are asking programs to be flexible.
 - Safe Haven Hotel
 - Over 50 individuals are currently housed.
 - Referrals are now accepted from homelessness shelters, street outreach providers, refugee and immigrant services, and any system with an individual in urgent need of safe haven. Please reach out to your DHS contact:
 - Homeless client referral contact: Jessica McKown
Jessica.Mckown@alleghenycounty.us
 - Jail referral contact: Jenn Batterton
Jennifer.Batterton@AlleghenyCounty.US
 - OBH referral contact: Diane Johnson
Diane.Johnson@AlleghenyCounty.US
 - Immigrants and Internationals referral contact: Brenda Green
bgreen@jfcspgh.org
 - CHS still needs staff; please refer people to [apply here](#). Organizations interested in loaning staff should contact Cynthia Shields directly at Cynthia.Shields@alleghenycounty.us.
 - Provider Network Meeting is held every Tuesday at 9:30 am, call-in information is in slide presentation.
 - This week's call will focus on residential frontline staff and address safety protocols.

Behavioral Health

- Financial Information
 - [CARES ACT provider relief fund](#)
 - Supports healthcare related expenses or lost revenue related to COVID-19.
 - [Small Business Owners Guide to the CARES Act](#)
 - [Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services expanded Accelerated and Advanced Payment Program](#)
 - Broader group of Medicare Part A and Part B suppliers
 - Federal Communications Commission [COVID-19 Telehealth Program](#)
- Drug and Alcohol
 - DDAP has cancelled all face-to-face trainings through 5-17-20.
 - The Office of National Drug Control Policy reaffirmed treatment of SUDs as an essential medical service.
- Early Intervention
 - OCDEL will host webinars on Wednesday and Thursday of next week on the use of telehealth in early intervention services.
 - In Allegheny County and nationally, there has been a decrease in referrals during COVID-19. This may be due to fewer children being seen by pediatricians. We are thinking about innovative solutions to encourage referrals.

OID/Autism

- To combat restlessness and boredom, we are sharing this list of [resources especially helpful during the COVID-19 response](#) that includes many links to support, remote activities and ways to stay connected and informed.
- As a reminder, continue to follow local information and directives, along with the PA Department of Health and the State Office of Developmental Programs. There are links to COVID-19 updates on MyODP.org <https://www.myodp.org/mod/page/view.php?id=26808>.

CYF

- April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.
 - Online child exploitation is continuing to increase as internet usage increases.
 - Discuss internet safety with children of all ages.
 - If you believe you or someone you know are the victim of child sexual exploitation:
 - Contact your local law enforcement agency.
 - Contact your [local FBI field office](#) or submit a tip online at tips.fbi.gov.
 - Contact CYF
 - File a report with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-843-5678 or online at www.cybertipline.org.
 - PAAR's drop-in center is closed but remote case management is still operating.
 - PAAR's regular services to all victims are still available.
 - PAAR is also putting out virtual trainings, workshops and psychoeducational groups.
 - We encourage survivors interested in receiving services to call the helpline at [1-866-363-7273](tel:1-866-363-7273).

Courts/Jail

- No new updates since 4-8-2020.

Transportation

- No new updates since 4-9-2020.

How to Reach Us

- Email us at DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us with questions. Use the subject line to indicate the type of question you are submitting (e.g., program area, DHS operations).
- The COVID Hotline is 2-1-1 and the Health Department's line is 412-687-2243.
- See the slide presentation for other key contacts.

SEE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED AT TODAY'S CALL