



**COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**

**June 24, 2021**



## General Information

DHS Provider Meetings are now being held at 4:30 PM every other week over the summer, on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

### Active Solicitations

- RFP for the Operator of the Low-Barrier Shelter and Drop-In Center at Second Avenue Commons
  - Proposals are due at 3 p.m. on Friday, June 25

We would like your input on ways in which we can improve our competitive solicitation process (RFP/RFQ/RFI) to better serve you and the community. Please take this [short anonymous survey](#) by Tuesday, July 6.

- [Link to DHS Solicitations](#)

## Allegheny County Housing Authority Public Hearing

- ACHA holding public hearing on changes to Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy and Section 8 Administrative Plan **Tomorrow, Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:15 a.m.**
- Proposed changes reflect ACHA's work with the Vera Institute of Justice, along with DHS, to reduce barriers to public housing for people with criminal records
- Review the draft documents and find details of hearing here:  
<https://www.achsng.com/publicdocs.asp> Attend hearing in-person or virtually, and/or submit comments ahead of time via email

## Area Agency on Aging Public Hearing

- You're invited to a public hearing to solicit comment on the 2021-2022 Budget Prospectus, scheduled for Friday, June 25, at 10 AM
  - View the [budget prospectus](#)
  - Join the Zoom meeting and teleconference through the [Community Meetings and Hearings page of the DHS website](#)
  - Submit written testimony to [Matthew.Beall@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:Matthew.Beall@alleghenycounty.us) or via mail to the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Area Agency on Aging, 2100 Wharton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 by June 28<sup>th</sup>

## Early Childhood Education Enrollment is Open!

It's never too early to enroll!

- Early Head Start, Head Start and Pre-K Counts programs offer Language Development, Math, Science and Social Skills.
- Allegheny County residents call: (412) 394-4594
- City of Pittsburgh residents call: (412) 529-4291 option 2

### Child Tax Credit Update

- Anyone who has filed taxes in 2019 or 2020, claimed a child on their return, and meets income qualification will automatically be enrolled in the advance payment program. An estimated 12% of US children are in families that are considered non-filers and may need help signing up
  - The non-filer tool is open and you can use [this guide](#) to support folks in filling it out
- The administration has launched the website [childtaxcredit.gov](http://childtaxcredit.gov) ([Spanish website version](#)) with details for potential recipients and information for non-filers.
- Just Harvest will join our next call (July 8<sup>th</sup>) to share more practical tips and outreach materials

### Participate in the ACHD Community Health Assessment Survey Supplement

ACHD seeks to better understand the complex impacts 2020 had on community residents.

- Complete the [survey online](#) in English or Spanish
- Request paper surveys in multiple languages including Spanish, Nepali, Arabic, and Simplified Chinese through [this form](#)
- Participants may enter a raffle for a \$50 Giant Eagle gift card
- Responses are due by 6/30.

### New on Allegheny County Analytics:



#### Allegheny County COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

ERAP offers financial assistance for people struggling to pay rent or utilities due to COVID-19. Renters qualify if they've lost income due to the pandemic, are at risk of becoming homeless, or their household income is below 80% of the Area Median Income for Allegheny County. Landlords can also apply with their tenants' involvement.

Learn more: <https://covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us/>

These interactive dashboards track data about ERAP, like who is applying and how long the application process takes, from when the program started until today. The data is updated daily, and you can sort it your way using filters.

Check out the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) [Dashboard!](#)



# Isolation & Quarantine Emergency Shelter Updates

- Isolation and Quarantine space remains available at the Safe Haven
- Seeing significant decrease in need and beginning to wind down temporary facility
  - Highly Vulnerable referrals will no longer be accepted after 6/30/21
  - Positive, exposed, or suspected referrals will be accepted through 8/31/21
  - Anticipate fully closing 9/30/21, continuing to be responsive to community need

## Winter Shelter Closure

- Winter Shelters kept open later this year to meet COVID related needs.
  - Smithfield United Church of Christ
  - McKeesport Downtown Housing Emergency Shelter
- The last **night** of shelter is June 30<sup>th</sup>. The shelter will officially close the morning of July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Providers are working with current guests to create plans post-shelter.
- DHS is reviewing client rosters to support connections with housing programs.

