



**COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**  
**January 7, 2021**



## General Information

DHS Provider Meetings continue to be held once per week on Thursdays at 4:30 pm.

### Human Services Planning: Request for Input

We need your help to identify priorities for helping people in Allegheny County. Priorities may include COVID-19 response, emerging needs, changes to improve the services we provide or any other needs. Please [use this form to provide input](#).

### 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 helping a client look for testing locations.
- The McKeesport Testing Site is still open.
  - Make an appointment for a free test. You do not need insurance. Registration and testing information are available at [bit.ly/McKeesportCOVIDTestSite](http://bit.ly/McKeesportCOVIDTestSite).
  - Individuals who are unable to drive can contact the COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-856-2774 for additional options and resources.

Upcoming opportunity to learn more about incarcerated women:

- Remote trainings are being held by A Child's Place PA on January 14, 21 and 28. Register by contacting Vicki Sirockman at 422-728-8287 or [vsirockman@achildplacepa.org](mailto:vsirockman@achildplacepa.org).

DHS has [released two solicitations](#):

- RFP for Family-Centered Service Coordination for Families Involved with Child Welfare and Mental Health Services
  - Proposals due Tuesday, February 9
  - Optional pre-proposal conference via Teams next Thursday, January 14 (details in RFP)
- RFP for Foster Care Agencies
  - Proposals due Wednesday, February 10
  - Optional pre-proposal conference via Teams next Friday, January 15 (details in RFP)

DHS released December 2020 Updates for congregate and long-term care providers and for providers conducting in-person operations, as well as the communication protocol for COVID-19 cases. We will continue to update these. Enhancements to DHS Guidance documents stem from PA's November 2020 [Mitigation and Enforcement order](#), the November 2020 updates to [PA DOH's Mask Order](#), and ACHD's updated [Isolation and Quarantine](#) guidance.

As a reminder, the Communication Protocol for COVID-19 Cases is:

In a single email to the following three individuals, the program administrator is to immediately notify the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (ACDHS) and the Allegheny County Health

Department (ACHD) that an individual being served in the program is presumed or has tested positive for COVID-19:

- [LuAnn.brink@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:LuAnn.brink@alleghenycounty.us)
- Brian Bell, DHS's Privacy Officer, [DHSPrivacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHSPrivacyOfficer@alleghenycounty.us)
- Your DHS program office contact

All [PA State metrics](#) are down in Allegheny County, although it should be noted that they are down only when compared to recent weeks, in which record highs were recorded.

- The current positivity rate (as of 12/31) is 26%.
- Cases have fallen slightly throughout December but are still high (4,006 cases the week of 12/26).

## **Legislative/Policy Updates**

### *Federal Updates*

- The \$2.3 trillion Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 was enacted on 12/27/20. The legislation includes many smaller bills, including the \$900 billion Coronavirus and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act. Much of the funding is one-time or time limited.
  - The bill contains no new funding to states and counties to broadly respond and recover from the pandemic (i.e., no new program like the Coronavirus Relief Fund established in the CARES Act in March 2020).

### *Supports available for providers*

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
  - \$248 billion for businesses *and non-profits*, though there are more restrictive eligibility criteria (e.g., fewer than 300 employees, 25% revenue reduction)
- Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program
  - \$20 billion for new EIDL Grants for businesses and non-profits in low-income communities, up to \$10,000 to small businesses that remain severely impacted by the ongoing slowdown
- Childcare provider support
  - \$10 billion nationwide to cover COVID-19-related expenses and re-enroll children in a safe environment
- Hospitals and healthcare provider support
  - An additional \$3 billion for the Provider Relief Fund

### *Supports available for individuals*

- Economic Impact Payments
  - One-time \$600 direct payments to individuals (full payment for AGI up to \$75k, reduced amount until \$87k). \$600 for dependents. Most eligible people will get payments automatically; other eligible individuals will need to file 2020 tax returns to receive their payment.

