



**COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**  
**October 1, 2020**



## General Information

DHS Provider Meetings continue to be held on Thursdays.

Important reminder: Allegheny County is still looking for temporary election processing assistants (primarily data processing and clerical work) at \$20/hour for various shifts. If interested, call 412-350-6109.

The following solicitations are active on the DHS Solicitations Page:

- RFP for Inpatient Program for Victims of Childhood Sex Trafficking
  - Proposals Now Due 10/14 (amended; date extended from original date of 9/16)
- RFI for a Racial Equity Training and Support Directory
  - Submissions Due 10/26
- All are available on [DHS Solicitations Page](#), along with form to sign up to receive email notifications when we post new solicitations.

The McKeesport Testing Site is open.

- Make an appointment for a free test. Learn more on the Allegheny County News page: <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/news/index.aspx>

## COVID-19 Metrics

[PA has posted an early warning indicators dashboard](#). The data is updated every Friday.

- There was a small increase in hospital ED visits due to COVID-like symptoms. All other metrics are decreasing.
- For more information, you can access the [Quarterly Board of Health meetings](#) and Weekly COVID-19 Press Briefings on [Facebook](#), Twitter and YouTube channels for Allegheny County and ACHD.

## CARES (CRF) Spending Reminders

- Reminder to submit all invoices by October 13<sup>th</sup> for the months of July, August and September
- Continue to bill within the first 10 business days of November and December.
- Submit final invoices by January 5, 2021.
- CRF expenditures must be incurred by 12/30/2020.

As a reminder, cleaning services can be requested through [this form](#).

- DHS will not be able to pay for any cleaning services that are not requested via the web form and approved ahead of time.

As a reminder, you can request in-home, portable internet access for your clients in need through [DHS Device Request Form](#).

- Hotspots are available now! Distributions are held most Fridays.
- Laptops can still be requested but remain out of stock. Our next shipment is expected mid-October.

Jessica Ruffin joined the call to discuss DHS's Renewed Actions to Address Institutional and Structural Racism.

- While we look at equity broadly, we have chosen to lead with race.
- The ultimate goal is to incorporate equity planning within our program and support offices. We realize government has played a role in creating some of these inequities.
- We have partnered with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a community of practice that provides us with guidance, framework and collaboration with other jurisdictions.
- Our theory of change is:
  1. Normalize - create urgency around the need to address racial equity; establish racial equity as a key value and develop a shared understanding of key concepts
    - Last year, we administered a baseline institutional assessment
    - Current initiatives include:
      - Share institutional assessment results and identify next steps/office-level actions
      - Enhanced intranet page to include a list of resources (books, articles, podcasts, etc.), Dialogue Facilitation Guide
      - Racial Equity Informational Video
      - Virtual Racial Equity Training
  2. Organize - build staff capacity through training and invite community partners
    - Current initiatives include:
      - Establishment of Employee Resource Groups
      - Racial Equity Informational Video
      - Virtual Racial Equity Training
  3. Operationalize - implement new strategies, build a sustainable infrastructure to sustain this work
    - Current initiatives include:
      - External-facing Resource Library
      - RFI for racial equity trainers/consultants with an intersectional lens for providers seeking to advance the work
- If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Equity and Inclusion at [DHS-Equity@AlleghenyCounty.us](mailto:DHS-Equity@AlleghenyCounty.us).

#### COVID-19 Mobile Testing Schedule

As a reminder, each Monday, the Allegheny County Health Department provides an updated mobile testing schedule on its [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#). Testing is ongoing at sites around the County, and individuals can [register here](#); some sites allow for walk-ins.

- You can use the [county testing map](#) when you are working with a client and looking for testing locations with them.

We are continuing to improve our website, located at [www.bit.ly/COVID19DHSProviders](http://www.bit.ly/COVID19DHSProviders).

- The [Operational Changes Tracker](#) is now live.
- You can reach us by email at [DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us). We will answer all questions and elevate issues to inform the network.
- Please submit stories and photos of how you are meeting needs during this time to [Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US](mailto:Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US)

#### Legislative/Policy Updates

## Federal Updates

- On Wednesday, President Trump signed into law a stopgap government-wide funding bill for the new Federal fiscal year that begins today.
  - Provides funding through December 11th.
  - Includes a one-year extension of the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) food program. Next step is for PA and the USDA to negotiate specifics of program operations. Unclear when funds will reach families' P-EBT cards.
- Today, HHS announced \$20b in new [Phase 3 Provider Relief Funds](#).
  - Providers that have already received Provider Relief Fund payments can apply for additional funding that considers financial losses and operating expenses due to COVID-19.
  - Application window is October 5th to November 6th.
- Congress discussing a new 11th-hour COVID-19 stimulus bill.
  - Democrats are asking for a \$2.2 trillion package with state and local government funding, while the administration is looking at a \$1.5 trillion package excluding government aid.

## State and Local Updates

- Gov. Wolf announced a \$1.9m program to reduce stigma associated with substance use and opioid use disorders.
  - The *Life Unites Us* campaign will utilize social media platforms and webinars to spread real-life stories of individuals and their family members battling SUD.
- Full PA Senate will consider COVID-19 funding-related bills week of October 5th, including a bill creating the \$200m Nonprofit Economic Emergency Delivery Systems (NEEDS) Grants Program.
- Bi-partisan bill moving quickly in PA General Assembly to increase the cap on emergency rental assistance and extend the application deadline for the PA Housing Finance Agency's CARES Act Assistance for Renters and Homeowners.
  - HB 2868 could be signed by the Governor as early as the end of next week.

