



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
October 29, 2020



General Information

As a reminder, DHS Provider Meetings are held every Thursday.

The following solicitation is active on the DHS Solicitations Page:

- RFP for Additional Rapid Re-Housing Units for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) - Responses due Tuesday, November 24
 - Non-mandatory pre-proposal conference via Teams on Tuesday, November 10 (details in RFP)
- Available on [DHS Solicitations Page](#), along with form to sign up to receive email notifications when we post new solicitations

COVID-19 Metrics

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

- All metrics are increasing except ER visits (which is steady) during the week of October 16th-22nd.
 - Average daily hospitalizations increased by 48% over the last week.
 - Patients on ventilators increased by 49% over the last week.

Pittsburgh Quarterly recently completed an [analysis of COVID cases](#) in Allegheny County.

- Allegheny County had 1,097 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 residents as of Oct. 15, lower than all benchmark regions except Seattle (King County).
- In Southwestern PA, Allegheny, Beaver and Indiana counties saw about 30% increases in new cases in recent weeks, trailing behind Westmoreland, Lawrence and Butler counties.

As a reminder, the McKeesport Testing Site is open.

- The site will be closed on the following dates: Nov 3 (Election Day), Nov 11 (Veterans Day), Nov 26 (Thanksgiving) and Nov 27 (day after Thanksgiving)
- Make an appointment for a free test. You do not need insurance. Registration and testing information available at bit.ly/McKeesportCOVIDTestSite.
- If you are unable to drive, contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-856-2774 for additional options & resources.

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 looking for testing locations with clients.

Consider downloading the COVID-19 Alert PA app. It can alert you if you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive.

The PA Department of Health listed additional factors to determine a close contact after being within 6 feet of someone for fewer than 15 consecutive minutes:

- Being in extremely close proximity (e.g., face to face)
- Having a prolonged exposure time
- The infected person exhibiting symptoms
- The infected person generating respiratory aerosols (e.g., coughing, singing, shouting)

- The presence of environmental conditions (e.g., crowding, inadequate ventilation or being indoors)

The state has created its own state-based health insurance marketplace, Pennie, to get people enrolled in the health insurance marketplace (replacing healthcare.gov).

- The [Pennie website](#) will allow users to compare insurance plans and enroll when the inaugural open enrollment period begins November 1st-January 15th.
- The Pittsburgh Business Group on Health is hosting a free webinar with Pennie's Executive Director on Tuesday, November 3rd from 12 to 1pm to discuss this transition and how you can help spread the word and support clients.
 - Link to register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0UKprJvHTuGR-B5T3nxxmeg

As a reminder, we encourage you to [place your order for free supplies](#)! Consider your needs through the remainder of the year. We have Emergency facemasks, Full-face shields, Non-Contact Infrared Thermometers (Limit 2 per order), Hand Sanitizer (8oz and 64oz options), Clorox Clean-Up Disinfectant

We are continuing to track how schools are delivering instruction at this time. You can visit your school district's website or [Allies for Children](#) for the latest updates.

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

- The [Operational Changes Tracker](#) is now live.
- You can reach us by email at 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

Legislative/Policy Updates

State and Local Updates

- The General Assembly has finished its regular legislative session without finalizing the allocation of the remaining \$1.3b in federal CARES Act funds. These decisions will be part of remaining budget negotiations that must be figured out by the end of November.
- The Allegheny County Elections Office has expanded hours for its office and the downstairs lobby for voters to return their completed ballot.
 - If a voter has made an error on their ballot, misplaced their security or declaration envelope, or not received a ballot previously applied for, the Elections Office can reissue the ballot or provide a replacement envelope.
 - Use this [Link](#) for hours and information on additional election offices.

