



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
June 25, 2020



General Information

As a reminder, we will only hold DHS Provider Meetings once per week on Thursdays.

As a reminder, [Green Phase Guidance](#) has been posted to the Provider Site.

As a reminder, you are invited to DHS's Virtual Human Services Block Grant Public Meetings on Monday, June 29th at 4:30pm or Tuesday, June 30th at 4:30pm. Please help us spread the word.

- To hear the live audio, see the live video, and participate in the Q&A, join on your computer, smartphone or tablet by visiting <https://bit.ly/2N5AVCX>. To hear the live audio only, call (267) 368-7515. The access code for Monday's meeting is 172 596 105# and the access code for Tuesday's meeting is 746 312 327#.
- Send us your questions, comments and ideas: Via email at DHS-Ideas@AlleghenyCounty.US or via the Q&A feature during the live meeting.
- Information on the Human Services Block Grant Plan is available at <https://bit.ly/3dcqbgo>. To read the previous Block Grant Plans visit <https://bit.ly/3ebyWIR>.

Please submit On the Frontline stories and photos of how you are meeting needs during this time to Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US

Neighborland

We urge you to send people to [Neighborland](#) and weigh in on the questions, we have not gotten as much feedback on these questions yet.

Q1: How can we support the fight against racism?

Q2: Are you worried about someone you care about?

Q3: What kind of support is the most helpful to you during this difficult time?

Q4: What's the best way to get the word out about COVID-19 to your community

See the slide presentation to read some ideas that we have received so far, or visit [Neighborland](#) to read through all of the comments.

DHS's COVID-19 Response Plan

This is one of the plans DHS is working on, and it is driving our funding requests. We will share more about how it will be funded in the coming weeks.

Reasons for the plan

- Our clients, especially those with chronic conditions, people in congregate living and older adults, have a higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID.
- More County residents people are facing more hardships, including unemployment and housing.
- Black people are affected more by COVID-19 and economic hardships.

DHS needs to respond by: mitigating the spread of the virus to people most at risk of getting seriously ill; ensuring access to and safe delivery of, life-saving health and human services; and helping people facing increased hardship because of the economic recession, using the following strategies:

Reducing the spread

1. Sanitization: of offices and provider network, hygiene stations
2. Reduce density in shelters
3. Testing: especially at congregate facilities
4. Quarantine and isolation: Safe Haven Hotel, Teen Healing Center, and Family Apartments
5. Older adults living at home

Access

6. Front Door: working on access to our services so people know where to go to get help
7. Warmlines/hotlines: Link, Senior Line, re:solve, etc.
8. Triage
9. Community outreach to black, latinx people: to connect them to health messages, benefits, etc.

Services, basic needs, delivered safely

10. Benefits enrollment: working with our community partners
11. Digital divide: wifi and device access
12. Homeless prevention: rental assistance and other aid to prevent housing instability
13. Health of the network: coordinating PPE, resource families, hazard pay for those on the frontlines, support for community-based organizations
14. Crisis Response: allowing helpers to step forward and the criminal justice system to step back

We welcome your feedback on this plan.

COVID-19 Metrics

Allegheny County is below the following benchmark:

- Diagnostic testing capacity: We have changed this metric to a ratio of testing to cases. They want it to be below 50, but we haven't been below that threshold since June 17th

Allegheny County is approaching the following benchmark:

- Decline in new cases: we saw a 70% increase in new cases in the last week
- Rate of transmission below 1: This has increased above 1, but UPenn projects it will trend downward over the next few weeks.

Allegheny County is meeting the following benchmarks:

- New cases below threshold: we have always been below the PA threshold over a rolling 14-day period. New cases are still projected by UPenn to continue to decline.
- Decline in total hospitalizations: the hospitalizations are a lagging indicator (they lag a week behind the new cases). We may see this go up.
- Decline in Deaths: We have a very low death rate and a decline in deaths.
- ICU bed capacity: we have not hit 90%. We continue to hover around 76%.
- Percent of positive tests: our average positive rate is low but has increased to 2.7%.

