



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
August 27, 2020



General Information

DHS Provider Meetings continue to be held every Thursday..

As a reminder, please submit uncovered expenses to DHS by 8/31/2020 if you have not already. We want to do what we can to help cover these costs.

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

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:

- RFQ for Forensic Psychological and/or Psychiatric Evaluators
 - Proposals Due Sept 1 (RFQ is ongoing; proposals due Sept 1st and March 1st)
- 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 available on the [DHS Solicitations Page](#), along with a form to sign up to receive email notifications when we post new solicitations.

As a reminder, 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.

COVID-19 Metrics

[PA has posted an early warning indicators dashboard](#). The data are updated every Friday. All state metrics are decreasing in Allegheny County except for a small increase in the percentage of hospital emergency department visits due to Covid-like-illness.

- The detailed County dashboard continues to be updated.
- The case rate per 100,000 has seen huge declines since the County put additional restrictions in place.

COVID-19 Mobile Testing Schedule (through August 31):

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 working with a client and looking for testing locations..

Lisa Kuzma, budget and financial analytics manager at DHS, joined the call to give an update on our Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) spending. As a reminder, our CRF spending is informed by our DHS Plan.

- DHS received \$38.8M in total.
- Isolation and quarantine (\$7M): We anticipate the need for these facilities to grow.
- Safety at Congregate Care Facilities (\$600K): We are looking for additional shelter locations.
- Basic Needs (\$8.6M): Rent assistance is going out, we have public benefits outreach going on, and we have upgraded our mental health, aging and the Link hotlines.
- Cleaning and Hygiene (\$5.5M): ServiceMaster [cleaning service requests](#) are available, sanitation stations are in place and we are doing mask distribution with Life's Work
- Bridging the Digital Divide (\$1.8M): Internet connectivity and devices are being made available.
- Health of the network (\$1.8M): Examples include additional payments to resource families.
- We are exploring a collaboration with Black and Latinx organizations to help people meet basic needs, share messaging and more.
- We've partnered with United Way and Trying Together to support food insecurity and childcare agencies.

Scott Hemphill, chief information officer at DHS, joined the call to give an update on Bridging the Digital Divide:

- Community/public Wi-Fi hotspots: 6 sites are confirmed and we have orders in for equipment. Work will start within the next few weeks. Mon Valley regional office will be live first.
- Device requests: DHS has distributed 780 laptops to date. We are unable to distribute more right now because devices are on back order. We anticipate receiving them in 7-8 weeks.
- In-home internet access requests: DHS Staff & Providers can submit a request for a device &/or internet on behalf of clients in need.
 - Available options include a mobile hotspot or in-home internet.
 - Requests are now incorporated into the [DHS Device Request Form](#).
 - Please get the word out.

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 how you are meeting needs during this time to Evelyn.Whitehill@AlleghenyCounty.US

Legislative/Policy Updates

Federal Updates

- Negotiations on a larger 5th Federal stimulus bill remain at an impasse, with the House agreeing to come down to \$2b, but the Administration/Senate not moving past \$1b.
 - News outlets report that lead negotiators are talking this afternoon, the first time in weeks.
 - Stimulus funding may become part of the larger government funding negotiations that must occur by the end of September to avoid a government shutdown.

State and Local Updates

- PA reported a 13.7% unemployment rate in July, higher than the national rate.
- Gov. Wolf announced that he cannot by law unilaterally extend the moratorium on rental evictions and home foreclosures past August 31st, and called on the PA legislature to extend the moratorium.
- Gov. Wolf unveiled his legislative agenda for the fall earlier this week. Highlights include:
 - Plan to spend the remaining \$1B in CARES funds (which the State has held in reserve) for increases for PPE and pay to frontline workers, \$250M for childcare services, \$100M for LIHEAP and to prevent water service being shut off, \$100M in rent relief, and \$225M in loans and grants to small businesses.
 - He has called to legalize recreational marijuana and use the proceeds to invest in both business grants and restorative justice.
 - The Republican-controlled legislature must approve these appropriations, and the antagonism between it and the Governor is extremely high currently.

Food

There are four upcoming food distributions:

1. Food Bank, Wilkesburg, 8/29, 11 am, 333 Lincoln Highway, [register here](#)
2. Farmers to Families, Swissvale, 8/29, 11 am, 1763 South Braddock Ave, no registration needed
3. Food Bank, Duquesne, 8/31, noon, 1 N Linden St, [register here](#)
4. Food Bank, PPG Paints Arena, 9/4, 10 am, 1001 Fifth Ave, [register here](#)

Paragon food distributions through PPS will end this week.

Program Updates

OCS

- Allegheny County's Community Learning Hubs will serve as places for children to engage in virtual learning and participate in enrichment activities.
 - [50 locations](#) have been identified, operated by 30 providers.
 - Many are opening on 8/31, others 9/8 or 9/14. Families should check with the hub they are interested in for exact details.
 - More information has been published on the [DHS site](#).
 - Please help get the word out to your families! Families can connect directly or call the ELRC. We encourage them to apply immediately.
 - Any family who needs a free spot should be able to get one.

- Housing
 - We have a new low barrier shelter in development, removing preconditions to enter and allowing access 24/7, 365! This has been in process since 2017 and was made possible by the Pittsburgh Cares Partnership.
 - There will be a drop-in center, additional services and single room occupancy units.
 - For an image, please see the slideshow.
 - The Winter Shelter will open November 15th at Smithfield United Church of Christ, operated by Mercy/Operation Safety Net. We plan to have a second location, currently in development.
 - DHS has partnered with Partner4Work to expand career services into more communities. P4W is looking for partner organizations willing to host a CareerLink Career Navigator. You can [apply here](#).
 - 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

- OMHSAS, the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, has issued updates and revisions.
 - [Regulatory Waiver for Signatures](#) – be sure to document efforts
 - Certified Recovery Specialist and Peer support specialists – DDAP has not yet moved to an online training. We continue to ask about this and will update you.
 - Face Masking Guidance – staff must have documentation that they cannot wear a face mask in order to wear a face shield. “Close Contact” definition has been changed to 15 minutes (from 10).
 - Licensing – OMHSAS is behind and is prioritizing the backlog in IBHS, inpatient and residential.
- 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