Food

Upcoming food distributions:

1. McKees Rocks, 10/31, 11 am, Angelina Way behind Speedway at CSX Intermodal Drive

2. Wilkinsburg, 11/7, 11 am, 225 Penn Ave [Register here](#)
3. Duquesne, 11/9, 3 pm, 1 N Linden St [Register here](#)
4. Allegheny Valley, 11/10, 4 pm, 590 Pittsburgh Mills Blvd [Register here](#)
5. Duquesne, 11/23, 12 pm, 1 N Linden St [Register here](#)

Program Updates

OCS

Housing and Homelessness system update

- Entries into the System: We have a -35.5% decrease in incoming calls. We have implemented COVID-19 screenings and are still able to welcome people in the HSB.
- Performance by Program
 - Emergency shelter-short term shelter for individuals, families and youth.
 - We have lost some beds to make social distancing possible. We've also asked shelters to avoid discharging people until they have a suitable place to go. This caused a decrease in entries and exits.
 - Transitional-time limited beds. No significant changes
 - Rapid Rehousing-time limited rental assistance and case management. No significant changes
 - Permanent Supportive Housing-longer term support with rental assistance and case management.
 - We are seeing lower enrollments and exits. We have fewer units available and we are seeing a downturn in folks leaving the system due to a lack of Section 8 voucher availability and loss of jobs. We are seeing high utilization as providers have been going above and beyond.
 - Rental Assistance/Prevention
 - We have been funneling people away from our traditional programs and to ACED's program, so our client counts are lower.
- Overall Program Performance
 - We have placed an increased emphasis on connecting clients to employment across all of our programs. Overall, income and employment levels are about where we could expect them to be.
 - RRH and PSH programs are doing a great job connecting folks to benefits.
 - We have not seen a decrease in exits to permanent housing (62% in 2020).
 - We have seen a drop in the number of households being housed. At the same time, we are seeing many requests (310) to our Housing Navigator unit, which works with landlords to make sure they are willing to rent to the people we serve. Programs are finding it challenging to find landlords who are willing to rent.
- Other Updates
 - Our Landlord Mitigation fund allows landlords to claim up to \$3,000 in damages. We are seeing more claims this year compared to last year. We think this may be due to a lack of on-site visits during COVID-19. We are encouraging virtual inspections.
 - We are keeping an eye on postponed evictions. We are about 6500 cases below last year's levels, and we would expect additional cases this year due to job loss. We are

- trying to plan to have support available when evictions begin to come through, perhaps at the beginning of next year. We are reserving rental assistance funds for this.
- Providers put many measures in place to keep clients and staff safe. We have had a handful of organizations report COVID-19 incidents. We have had 17 positive cases.
 - Our isolation and quarantine facilities include:
 - The Safe Haven hotel has served 161 individuals; 72 have exited.
 - The Family space has served 7 families; 5 have exited.
 - The Winter Shelter will be up and running from November 15-March 15. Due to social distancing recommendations, we are limiting the number of people staying at Smithfield United Church of Christ (men)/Shepherd's Heart (women) We have Overflow at Safe Haven. We will institute temperature and symptom checks, a weapon scanner (to replace wand and bag checks) and individual meal service (from group meal service). We are also supporting Catholic Charities in opening two daytime warming centers.
 - We have had to make many accommodations so that providers can serve people flexibly without being burdened by requirements. We are using a risk scale to determine an appropriate level of virtual monitoring. Homeless Services and Supports Coordination staff have been working to get devices to youth to participate in school and are working extra hard to get families out of shelter and into permanent housing.
 - We established a partnership between our shelters, the health department and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to provide flu shots, direct referrals and telehealth workstations for each shelter.
 - We are excited to expand the Youth Homelessness Demonstration program.
 - Due to COVID-19, we are not sure if the Point-in-Time count will occur.

CYF

- We are working to match each youth in congregate care with a family for a holiday visit. Please reach out to A Second Chance if you are interested.
- We are partnering with Community Empowerment Association to provide additional visitation centers.
- We encourage you to check out this [15208 Homewood and Wilkinsburg Community Resource guide](#).

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-19 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