

What Connects Us

Allegheny County Department of Human Services



10/28/21

Provider Briefing

Agenda



- 4:30 - 4:45 pm:** Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Expansion
- 4:45 – 5:00 pm:** Addressing the Local Refugee Housing Crisis
- 5:00 - 5:15 pm:** Resources for Refugee Youth in the Region
- 5:15 - 5:30 pm:** Policy and Legislative Update, Active Solicitations



Join the DHS Team!

<https://allegHENYcounty.bamboohr.com/jobs/view.php?id=82>

Vaccine Eligibility Expansion



- The FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee met Tuesday and recommended emergency use authorization of a low-dose Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11.
- With the FDA's authorization, the issue goes to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Vaccine Advisory Group which is scheduled to meet on November 2nd and 3rd.
- If the CDC issues a positive vote, vaccines can be available for this group as early as November 4th or 5th.



Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Expansion

Dr. Robin Sims, Primary Care Health Services, Inc.



Panel Discussions



Addressing Local Refugee Housing Challenges

Robert Sherwin, M.S.Ed., Executive Branch Director, Bethany Christian Services of Western Pennsylvania

Yinka Aganga-Williams, Ph.D., Executive Director, Acculturation for Justice, Access and Peace Outreach (AJAPO)

Ivonne Smith-Tapia, Director, Refugee & Immigrant Services, JFCS

Kayleigh Del Cotto, Community Sponsorship Manager, Hello Neighbor

Erin Dalton, Facilitator



Resources for Refugee Youth in the Region

Morgan Puterbaugh, Operations Manager, ARYSE

Emily Blair, Director of Education, Latino Community Center

Casey Rich, Site Director, South Hills Family Center, South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM)

Veronica Jenkins, Deputy Director of Programs and Community Engagement, Casa San Jose

Amanda Welby, Director of Youth Programming, Casa San Jose

Jessica Ruffin, Facilitator



Policy Updates

LIHEAP Application Open



- Pennsylvanians can apply for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) online or by phone at (866) 550-4355, with full information available here and paper application option.
 - Benefits are higher this year due to funding from the American Rescue Plan increasing the minimum grant from \$200 to \$500, and increasing the maximum grant from \$1,000 to \$1,500, with the grant amount based on household size, income, and fuel type.
 - The maximum LIHEAP crisis grant — for people who meet the poverty limits and are in jeopardy of having their heat turned off — is doubling to \$1,200.
 - Application period is open from October 18 to May 6.

State Assistance Hotline for P-EBT



- PA Department of Human Services launched a live hotline (484-363-2137, open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., [webform](#)) to assist families with the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) program.
- Overview of P-EBT:
 - Provides eligible school children with nutrition benefits loaded on EBT cards that are used to purchase food when schools are closed or operating with reduced hours.
 - Provides benefits to younger children in households participating in SNAP whose covered childcare facility is closed or operating with reduced hours or attendance.
 - More than one million children in Pennsylvania are eligible for P-EBT and more than 757,000 cards have now been activated by families who choose to use the benefit.
- Parents who have a standard EBT card (for SNAP and Cash Assistance) and have children who were deemed eligible for P-EBT, will have their P-EBT benefits loaded to their EBT card.
- Due to identified issues, benefit cards are being reissued to families in McKeesport Area School District.

Upcoming Election – Voter Registration



Election day is **Tuesday, November 2, 2021**

Polls are open on election day from **7 A.M. to 8 P.M.**

- Uncertain of your voter registration status? You can [look it up here](#).
- Uncertain of your polling place? You can [look it up here](#).
- If a voter has made an error on their mail-in ballot, or has not received one previously applied for, Elections can reissue the ballot at County Office Building (542 Forbes Avenue).

Ballot return is available daily in the lobby of the County Office Building through Election Day. Hours for ballot return:

| Day/Date | Hours |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Thursday, October 28 | 8:30 AM to 8 PM |
| Friday, October 29 | 8:30 AM to 8 PM |
| Saturday, October 30 | 8 AM to 5 PM |
| Sunday, October 31 | 11 AM to 7 PM |
| Monday, November 1 | 8:30 AM to 8 PM |
| Tuesday, November 2 (Election Day) | 7 AM to 8 PM |

Federal Grant Opportunity



American Rescue Plan Provider Relief Fund Phase 4 General Distribution Application period opened September 29th

\$17 billion available for distribution based on providers' lost revenue and changes in operating expenses from July 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

Eligible providers include:

- Behavioral health providers (e.g., substance use disorder, counseling, psychiatric services)
- Home and community-based support (e.g., housing services, care navigators, case management)
- Inpatient behavioral facilities (e.g., inpatient rehabilitation facilities, long-term acute care hospitals, other residential facilities)
- Other services (e.g., foster care, developmental disability services)