### Updated DHS Values Statement

- 1. Service integration begins with the individuals and families we serve.**
  - Whenever possible, a team approach involving the consumer/family, system partners and natural supports will develop and monitor the plan for services.
- 2. Individuals and families have the capacity to identify their own strengths, needs and goals; create relationships; and take steps necessary to accomplish these goals.**
  - Improving the health and well-being of individuals and families, and increasing their self-reliance to the extent possible, will be prioritized.
- 3. Consumers sustain their health and wellness with the support and assistance of their families and/or natural supports.**
  - The engagement of family and natural supports will be emphasized and the intrusiveness of formal service systems minimized, whenever possible
- 4. Individualized and comprehensive services should be provided to consumers based on their unique needs.**
  - A full continuum of services (information, prevention, early intervention, case management, crisis intervention, after care), including tangible aid, when necessary, will be available to support those needs.

5. **All services must be high-quality, accessible, and aligned with consumer and family strengths, needs and goals.**
  - Ongoing assessment of service quality and fidelity, through the use of data, research and timely measurement of program efficacy and outcomes, will direct continuous quality improvements.
6. **All communities and populations have unique cultural characteristics.**
  - Services will be delivered in a manner that is inclusive, competent and respectful of these characteristics.
7. **All services, policies and processes will be informed by a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, requiring the active and intentional inclusion of people of varying social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic class, ability, religion, citizenship status and country of origin).**
  - This commitment recognizes the social and structural differences that are deeply embedded in the fabric of society. By frankly addressing the privilege and power disparities that have led to unequal access to opportunities and resources, all people, regardless of social group or individual characteristics, will have an opportunity to succeed.

## **Policy Updates**

### **State Budget**

- The General Assembly is working to meet the June 30th state budget deadline; we don't yet have insights into funding levels.
- Currently the GA is finishing up the code bills (Public School Code, Tax Reform Code, Human Services Code and Fiscal Code) that will tag along with the General Appropriations bill.
- There has still been no indication yet on how the General Assembly will decide to appropriate the \$7 billion recovery funding received from the American Rescue Plan.

### **Election Reform**

- After two days of intense debate, the Republican-backed election overhaul bill, HB 1300, passed the House on Tuesday in a 110-91 vote.
- Gov. Wolf has already promised to veto the legislation if it makes through the Senate and to his desk.
- The bill would increase voter ID requirements, cut down on election timelines and put a limit on dropbox usage, which is currently not specifically provided for in election law.
- Not all of the bill's provisions are contentious: HB 1300 extends pre-canvassing, the process by which mail-in ballots are prepared for counting, to seven days before the election. It also includes measures to make voting more accessible to disabled voters and seniors, introduces

universal early voting beginning in 2025 and would provide for upgrades to voting locations with long wait times.

- Ahead of the bill's introduction, county election officials across PA advocated that the legislature pass simple legislation that would extend pre-canvassing and adjust the mail-in ballot deadlines, rather than place them in a larger, more controversial bill like HB 1300.
- There is also currently a bill in the House to add voter ID requirements to the PA Constitution. Just like the recent disaster emergency declaration bills that passed at statewide referendum, this bill could not be vetoed, but must pass two concurrent legislative sessions before it can appear at referendum. If it does, the earliest it could appear on the ballot would be May 2023.

### **PA Juvenile Justice Report**

- According to a [report released this week](#) by a bipartisan task force created by the State Senate to reform juvenile justice in the state, PA imprisons too many first-time and low-level youth offenders, with Black youth in particular disproportionately prosecuted as adults
- The task force said its recommendations would reduce the population of young people in residential facilities by nearly 40% in five years and save nearly \$81 million that could be reinvested in a range of youth services.
- The administrative, statutory and budgetary recommendations include:
  - Greatly expanding the use of community-based interventions as an alternative to residential placement, reserving detention for kids who “pose a serious risk of harm to community safety.”
  - Narrowing the use of pre-adjudication detention.
  - Raising the minimum age at which young people can be tried as adults for certain serious offenses from 14 to 16.
  - Repealing a 1995 law that automatically requires adult prosecution in more serious cases.
  - Eliminating fines and most court cost and fees.