## Food

### Upcoming food distributions:

1. West Mifflin (Farmers to Families), 10/3, 10am, 1800 Homeville Rd
2. Duquesne, 10/12, 12pm, 1 N Linden St [Register here](#)
3. Military Share, 10/13, 12pm, 2934 Smallman St
4. Allegheny Valley, 10/13, 5pm, 590 Pittsburgh Mills Blvd [Register here](#)
5. McKeesport, 10/17, 10am, 1960 Eden Park Blvd [Register here](#)
6. Wilkinsburg, 10/24, 11am, 333 Lincoln Highway [Register here](#)

Sysco has approximately 120k cases from the USDA farmers to families food boxes for PA that they are looking to distribute to 501c3 partners

- They will deliver the boxes to your location. They are currently looking to identify partners to get the boxes out by 10/31/20.
- Please provide Christine Heyser at [cheyser@pa.gov](mailto:cheyser@pa.gov) by **Monday, October 5** with your contact information so they can compile a list to forward to Sysco if interested.

## Program Updates

### OCS

- Housing
  - [Allegheny County CARES Rent Relief Program](#) Update
    - **The Local Application Deadline has been extended to October 31.** (Fingers crossed the State will follow suit). In the meantime, any eligible applications received in October will be paid using only County CARES funds.
    - The Rent Cap has been raised to a total of \$2,000/month from \$1,500/month. The additional funding will be covered with County CARES funds.
    - The Non-Rent Cap has been increased to \$500/month from \$200/month. This can cover gas, electric and internet, late fees, other lease-based fees and court costs. This does not include water or sewer.
    - If your clients are not eligible for this program, you can refer them to:
      - Call the Allegheny Link (1-866-730-2368) to be screened and referred for Eviction Prevention assistance
      - Call 2-1-1 for referrals to the URA's Housing Opportunity Fund (city residents only)
  - Congregate setting guidance: please review the [guidance](#)
    - Negative COVID tests are not required to accept new clients into shelters or housing programs.
    - Symptom/temperature checks at intake are recommended.
    - Intake/Referral flow chart [https://dhstraumaresourcelibrary.alleghenycounty.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/safe-haven-decision-tree\\_revised.pdf](https://dhstraumaresourcelibrary.alleghenycounty.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/safe-haven-decision-tree_revised.pdf)
  - Telehealth workstations are on the way to shelters!
    - Workstations will be coordinated with your partnering/local Federally Qualified Health Center
    - Workstations will include everything you need to connect to health services - computer, camera, blood pressure cuff, thermometer.
    - Supplier will assist with delivery and staff training.
  - You don't need a home to vote!
    - Deadline to register to vote is October 19<sup>th</sup>.
    - Individuals experiencing homelessness can register to vote by mail (w/o specific address) or [online](#) (w/ address of shelter, drop-in center, etc.)
    - You need ID to vote, you can get a voter registration card and use that.
  - The next homeless network provider call is on 9/29 at 9:30 am.

- Also, “Ask a (Housing) Navigator! Office Hours” are being held every Tuesday from 10:30-11:00 am; please see slides for access information.

## CYF

- Racial Equity Efforts
  - Data review
    - There are racial disparities at every decision point in the child welfare continuum.
    - We have ongoing county-wide initiatives to alleviate racial disparities, and we have seen some great improvements so far.
  - Our Equity Goals:
    - Reduce rates of disproportionality and disparity across the child welfare continuum.
    - Reduce the number of African American teenage girls whose first placement is congregate care.
    - Increase kinship care placements for African American children while reducing the use of congregate care.
    - Increase focus on the use of data to drive practice at the executive and regional office level.
    - Create a county-wide racial equity taskforce. Include parents, youth, community and system partners.
    - Reduce the disproportionality and the percent of removals due to “child behavior” and “parent-child conflict.”
    - Increase parent and community engagement in efforts to address racial disproportionality and disparities.
  - Please see the slide presentation for details on regional office initiatives. Each office has named a practice focus based on the population they serve in their catchment area. They are conducting both internal and external work with the community.
  - We are also analyzing Child Exploitation and Abscondence data.
  - Kids Esteem Enhancement Program and YogaRoots are new programs to create safe spaces. Other ongoing projects and workgroups include:
    - System of Care Diversity and Inclusion Workgroup
    - Model Courts Equity and Diversity Workgroup
    - Engaged courts in reviewing equity data
    - Child Welfare Resource Center Diversity Task Force
    - Allegheny County Health Department Racial Equity workgroup (infant and maternal mortality)
    - Hep C Free Allegheny
    - Intimate Partner Violence QIC-Grant
    - Placement Stability & Permanency for LGBTQ Youth in Foster Care-QIC Grant
    - Transition Aged Youth Racial Equity Planning
  - We are also engaging in career promotions process improvement.

## How to Reach Us

- Email us at [DHS-COVID19planning@allegHENYcounty.us](mailto: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. For basic needs assistance or general COVID-19 inquiries call the 24/7 COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-856-2774. Language services are available.
- See the slide presentation for other key contacts.

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