- Emergency Rental Assistance Program
  - \$25 billion nationwide to cover rent and utilities
  - Eviction moratorium extension through January 31<sup>st</sup>
  - Visit the [Allegheny County Rental Assistance website](#) for updates.
- Low-Income Household Drinking Water and Wastewater Emergency Assistance Program
  - \$638 million allocated nationwide to help individuals pay their water and wastewater bills; this is a new program that will be established and administered by HHS, through state governments; program specifics and eligibility criteria are not yet specified.
- Pandemic unemployment programs
  - Extends Pandemic Unemployment Assistance for gig and non-traditional workers
  - Extends Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation and restores supplement, \$300/week increase through March 14<sup>th</sup>
- Emergency Broadband Benefit Program
  - New program administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), provides \$50/month for internet service to eligible households
  - Qualifying households: children who qualify for the free/reduced lunch program, Pell grant recipients, recently laid off or furloughed workers, individuals who qualify for the Lifeline program, individuals who qualify for a low-income or COVID-19 internet service discount program
  - [The FCC is seeking comments](#) as they establish the \$3.2 billion program (deadline of January 25th).
- SNAP benefit increase
  - 15% increase to the maximum allotment, from January through June
- Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) program simplifications
  - Food benefit for households with kids eligible for school meal programs
  - Permits states to propose providing P-EBT benefits to SNAP households, with a child under six, that live in an area where a school is closed or operating under hybrid learning
- Chafee Education and Training Vouchers
  - Increase of maximum stipend for older youth in foster care
- Pell Grant
  - Increase of the maximum award by \$150
  - Reinstates eligibility for students who are incarcerated
- FEMA Funeral Assistance
  - Covers some funeral expenses for COVID-related deaths in 2020
- The bill also includes new nationwide stimulus funding that will support related County services and programs, including funding for Head Start, senior nutrition programs, elder justice, child welfare prevention and the Family Unification Program's vouchers for young people.

### *State and Local Updates*

- The PA General Assembly began the 2021-2022 legislative session on Tuesday.
  - While the House gavelled in their session without drama, partisan struggle overshadowed the Senate opening with Republicans refusing to seat Allegheny County Senator Jim

Brewster, who won a close election in November, even though the State had certified his win. Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, whose duty it is to oversee Senate proceedings, was removed by Republicans in a symbolic display of power when he moved to allow Brewster to take the oath of office.

- PA House and Senate Democrats are renewing legislation to prevent widespread evictions and foreclosures ahead of the end-of-January federal eviction moratorium expiration.
  - The bill would extend the eviction moratorium to 60 days after the governor ends his COVID-19 disaster declaration. The disaster declaration was enacted March 6, 2020 and has been renewed three times since.
  - There were no Republican co-sponsors in the last session.
- Pittsburgh Public Schools announced the creation of the Re-Imagine School Safety Task Force, an act of the School Board intended to recommend and influence policies that combat racial disparities in school safety.
  - The task force will evaluate available police data to determine measures for reducing the disproportional arrests, citations and suspensions of students of color in PPS.

#### *Allegheny Courts Emergency Operations Order*

President Judge Clark issued an Order for Jan. 11 – Jan. 31, amending Court Operations due to COVID-19. All Courts will remain open to the public and for case filings, payments and processing, with these exceptions:

##### Court of Common Pleas

- All matters will be conducted remotely, with the exception of some specific in-person hearings.
- Indirect Contempt-of-Court Hearings for incarcerated individuals shall proceed in person as scheduled in the Family Division, with as many participants appearing remotely as possible, including witnesses and attorneys.
- Delinquency Adjudication Hearings for Juveniles who are detained and who request an in-person hearing may proceed in person.
- All proceedings scheduled on or prior to January 29, 2021 that cannot be conducted remotely are postponed to a date after January 29, 2021.

##### Magisterial District Courts and Pittsburgh Municipal Courts

- Landlord-Tenant proceedings scheduled during the period from January 11, 2021 through January 29, 2021 will be postponed to a date after January 29, 2021.
- Summary non-traffic/traffic and civil proceedings in which all parties agree to conduct the hearing remotely may continue, otherwise postponed until after January 29, 2021.
- Preliminary Hearings for incarcerated individuals will proceed as scheduled, with as many participants appearing remotely as possible.
- Emergency PFA petitioners may appear in person to present their petitions, and Preliminary Arraignments will proceed per the August 31, 2020 Emergency Operations Order.