We are continuing to improve our website, located at www.bit.ly/COVID19DHSPROVIDERS.

- [The Operational Changes Tracker](#) is 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

Federal Updates

- Yesterday, President Trump issued an [Executive Order](#) on "Strengthening the Child Welfare System for America's Children," which aims to: encourage partnerships between state agencies and public, private, faith-based and community organizations; improve access to adequate resources for caregivers and youth; and ensure equality of treatment and access for all families.
 - With deadlines over the next 3 years, the EO requires HHS to collect data, issue reports and publish guidance.

State and Local Updates

- Gov. Wolf has sent a [letter](#) to USDA Secretary Perdue urging the extension of SNAP waivers that ensure continuity of benefit administration and eligibility determinations while also prioritizing health and safety.
- Both the PA House and Senate have passed bills to strengthen police hiring practices, record law enforcement's use of force and other reform measures.
 - None of the four bills have passed both chambers yet, but all received unanimous support and could wind up on the Governor's desk as early as next week.
- A state bill (SB 637) aimed at helping people with past criminal records find work in occupations directly regulated by the state received final passage in the General Assembly and is now headed to Gov. Wolf's desk for signature.
 - Addresses 29 job categories for which the state has all-important licensing authority, ranging from cosmetology to nursing to selling real estate or cars.
 - Hiring agencies must consider whether the crime(s) are directly related to the occupation, weigh rehabilitative factors, and consider if issuing a license creates a substantial risk to the public.
- After a contentious vote that defeated a bill requiring COVID-19 testing in Kanawha and the County Jail, the Public Safety Committee of the Allegheny County Council will vote next week on an amended bill presented by Councilwoman Hallam that seeks to expand testing to all County employees.

Food

There is a Drive-Up Food Distribution happening this weekend in Wilkinsburg, at the intersection of Penn Ave and N. Trenton Ave, on Saturday June 27 at 11 am.

The Food Access Call is on Tuesdays at 3:30 pm. Call-in information can be found in the slide presentation.

Program Updates

AAA

- PA Department of Aging is working on a new 4-year plan and we encourage you to give feedback. You can take the survey by visiting <https://bit.ly/PAAgingStatePlan>.
- There will also be a webinar discussing the State plan on Tuesday, July 7th at noon. See the slide presentation for access information.

OCS

- Homeless network
 - Quarantine and Isolation spaces are still open for individuals and families and have available spaces.
 - To make a referral for a family, Contact Remy Harris (Remy.Harris@allegHENYcounty.us).
 - Homeless referrals: Jessica.McKown@allegHENYcounty.us
 - Office of Behavioral Health referrals: Diane.Johnson@allegHENYcounty.us
 - Allegheny County Jail referrals: Jennifer.Batterton@allegHENYcounty.us
 - Immigrants and Internationals referrals: bgreen@jfcspgh.org
 - We've moved the Provider Network Meeting to every other Tuesday at 9:30 am; call-in information can be found in the slide presentation.

CYF

- June is National Reunification month. Family is an essential source of strength that helps us be resilient, check out this [article from the Children's Bureau](#).
- We wanted to share some reunification data. Foster and kinship care should be a support to permanency, not a substitute.
 - In 2019, we exited over 1,000 children from placement, and 91% exited to permanency, and 56% returned home.
 - Children aged 15-17 represented the largest number of reunification exits.
 - There is a disproportionate representation of black children in care. Black children represented about 50% of children who reunified.
 - Eight in ten children reunifying were from a family placement setting.
 - In 2020, we have had 444 children exited from placement so far, 92% of which exited to permanency and 52% returned home.
- As a reminder, if your fingerprinting clearances require renewal in the fall, please renew this summer to avert backlogs!

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 and the Health Department's line is 412-687-2243.
- See the slide presentation for other key contacts.

SEE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED AT TODAY'S CALL