



Allegheny County Department of Human Services Equity and Inclusion Community Listening Sessions

FAQs

Technological barriers

What is the status of quarantine centers (hotel/motel) and support for unstably housed individuals?

We have opened a “safe haven” hotel to provide individual rooms to a few sub-sets of individuals experiencing homelessness:

- Highly vulnerable individuals (due to age and/or chronic health conditions) that were living in tight, congregate settings such as many of our homeless shelters were moved to the hotel to help protect them and stop the spread of COVID
- Individuals that are symptomatic or tested positive for COVID19 but have nowhere safe to quarantine/isolate
- First responders that have been exposed and don’t want to quarantine in their homes, for fear of infecting their families.

To access this resource, organizations are encouraged to reach out to their DHS program office to be connected with the appropriate referral source.

Is there a that community leaders can get notified if a family in our community has tested positive with COVID-19 so we can be proactive in supporting them during the quarantine?

We would not be able to share that information due to privacy concerns. But we will work with the community to make sure they have access to all the resources they need for effective quarantining.

What else can be done to support educating youth around COVID-19?

iHeart media launched a campaign targeted at persons aged 13-34 and worked with both County and City leadership to implement this campaign in our area. This audience does not respond well to orders and often thinks they are invincible and won’t get sick. The goal of the campaign is to empower this group; each person can be a superhero by doing what’s necessary to stop COVID-19 from spreading. Messaging will be issued through a variety of digital, social and broadcast channels and will have one billion impressions over the next three months.

Here are additional resources for youth:

- Parent Resources for Talking to Children about Coronavirus (COVID-19) from The Campus Laboratory School of Carlow University <https://campusschool.carlow.edu/Page/888>
- Highmark has a podcast called “Confronting COVID-19” with an episode about communicating with children: <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1269-confronting-covid-19-59939638/episode/communicating-with-children-60402851/>
- How to talk to kids about COVID-19 from UPMC Health Beat: <https://share.upmc.com/2020/03/how-to-talk-to-kids-covid/>
- Helping kids cope with the COVID-19 pandemic from the Mayo Clinic: <https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/helping-kids-cope-with-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Talking with children about Coronavirus from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>

Government Guidelines & Support

We have heard of stores that are not providing masks or gloves to employees or social distancing measures when they are serving food. How can the county address this?

The Allegheny County Health Department's Food Safety Program and its inspectors continue to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program has been reaching out, and will continue to reach out, to the more than 8,000 permitted food establishments in the county to make sure they have what they need to keep employees and the public safe. The program has a team of inspectors who are conducting COVID-19 safety assessments at restaurants, grocery stores and convenience stores deemed life-sustaining and still operating and responding to consumer complaints. Information about filing complaints and several resources about food safety are available on the program's [website](#).

Are there any institutions that are making sure stores are following protocols and providing things like signage in languages other than English?

The Allegheny County Health Department provides translations of its daily COVID-19 alerts in Arabic, Chinese, Nepali, Spanish, Swahili. These alerts will have the latest information and guidance and can be accessed through the Health Department's [website](#).

How are agencies like the Health Department supporting stay-at-home orders?

The Health Department has information on its [website](#) to help residents through the stay-at-home orders. That information includes a map of free food distribution sites, guidance for outdoor activities, virtual activities for children, and ways to practicing physical distancing at home, even if someone is sick.

What resources are there to access diapers and hygiene products that are not covered by food stamps for families in need?

There are several organizations, like Immigrant Services and Connections (ISAC), that are providing both food and these specific supplies. See the resource document attached to the FAQ for all the resources that we are aware of.

What does access to employment look like for individuals with limited English?

People can search for job on the CareerLink [website](#). The service also provides support to eliminate barriers to access.

If classes in ESL are needed, the CareerLink works with partners at Literacy Pittsburgh and Goodwill. TTY is available for deaf/hard of hearing. At the sites, there is a TTY teletype phone.

The CareerLink are currently working remotely, but there is an option to set-up ASL in-person interpretation if needed.

For folks who are blind, there is an option of JAWS or Zoom to assist in services.

For folks that need anything converted to braille, the CareerLink work with partners in OVR and BBVS.

“If someone calls CareerLink and they are ESL:

- They should indicate the language needed
- Staff at the CareerLink will call the interpreter and do a 3-way call or they will return the client's call with the language interpreter on the line”

Are there any resources for university LGBT+ students around housing?

Students who are experiencing housing instability are encouraged to contact their university's office of student affairs to identify any housing resources available on or off campus. Many colleges and universities have maintained housing options for students who do not have a safe place to go.

