



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting

August 20, 2020



General Information

As a reminder, DHS Provider Meetings are held on Thursday each week.

Please submit uncovered expenses to DHS by 8/31 if you have not already. We want to do what we can to help cover these costs.

- Please review the below for more information and you can reach out to your Fiscal Lead or contact the DHSProviderResourceHub@alleghenycounty.us with any questions.
- [Guidance Document](#)
- [E-Learning](#)

Medical/Behavioral Health providers are eligible for a federal HHS provider relief fund, covering up to 2% of patient revenue. HHS has streamlined the application and is trying to get the money out as quickly as possible. If you think we may be able to help you apply, please let us know.

- [Follow the 6-Step Application Process.](#)
- [Provider Relief Fund Application and Attestation Portal](#)
- If you encounter challenges with the application, call the Provider Support Line at (866) 569-3522; for TTY, dial 711.

Poll workers are still needed, and we encourage you to apply. To learn more and apply, visit [Poll worker application](#) and the [Become a Poll Worker](#) video.

Check out and share these voter resources:

- Allegheny County Elections Division E-newsletter: [Sign-up](#) to receive information on preparations for the November general election.
- [Overview of vote by mail process in Allegheny County](#)
- [Register to vote](#)
- [Check voter registration status](#)
- [Absentee Ballot Application](#): The last day to apply for an absentee ballot for the November 3, 2020 election is October 27th. The application must be received in the Elections office by that date.

The following solicitations are active on the DHS Solicitations Page:

- RFP for Trauma-Informed Care Training and Consultation
 - Proposals Due August 21 – *Tomorrow!*
- RFQ for Forensic Psychological and/or Psychiatric Evaluators
 - Proposals Due Sept 1 (RFQ is ongoing; proposals due Sept 1 and March 1)
- RFP for Inpatient Program for Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
 - Proposals Due September 16
- RFP for Latinx Community Needs Assessment
 - Proposals due September 18

All are available on [DHS Solicitations Page](#), along with form to sign up to receive email notifications when we post new solicitations.

The deadline for the 2020 Census is September 30th.

- The city and the county are undercounted compared to 2010 levels. The East End and Mon Valley are particularly undercounted right now.
- Please do whatever you can to get the word out, and let DHS know how we can help.

Recruitment Platform Update

- We put together this [platform](#) to link qualified staff to agencies with potential staffing shortages.
- In a poll conducted during last week's provider briefing, a majority of agencies reported that they have not experienced a staffing shortage and 73% did not anticipate a future staffing gap.
- Providers also noted that DHS can help meet staffing needs by connecting providers to Spanish-speaking case managers, creating virtual job fairs, collaborating with community colleges to develop professional staff interested in human services, and assisting with access to free and easy COVID testing for staff.

Cleaning Services for Providers

- DHS is now opening up [cleaning service requests](#) to any provider that serves clients onsite. Providers can request cleaning services after someone was present in the building who meets the following criteria:
 - Person has a confirmed positive case of COVID-19.
 - Person has been exposed to COVID-19 AND is showing symptoms.
 - *Exception:* Homeless services providers can request a cleaning service when someone in the facility has symptoms, even if you aren't able to obtain a positive test or confirm exposure.
 - Providers can also request cleaning services if you are preparing to re-open a client-facing facility that has been closed for a period of time, although we ask that these requests be made as far in advance as possible.

United Way Wellness Checks *for Everyone*

United Way's telephone-based wellness check-in service, which began with a focus on seniors, is now more broadly available (to any individual who might benefit from such a check-in).

- United Way staff are trained to assess the needs of callers and can offer other services to clients.
- If you encounter a client who is interested in receiving check-in calls, you can either:
 - write down their name, phone number, zip code and age, and email that information to checkins@unitedwayswpa.org.
 - or direct the individual to call "2-1-1" for self-enrollment.

COVID-19 Metrics

[PA has posted an early warning indicators dashboard](#). The data is updated every Friday. All state metrics are decreasing or neutral. Looking at County-level, however, from the beginning of the pandemic to now, we can glean insights into how our county's vulnerable populations are faring.

- There was a large spike in daily COVID-19 cases, beginning in mid-June, during the period of our "first opening" (6/6-6/30).

- Specifically, there was, during this time, a significant spike in 20-25-year-olds who tested positive for COVID-19 (representing half of all cases from 6/6 through 6/30).
 - Since 7/1, a time period in which new restrictions have been imposed on social activity, 20-25-year-olds continue to be the age group with the highest number of reported cases, although their share is declining.
- Since 7/1, Black residents accounted for 29% of cases; this is up from 18% in June (6/6 through 6/30).
- Since 7/1, residents who identify as Hispanic account for 2% of cases (though it should be noted that ethnicity data is missing for 23% of individuals).
- When we look at the number of cases per 100k residents, by race, since 7/1 the case rate for Black residents has been 3X higher than the case rate for white residents.
- When we look at the positivity rate (the percentage of administered tests with positive results), other insights emerge. Many experts say that the positivity rate can show whether enough tests are being conducted. If the positivity rate is below 10%, it's likely that the number of tests is sufficient.
 - Since 7/1, the positivity rate for Black individuals is 14%, and the rate for (self-identifying) Hispanic individuals is 15%, suggesting that additional testing resources are likely needed.
 - The positivity rate for white individuals, since 7/1, is 8%.