## Program Updates

### OCS

#### Health of the Childcare System

- 567 licensed childcare providers and 437 relative providers are currently open.
- 64 licensed childcare providers are temporarily closed due to reopening challenges.
- 30 providers had to close temporarily in December due to potential/positive cases of COVID-19; 29 were childcare centers and one was a family childcare home. This impacted 654 children.
- 22 childcare providers have permanently closed since the start of COVID-19 in Allegheny County; 9 childcare centers, 8 family childcare homes and 5 group childcare homes.
- There are currently 7,688 children receiving the Child Care Works (CCW) subsidy.
- There are no children on the subsidy waitlist, as of 1/5/21.
  
- Resources:
  - Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC): Physical offices not open to public, but all services available virtually @ (412) 350-3577 and [elrc5@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:elrc5@alleghenycounty.us)
  - Community Learning Hubs: [Community Learning Hubs - Trying Together](#)

#### Food

##### Upcoming Food Distributions:

- Drive-up food distributions are happening on 1/14 (Glassport), 1/16 (McKeesport), 1/23 (Wilkinsburg) and 1/25 (Duquesne) – [details and registration here](#).
- Don't forget the [Food Bank's network of food pantries](#) for more consistent access to food.

#### Health of the Homelessness System

- Adult shelter beds are available at all three winter shelters (Smithfield, Shepherd's Heart and McKeesport Downtown Housing) and some year-round shelters (EECM, Light of Life & Bethlehem Haven).
- Youth shelter beds are currently full.
- Family Shelter units are available (mostly units for smaller families).
- There are three warming centers open during the hours winter shelters are closed. Centers are located at Catholic Charities, Red Door and McKeesport Downtown Housing.
- Isolation and quarantine facilities (Safe Haven & Family) are receiving referrals and are taking in record numbers of people - including an increased percentage of COVID-19-positive/exposed individuals.
- Telehealth workstations were delivered to all shelters and other locations this week.

#### Housing

- The latest stimulus package:
  - Extends the CDC's federal eviction moratorium through January 31
  - Makes available \$25 billion through the Emergency Rental Assistance program to assist households that are unable to pay rent and utilities due to the pandemic. Allegheny County is requesting rental assistance funding.
- *DHS expects to launch new rental assistance program supporting tenants and landlords impacted by COVID-19 in February.*

- Upcoming Training Schedule
  - January 27<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm – Landlord/Tenant Topics: standard lease breakdown, tenant responsibilities and landlord responsibilities
    - [Click here to join the meeting](#) or call in (audio only) +1 267-368-7515 Conference ID: 919 769 821#
  - February 24<sup>th</sup> at 1 pm – Housing Crisis: hoarding / infestations, housing cost burdened, eviction prevention, condemnations and change of ownership/common real estate scams
    - [Click here to join the meeting](#) or call in (audio only) [+1 267-368-7515](#) Conference ID: 129 530 437#
  - Virtual trainings being scheduled now: Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Care, and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression
  
- Upcoming Meetings
  - Housing & Homelessness Provider Calls
    - Every other Tuesday @ 9:30 AM
    - Next Call: January 5th
    - Featuring: Just Mediation
    - [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
    - [+1 267-368-7515](#)
    - Conference ID: 883 836 652#
  - Ask a Navigator Office Hours
    - Every Tuesday, 10:30 am-11 am
    - [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
    - [+1 267-368-7515](#)
    - Conference ID: 947 434 365#

#### Economic Impact Payments

- If any clients did not receive their 2020 stimulus payment but should have, the easiest way to get their payments is to file a full 2020 tax return.
- The Allegheny County Free Tax Program can assist the taxpayer for free, starting on January 20th. A photo ID for the taxpayer, social security cards for all individuals on the return and tax documents are required.
- If you have multiple clients interested in filing a full tax return, please email [FreeTaxPrep@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:FreeTaxPrep@alleghenycounty.us) so we can discuss the easiest way to serve your clients.

#### CYF

- Think of Us is hosting a [national Town Hall](#) on Friday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm to discuss the Supporting Foster Youth & Families through the Pandemic Act. Children’s Bureau staff will give a high-level overview of the initial information related to new funding and additional support for current and former foster youth ages 14 through 26.

#### **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**