## **Eviction Moratorium Extended to July 31, 2021**

- CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky has signed an [extension](#) to the eviction moratorium further preventing the eviction of tenants who are unable to make rental payments
- Was scheduled to expire on June 30, 2021; now extended through July 31, 2021
- Intended to be the final extension of the moratorium

## Federal Communications Commission accepting comments about text-to-988

- The FCC proposes to require covered text providers to support text messaging to 988, the 3-digit dialing code to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. FCC seeks comment on this proposal and related issues, such as the text message formats that covered text providers must transmit to 988 and the timeframe for implementation.
- [Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \(FNPRM\)](#) includes specific questions about text-to-988 for individuals with disabilities.
- Comment deadline is July 12, 2021
- General information about 988 and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/suicide-prevention-hotline>.

## Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh - Megan Confer-Hammond, Fair Housing Partnership of Greater Pittsburgh

[megan@pittsburghfairhousing.org](mailto:megan@pittsburghfairhousing.org)

- fair housing advocate and enforcer of fair housing laws
- providing education and outreach to the community regarding the Fair Housing Act
- training housing providers and government officials on their obligations under the Fair Housing Act

Housing Discrimination requires a housing-related harm based on protected class

It is not enough to NOT Discriminate – we must undo past discrimination

To file an anonymous complaint or speak with fair Housing Partnership staff, please call 412-391-2535

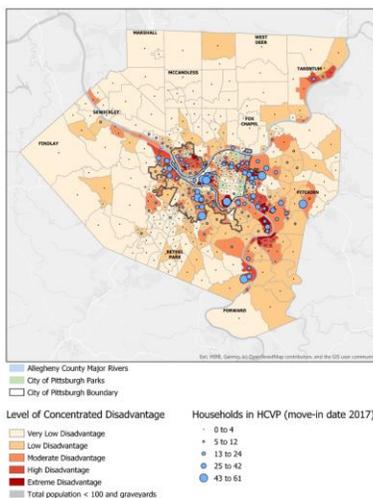
**Housing Mobility Program** – Colleen Cain, PhD [colleen.cain@allegHENYcounty.us](mailto:colleen.cain@allegHENYcounty.us) ; Nick Cotter [nicholas.cotter@allegHENYcounty.us](mailto:nicholas.cotter@allegHENYcounty.us)

## Place Matters in Childhood Outcomes

- Growing up in a neighborhood with high poverty is associated with stressors that influence well-being and limit economic mobility.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Growing up in a neighborhood with low levels of poverty, access to better schools, and less violence can lead to better health and well-being, and greater economic mobility.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Low-income children who make moves to low-poverty neighborhoods have significantly higher adult income and educational attainment than their peers who remain in high poverty neighborhoods. They are also significantly less likely to experience incarceration or experience a teen pregnancy. Dosage effect was observed with all outcomes. <sup>[3]</sup>
- Place matters because our neighborhoods were racially and economically segregated by design. The divergent conditions, opportunities and resulting outcomes in Black versus White neighborhoods are the direct result of decades of systemic and interpersonal racism. <sup>[4][5]</sup>

# Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

- Long-term rental subsidy for income-eligible individuals
- Participants pay portion of rent, subsidy covers remaining cost
- Dependent on private rental market
- Funded by HUD and administered by local PHAs
- Stats:
  - Around 12,000 units (30,000 annual participants on average in Allegheny County)
  - Heads of households: 80% Black, 19% White, 1% Other; 85% women
  - ~two-thirds of households have children
- Goals:
  - Housing safety and stability – Program meets these goals
  - Geographic **choice**, de-concentration of poverty - But is the program leading to geographic mobility?



**Majority of HCV Households Highly Segregated Overall and by Race [4]**  
(n = 2,429, 2017 move-in date)

- 54% of total households moved to highly or extremely disadvantaged tracts
- Only 17% moved to opportunity tracts (low or very low disadvantage)
- Difference in move outcomes by family status, gender and race
- Black and female-headed households with children twice as likely as White and female-headed households with children to move to highly or extremely disadvantaged tracts

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

## Barriers to Opportunity

Barriers	Examples
Lack of eligible rental housing in Opportunity Areas	<i>Exclusionary zoning, old housing stock, higher rents in opportunity areas</i>
Tenant History	<i>Eviction history, negative or no credit, criminal history, no housing search assistance, lack of information, no financial assistance</i>
Programmatic Constraints	<i>Lengthy inspection times, insufficient payment standards, portability challenges, inadequate time to find a unit</i>
Landlord Discrimination	<i>HCV program stigma, family status discrimination, gender discrimination, racial discrimination, source of income discrimination</i>

