



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
October 8, 2020



General Information

DHS Provider Meetings are held on Thursdays.

As a 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 a form to sign up to receive email notifications when we post new solicitations.

As a reminder, the McKeesport Testing Site is open.

- Make an appointment for a free test. Registration and testing information available are at bit.ly/McKeesportCOVIDTestSite.
- If you are unable to drive, contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-856-2774 for additional options & resources.

The Allegheny County Free Flu Shot Clinic and Health Screenings schedule can be found at <http://www.livewellallegheny.com/health-screenings-flu-shot-clinics/>.

NAMI Walks is occurring this weekend (October 10th). To learn more visit <https://www.namikeystonepa.org/nami-events/namiwalks/>

The County released its proposed 2021 budget:

- County Operating Budget totals \$942.5m, a 1.8% decrease (\$17.3m) over the current year.
 - Half of the Operating Budget is funded by local taxes. Strong property tax base has kept 2020 collections stable. Proposed Budget does not include a property tax increase.
- County budget recommends \$210m for DHS, a 1.76% increase over the current year.
 - County funds make up approximately 5% of the total DHS budget.
 - DHS Initiatives highlighted in the County Budget:
 - The Engagement Center to streamline access to substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports
 - Hello Baby to support parents of newborns
 - Low Barrier Shelter, a year-round, 24-hour shelter providing behavioral health and housing assistance for people experiencing homelessness

DHS has partnered with United Way to mail 4 cloth masks to every DHS client household.

- This was made possible using CARES funds.
- Each package will have 2 informational cards. Each card is translated into Spanish on the reverse side.
- Mailing will begin next week and continue for 4-6 weeks.

We encourage you to [place your order for free supplies!](#) Consider your needs through the remainder of the year.

COVID-19 Metrics

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

- There was an increase in all metrics during September 26-October 2.
 - New cases, incidence rate and average daily hospitalizations all increased by 28% over the last week.
 - There was a 31% increase in positivity rate over the last week. However, positivity rate is still low, below 5%.
- DHS Key Indicators
 - Food
 - Food-related calls to 2-1-1 have fallen. This may mean we are meeting the increased food need.
 - SNAP applications have decreased since June, mostly due to a policy change waiving recertification requirements.
 - Employment
 - Unemployment Insurance Claims are steady and higher than last year.
 - Mental Health
 - We've seen small increases in calls to IRES and voluntary commitments, and steady calls for mental health crises, mostly after lifting of restrictions.
 - Overdoses have been increasing; there was a spike in March 2020.
 - Housing & Homelessness
 - Calls to the Link have been down throughout the pandemic.
 - Clients are not exiting shelters as quickly. People may be finding it hard to find a safe place to stay.
 - We are now about 6,500 cases below the number last year at this time. We don't know how many additional cases will result from loss of income due to COVID-19, but we can expect at least this many cases to be in the pipeline once the CDC moratorium expires at the end of December 2020.
 - There have been 6,892 applications to the CARES Rental Assistance program.
 - Aging services
 - Calls to SeniorLine have increased but calls for Elder Abuse and Reports of Need have decreased. We have seen increases since the lifting of restrictions.
 - Child welfare
 - Calls to Child Welfare remain below pre-COVID levels but have increased since the lifting of restrictions.
 - Criminal justice system
 - Bookings, average daily jail population and criminal filings remain below pre-COVID levels, but have increased since the lifting of restrictions.
- 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 AC Health Department.

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

- Hotspots are available now! Distributions are held most Fridays.
- Laptops are also in stock and more are on the way.

Ian Mavero joined the call to discuss the Client Management Information System (CMIS).

- We identified the following pain points in our provider IT systems:
 - Duplicate Data Entry

- Unsustainable
- Inefficient IT Cost
- We think there is great opportunity for IT cost efficiencies and needed flexibilities in the Platform as a service area.
- The Client Management Information System (CMIS) aims to provide a common platform to support client and case management functions for the various human service programs DHS and our broad provider network implement for the residents of Allegheny County.
- We went through 2 RFP processes and are now in contract negotiations with a vendor.
- Please reach out to Ian Maverro (Ian.Maverro@AlleghenyCounty.US) or Sam Litvak (Samantha.Litvak@AlleghenyCounty.US) for more information.

COVID-19 Mobile Testing Schedule

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.

- 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 COVID-19 has changed your operations (temporarily or permanently) to Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US.

Legislative/Policy Updates

State and Local Updates

- Gov. Wolf extended the timeline to apply for PHFA's COVID -19 Relief Mortgage and Rental Assistance Grant Program to November 4th.
- Due to a legislator's positive coronavirus test, the General Assembly canceled session days until October 19th, pushing the timeline back for any movement on the below legislation:
 - Senate consideration of COVID-19 funding-related bills, including a bill creating the \$200m Nonprofit Economic Emergency Delivery Systems (NEEDS) Grants Program
 - House bill with bipartisan support that increases the cap on emergency rental assistance for PHFA's COVID Relief-Mortgage and Rental Assistance Grant Program (HB 2868)

Food

Upcoming food distributions:

1. Pitcairn Park, 10/10, 10 am, Broadway Blvd & Center Ave
2. Duquesne, 10/12, 5 pm, 1 N Linden St [Register here](#)
3. Military Share, 10/13, 12 pm, 2934 Smallman St
4. Allegheny Valley, 10/13, 5 pm, 590 Pittsburgh Mills Blvd [Register here](#)
5. McKeesport, 10/17, 10 am, 1960 Eden Park Blvd [Register here](#)
6. Clairton, 10/17, 11 am, Clairton High School

7. Wilkinsburg, 10/24, 11 am, 333 Lincoln Highway [Register here](#)
8. Hill District, 10/24, 9 am, Shop N Save

Program Updates

OCS

- Housing
 - [Allegheny County CARES Rent Relief Program](#) update:
 - Over 400 payments have been made.
 - The Local Application Deadline has been extended to November 4th.
 - The Rent Cap has been raised from \$1,500/month to \$2,000/month. The additional funding will be covered with County CARES funds.
 - The Non-Rent Cap has been increased from \$200/month to \$500/month. This can cover gas, electric and internet, late fees, other lease-based fees and court costs. It does not include water or sewer.
 - Continue to send documents to ACTION Housing if the initial application was denied due to incomplete completion. ACTION Housing has hired more staff to help with application processing.
 - If your clients are not eligible for this program, you can refer them to other resources:
 - 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](#):
 - Negative COVID-19 tests are not required to accept new clients into shelters or housing programs. The incubation period does not allow for accurate determinations.
 - Symptom/temperature checks at intake are recommended.
 - As a reminder, you don't need a home to vote!
 - Deadline to register to vote is October 19.
 - 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 an ID to vote, a voter registration card can be used.
 - Voter Registration Tips for Providers:
 - Put up signs announcing that people can "Register to Vote Here."
 - Train staff on voter registration forms.
 - Post messages on social media reminding followers to register and vote.
 - Have outreach workers complete voter registration.
 - Make registration part of your intake or exit interview process.
 - Ask your client advisory group to help or to advise you about ways to encourage registration among clients.
 - Let your clients use your agency address.
 - Encourage staff, board members, supporters to register to vote.
 - Help clients get to the polls on voting day.

- The next Homeless network provider call is on 10/13 at 9:30 am. See slides for call-in information.
- “Ask a (Housing) Navigator! Office Hours” are being held every Tuesday from 10:30-11:00 am; please see slides for access information.

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. 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