COVID-19 Mobile Testing Schedule (through August 21):

- 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.

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 ways in which the pandemic has impacted your operations to Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US.

Legislative/Policy Updates

Federal Updates

- Negotiations on the fifth (larger) Federal stimulus bill are stalled, as the Senate is in recess.
 - Some Senate Republicans are working on a smaller bill that includes \$10 billion in postal service funding, coronavirus liability protections, a \$300/week additional unemployment benefit, another round of Paycheck Protection Program funding, and additional funds for testing and schools.
 - Since this pared-down relief bill is most likely a non-starter in the Democratic-controlled House, Senate Republicans are considering tying this new bill to the upcoming stop-gap government funding bill which much be passed by Sept. 30th to keep the government open.

State and Local Updates

- Gov. Wolf has moved forward with seeking the additional \$300 in weekly unemployment compensation from President Trump's executive order, in an attempt to get more money to unemployed residents.
 - The executive order provides states with \$300 in funds (from FEMA) per week per unemployed person; recently, the state match requirement of \$100 per week per person was dropped.
 - It is unclear how long the additional unemployment compensation funds from FEMA will last, but the PA Department of Labor believes it could be for as little as 5 weeks.
 - Comments must be emailed directly to Secretary of the Commission at rchiavetta@pa.gov and submitted on the [PUC website](#) by August 18th.
- A bill to ban chokeholds and neck holds was introduced in Allegheny County Council on Tuesday (8/18).
 - Because of PA state law, any ban that could be passed would most likely only apply to Allegheny County police and would not apply to municipal police departments.
 - The bill now heads to the Public Safety Committee for a Committee recommendation.
 - Pittsburgh City Council passed a ban on police chokeholds in July.
- On August 7, President Judge Clark issued an order prohibiting the commencement of new residential landlord / tenant actions where the eviction is based solely on non-payment of rent or on a tenant holding over or exceeding the term of a lease whether or not the lease includes a waiver of a “notice to quit” provision.
 - The temporary prohibition is in effect through Aug. 31 while the court remains in emergency status. Read the full order from Aug. 7 [here](#).
 - *This Order was made in recognition that Governor Wolf’s July 9th Order did not affect those residential leases containing a waiver of the “notice to quit” provisions.*

Food

There are two upcoming food distributions:

1. Farmers to Families, Edgewood Town Centre, 8/29, 11am-1pm, [details here](#)
2. Food Bank (Distribution Center), 1 N Linden Street in Duquesne, 8/31, 12-2pm, [register here](#)

Program Updates

OCS

- Abby Horn, DHS Deputy Director, Office of Community Services, joined the call to share information about Allegheny County’s Community Learning Hubs, which will serve as places for children to engage in virtual learning and participate in enrichment activities.
 - Hub locations will be announced next week.
 - Priority for *free* programming will be given to children who are: in grades K-5 (with space for middle school children too), low income, engaged with child welfare, engaged in the homelessness system, and/or referred by school counselor or social worker.
 - Initial funding will provide capacity for approximately 1,000 children, and demand will be closely monitored.
- Housing

- New programs for youth experiencing homelessness are coming soon.
- In 2019, Allegheny County DHS was awarded a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grant from HUD, and over the past year, has worked with youth and provider partners to create a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness.
- As part of that plan, DHS released an RFP earlier this year seeking to fund new programs to address youth homelessness. We are in the process of awarding grants for Host Homes, Mobile Diversion Specialists and additional Rapid Re-Housing for youth. *Stay tuned for more information as those programs begin to ramp up.*
- Bright spot: 10 youth moved from homelessness into permanent housing over the past two weeks thanks to the work of our incredible partners.
- Points of contact for the Isolation and Quarantine space referrals:
 - Homelessness System referrals: Jessica.McKown@alleghenycounty.us
 - Office of Behavioral Health referrals: Diane.Johnson@alleghenycounty.us
 - Allegheny County Jail/CJ referrals: Jennifer.Batterton@alleghenycounty.us
 - Immigrant and International program referrals: bgreen@jfcspgh.org
 - Families: Remy Harris: Remy.Harris@alleghenycounty.us
- The next Homeless network provider call is on 9/15 at 9:30 am, focused on peer support and psychological rehabilitation services; please see slides for access information.
- Also, “Ask a (Housing) Navigator! Office Hours” are being held every Tuesday from 10:30 -11:00 am; please see slides for access information.
 - Housing navigation-focused provider trainings will begin in September, and landlord trainings are in the works.

OBH

- The Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) is seeking stakeholder feedback on Pennsylvania's Substance Use Disorder (SUD) confidentiality regulations. The survey, [which you can take here](#), will be open for two more weeks.
 - Please let us know how the requirements are working and if they can be improved before this survey closes on August 31st!
 - For more information about this project, go to the [DDAP website](#).
- OMHHAS, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, has issued guidance on masks, screening and handwashing, which can be [found here](#).
- September is suicide prevention month.
 - This [resource guide](#) provides examples of activities that you can implement in your community to raise awareness of the importance of suicide prevention.
- The 5th Annual Pittsburgh Recovery Walk will occur semi-virtually on September 19th. Register here: <https://pghrecoverywalk.org/>
- NAMI Walks will occur on October 10th, 2020. Visit <https://www.namikeystonepa.org/nami-events/namiwalks/> to learn more.

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