## Mobility Services + Administrative Changes

- Mobility services include:
  - Housing search & leasing assistance
  - Landlord engagement
  - Financial assistance to families and landlords
  - Post-move supports
- Changes to housing authorities' administrative policies, such as:
  - Higher payment standards
  - Streamlined porting
  - Expedited inspections

## Housing Mobility as a *Place-Conscious* Strategy

- Helping families move to low-poverty neighborhoods is **one** way to improve childhood outcomes and reduce concentrated poverty.
- Place-based investments and people-based anti-poverty efforts are also important.
- *Traditionally, many community improvement initiatives have reflected an implicit vision that a neighborhood should function as an incubator for its residents—investing in programs and services that families need to thrive, as well as the amenities that make them want to remain as their circumstances improve. [...]*

*Enabling residents to move to more opportunity-rich neighborhoods—if they want to—should be part of a larger vision for improving outcomes. [...] Thus, strategies that expand people's access to neighborhoods throughout a city or region should be viewed as part of a larger **place-conscious strategy**, not as an alternative to neighborhood reinvestment and revitalization.*

(Turner & O'Brien, 2021)<sup>[5]</sup>

## Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program

- Program Partners:
  - DHS (management/coordination, data analysis, data/map tool development, fundraising)
  - City and County housing authorities (voucher admin, enrollment, new policies)
  - Contracted provider (TBD) (mobility services)
- Priority Population: Families in HCV Program with children under 13
- Technical Assistance:
  - Opportunity Insights at Harvard University
  - Mobility Works
  - Dr. Anita Zuberi, Duquesne University
  - FirstPic, Inc.
- Funding:
  - Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (awarded \$300K for year one)
  - The Pittsburgh Foundation (awarded \$75K for year one)
  - PA Department of Human Services (awarded \$100K)
  - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (\$4M + 74 new vouchers)

## Stakeholder Input

(In addition to consulting national and local research ...)

### We spoke with:

- 6 current voucher holders in Pittsburgh-Allegheny County (5 are single mothers with children aged 14 and younger)
- 6 people with experience in direct service provision, housing and/or relocation assistance
- 2 local fair housing advocates
- 2 housing mobility provider organizations (Dallas and Baltimore)

### About:

- Mapping methodology
- Voucher holders' housing search considerations
- Challenges voucher holders face in Pittsburgh-Allegheny County
- Inspections
- Pre-move assistance
- Post-move experiences and assistance

## HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration

- Pittsburgh-Allegheny County one of nine selected sites
  - Includes program funding, technical assistance and training, and an independent evaluation (Abt Associates)
- Randomized Controlled Trial
  - At *each* demonstration site, sample size of nearly 2,000 over 6 years
  - Study participation and decision to move = voluntary
  - Two treatment groups + control group
  - Questions:
    - Is there a significant difference in moving patterns and retention between voucher holders with children who receive mobility services and those who do not?
    - Are there discrepancies in moves to opportunity and retention in new neighborhood by race? By neighborhood characteristics?

## HUD HCV Mobility Demonstration

- Qualitative Research
  - Interviews with voucher holders, housing agencies, mobility program staff, and landlords re: challenges + most effective services
- Locally, we have additional questions, including:
  - What are the experiences of Black versus White voucher families who move to high opportunity areas and how can the program best support their transition and retention?
  - Which incentives tend to bring landlords in areas of high opportunity into the program and how can the program retain participating landlords over time?

## What We Hope to See

- Reduced barriers to high-opportunity areas for HCV families and more families with children moving to those areas
- Neighborhood satisfaction and persistence for those who move to high-opportunity areas
- Higher lease-up rates for the HCV program, as more landlords are recruited and as families receive personalized housing search assistance

## Summary

- Place matters in childhood economic and educational outcomes
- The HCV Program *should* expand geographic options, but participants, especially Black women with children, face barriers to high opportunity neighborhoods
- One way to reduce barriers to geographic choice: housing mobility services coupled with administrative changes
- The Allegheny County Housing Mobility Program will launch in 2022 as one of nine HCV Mobility Demonstration sites selected by HUD
- The Demonstration includes technical assistance and a rigorous mixed methods evaluation to test the program's effectiveness, as well as learn from participants, landlords, and staff to make improvements

Q: What will be the Referral Pathway

A: The Housing Authority. Many of the participants will be existing voucher holders

### Coming up Next:

- Next meeting is on July 8
- Topic Violence Prevention

### 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.