- If you have questions about homeless services or access to the homeless system, please contact the Allegheny Link at 1-866-730-2368 or by [email](#).
- The 412 Youth Zone assists young adults who are experiencing unstable housing. Contact 412-902-4068 or visit <https://www.auberle.org/the-412-youth-zone> for more information.
- A comprehensive list of local emergency shelters, including contact information, is available [here](#).

Testing Information

Where are testing centers located and is there capacity to establish centers in the Mon Valley communities such as McKeesport, Duquesne and Clairton?

Allegheny County Health Department wants to see testing in all parts of the county. The department is working with federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), including facilities in Clairton and Duquesne, to set up testing at those sites and with healthcare providers throughout the county to expand testing.

Can individuals without a Primary Care Physician (PCP) access testing centers?

Dr. Rachel Levine, Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, recently eased the criteria to receive a test to allow anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 to be eligible for testing. Someone with symptoms of COVID-19 who doesn't have a primary care provider can go to any federally qualified health center to get tested or schedule an appointment. You can find a list of FQHC in Pennsylvania [here](#). To schedule an appointment at one of Rite Aid's testing centers in Allegheny County, follow the directions on their [website](#). The latest information on testing, including a map of current testing locations, is available on the Health Department's COVID-19 and can be found [here](#).

Does the county have capacity, if necessary, to expand testing centers in at-risk communities and act as a "safety net" for the areas that lack centers?

The county has limited resources at its lab to test and is using them as best it can. The department is working with the federally qualified health centers, which serve the under- and uninsured, to be that safety net for areas in the county that lack centers

How can community leaders help notify residents that can be tested and what are the testing criteria?

The latest information on testing will be available on the Allegheny County Health Department's COVID-19 [website](#). The criteria for who should be tested has changed throughout the pandemic as we have learned more about the disease and adapted the response. The Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine, recently broadened the criteria to allow anyone that has symptoms of COVID-19 to be tested.

Will the Allegheny Health Network location accept people with referrals from other insurance carriers or uninsured individuals who have a referral from another provider?

YES. Testing sites in Allegheny County are run by major healthcare providers, including Allegheny Health Network and UPMC. They will accept referrals from any doctor, regardless of their affiliation. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, please contact your primary care provider for information on testing. If you do not have a primary care provider, please call the Allegheny County Health Department's COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-856-2774 or 412-687-2243 for information on testing

What is the county doing to provide testing to folks in senior high rises?
The Allegheny County Health Department is working on strategies to provide testing to people who do not have access to transportation or may be home bound. As these plans are finalized, the department will work with community partners and government agencies to inform people of the services.
COVID-19 Data
Will data on race and gender be gathered and where can we find that data?
The Allegheny County Health Department has data by race and gender on their COVID-19 website .
What are the barriers to consistently capturing race data, and how will this be addressed moving forward?
The initial data on COVID-19 test results comes to the Allegheny County Health Department through the Pennsylvania National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (PA-NEDSS). Certified laboratories upload COVID-19 tests to PA-NEDSS. The data from laboratories often does not contain information on race. More than half of the tests from labs did not contain data on race. The Health Department recognized this gap and started to manually fill it in through case investigation. The department is going to continue to gather, monitor and analyze data on race moving forward.
When will we have the data by ethnicity?
Like race and for the same reasons, there are a lot of gaps in our data surrounding ethnicity. The Allegheny County Health Department is working to fill in missing data on ethnicity and hopes to be publishing that information soon in updated dashboards.
How are we collecting data for LGBT+ respondents, is there an option to self-identify?
This is not something that is currently being collected by ACHD is looking into it.
What entities in the county are collecting data on people who are being refused testing but are symptomatic?
ACHD is working on a way to collect and track this data and provide a resource for people to call if they believe they have been improperly denied testing.
Language Access
What is told to someone who has limited English when they call the hotline?
A person who calls the COVID-19 hotline and does not speak English will be connected to a bilingual resource navigator, and a third-party translation service will be added to the call to assist. The service covers between 140 to 160 languages and dialects. The resource navigator will need to know which language translation is needed. A simple phrase like “Speaks Spanish” is all that is needed for the resource navigator to connect with the correct translator. It may take a few minutes to get the translator on the line.
Can people receive Allegheny Alerts in languages other than English?
No, but we translate our daily reports in the top 5 requested languages. They can be found here .
Is the county using specific organizations to address the language barriers challenges that exist in the county? What organizations?
Allegheny County has contracted with translation services to provide translations in Arabic, Chinese, Nepali, Spanish and Swahili of important information including guidance and the daily COVID-19 alerts.