Health Care Open Enrollment Periods



- Pennie (PA's health exchange): November 1, 2021 through January 15, 2022
- Medicare: October 15 through December 7, 2021

Federal News



- Today, President Biden announced a \$1.8 trillion framework to materialize the Build Back Better agenda that is reported to have the necessary Democratic support. Almost 1,700 pages of bill text was released this afternoon.
- This agreement signals the likely go-ahead for the House to pass the \$550 billion traditional infrastructure bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- Highlights:
 - Continuation of monthly payments of the increased Child Tax Credit (CTC) in 2022, while making CTC fully refundable in all future years
 - Continuation of Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) increase for childless workers in 2022
 - \$400 billion to provide universal pre-K to 3- and 4-year-olds
 - \$150 billion in affordable housing investments, including for rental assistance and improvements to public housing
 - \$150 billion to support in-home care for seniors and individuals with disabling conditions, and to increase wages for home health care workers
 - \$40 billion for workforce training and higher education, including an increase to Pell grants
 - Investments in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
 - Investments to reduce health care costs for working families
 - Investments to combat climate change

Federal News



- **Social Security Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), benefits and thresholds**

- Social Security and Supplement Security Income (SSI) benefits will increase 5.9% in 2022.
- The annual increase is the highest in about 40 years. In 2021, for comparison, the COLA was 1.3%.

| Estimated Average Monthly Social Security Benefits Payable in January 2022 | | |
|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| | Before 5.9% COLA | After 5.9% COLA |
| All Retired Workers | \$1,565 | \$1,657 |
| Aged Couple, Both Receiving Benefits | \$2,599 | \$2,753 |
| Widowed Mother and Two Children | \$3,009 | \$3,187 |
| Aged Widow(er) Alone | \$1,467 | \$1,553 |
| Disabled Worker, Spouse and One or More Children | \$2,250 | \$2,383 |
| All Disabled Workers | \$1,282 | \$1,358 |

| | 2021 | 2022 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Social Security Disability Thresholds | | |
| Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) | | |
| Non-Blind | \$1,310/mo. | \$1,350/mo. |
| Blind | \$2,190/mo. | \$2,260/mo. |
| Trial Work Period (TWP) | \$ 940/mo. | \$ 970/mo. |
| Maximum Social Security Benefit: Worker Retiring at Full Retirement Age | | |
| | \$3,148/mo. | \$3,345/mo. |
| SSI Federal Payment Standard | | |
| Individual | \$ 794/mo. | \$ 841/mo. |
| Couple | \$1,191/mo. | \$1,261/mo. |
| SSI Resource Limits | | |
| Individual | \$2,000 | \$2,000 |
| Couple | \$3,000 | \$3,000 |
| SSI Student Exclusion | | |
| Monthly limit | \$1,930 | \$2,040 |
| Annual limit | \$7,770 | \$8,230 |

State DDAP News



- The Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) approved a voluntary licensing system this week that would make recovery homes subject to inspections and new requirements per DDAP.
 - Under the proposed regulations, Federal or state funding for services will be limited to recovery homes licensed by DDAP.
 - DDAP expects to require compliance with the new regulations by May or June 2022, assuming both the Attorney General and the General Assembly have no objections.

Active Solicitations



Active Solicitations

RFQ for Design, Content and Digital Strategy: Fall 2021

- Applications due at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, November 15th

RFI for a Racial Equity Training and Support Directory

- The last 2021 deadline is at 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, December 15th

[DHS Solicitations](#)



Next Meeting

11/18/21
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Meeting notices and reminders will come from the staff of the Office of Equity and Engagement.

Here is the link to sign up to receive those notices: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/Uvw6IMX/ProviderBriefings>
Or email us at DHS-OEE@AlleghenyCounty.us

Key Contacts



Questions for the Allegheny County Health Department

- <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/healthdepartment/index.aspx>

Questions for DHS

- DHS-COVID19Planning@alleghenycounty.us
- Use the subject field to indicate if your qq is about CYF, Aging, BH, CYF, ID, Community Services or DHS operations (e.g., contracting, payment)

Key DHS staff

- Payment inquiries: Dan Evancho Dan.Evancho@alleghenycounty.us
- Contract inquiries: Kathy.Heinz@alleghenycounty.us or Laura.Brigido@alleghenycounty.us

United Way 2-1-1

- For basic needs assistance or general COVID-19 inquiries call the 24/7 COVID19 Hotline at 1-888-856-2774. Language services available.