



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
September 3, 2020



General Information

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

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 Inpatient Program for Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
 - Proposals **now due September 30th** (amended with a new requirement; date extended from original date of 9/16).
- RFP for Latinx Community Needs Assessment
 - Proposals due September 18th
- All available on [DHS Solicitations Page](#), along with 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.

We are preparing a submission for a renewal of our MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice grant, which we will share more about next week. Visit [Neighborland](#) to share your input on:

- What are some ways in which Allegheny County can continue to reduce its jail population?
- How should Allegheny County support community-based efforts to improve public safety?
- If you or a family member were involved in the criminal justice system, what do you wish had happened differently?

Supply Availability

We continue our partnership with Global Links to get supplies to the provider network.

- We have reserved \$1M of CARES funding for another round of supply distribution. You can access these supplies at no cost, starting next Thursday afternoon. The form will be shared on this call.

- DHS providers can select from a special menu of supplies including emergency facemasks, full face shield, non-contact infrared thermometers, hand sanitizer, Clorox clean-up disinfectant, and limited supplies of baby, incontinence & personal care items.

Rachel Schneider, integrated practice specialist at DHS, joined the call to talk about a new public site for viewing DHS Policy Documents.

- In the interest of transparency, we are making a majority of our policies, procedures and standards of practice available to the public on [this site](#).
- Click browse to view documents by program area or document type. You can also type into the search field.
- When you open the document, you will find accessibility features including translation and immersive reader.
- You can reach out to Rachel.schneider@AlleghenyCounty.US with any feedback and questions.

COVID-19 Metrics

[PA has posted an early warning indicators dashboard](#). The data is updated every Friday. All state metrics are decreasing – and moving in the right direction – in Allegheny County.

- To put COVID into context, we see huge differences in hospitalizations and deaths compared to the seasonal flu.

For more information, you can access the [Quarterly Board of Health meetings](#) and Weekly COVID-19 press briefings on [Facebook](#), Twitter and YouTube channels for Allegheny County and the Health Department.

New tool on Allegheny County Analytics: [Human Services Community Profile](#)

- This tool allows users to identify the number of participants, using data from the Data Warehouse, across a selected list of programs in their community.
- You can select one or more communities or create a custom geography. You can compare up to five geographies and switch to view different years.
- This creates a Human Services Snapshot displaying a printable page of selected metrics on trends and services for the communities you selected.

Andrea Bustos, administrator of resource navigation and community supports, joined the call to talk about prioritization in the homeless system.

- The Link provides coordinated entry to the Continuum of Care. We receive a high volume of calls and use a common assessment to prioritize folks for services.
 - We began using the VI-SPDAT, but we found that we already have the answers to many of its questions.
 - The demand far outweighs the supply for Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing and Bridge Housing. We do not have the capacity to serve every person, so we need to make sure we are identifying and prioritizing the most vulnerable in the most accurate and equitable way.
 - The waitlist has been upwards of 600 people at a time.
- We built a new Allegheny Housing Assessment that, using a predictive risk model, predicts adverse outcomes including ER visits, mental health inpatient visits, or jail booking. View the slide presentation for details on model predictors and outcomes.
 - We launched the tool on August 28, 2020.
 - We do not see significant differences in how the tool performed between Black and white clients.
 - According to the data, high-risk clients who received PSH/RRH/Transitional housing had lower rates of adverse outcomes.

- This assessment is much shorter. Clients without administrative data available will get a shortened eligibility screening and alternative assessment.
- We can better manage expectations of those who are waiting; our prioritized waiting list has already been cut in half.
- We will continue to prioritize clients who are chronically homeless. Specialized subpopulations will still have access to dedicated units.
- We will continue to gather feedback from Service Coordinators and clients, and review call times.
- Today we published [information on the tool](#), including a methodology report, FAQ, summary of client feedback and an independent ethical/data science review.

COVID-19 Mobile Testing Schedule

As a reminder, 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 helping find convenient testing locations.

In-home internet access requests: DHS Staff & Providers can submit a request for a mobile hotspot device &/or in-home internet on behalf of clients in need.

- 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 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 larger 5th Federal stimulus bill remain at an impasse.
 - Stimulus funding may become part of the larger government funding negotiations that must occur by the end of September to avoid a government shutdown.
- The CDC declared a nationwide halt to all evictions through the end of the year on Tuesday.
 - Halts evictions only for nonpayment of rent and does NOT waive rent due or any penalties or fees associated with late rent.
 - The order does not provide new funding to help pay rent and directs states and HUD grantees to use the CDBG, ESG and the Coronavirus Relief Funds they were granted as part of the CARES Act in March 2020 to fund rental assistance programs.
 - Renters are not automatically protected; must sign a Declaration to declare qualification.

- Because PA's moratorium expired last week, there was a rush of evictions filed by landlords in court before the CDC's announcement. It is unclear how those will proceed.

State and Local Updates

- PA was approved to receive additional unemployment funds from President Trump's executive order, which repurposed FEMA funds for state unemployment.
 - PA Labor Secretary Jerry Oleksiak announced it could be 3-4 weeks until these additional unemployment funds will be available.
- Gov. Wolf signed a second renewal of his 90-day disaster declaration for the COVID-19 pandemic on Tuesday, and an attempt by the General Assembly to overturn the declaration failed to gather enough votes for a veto override.
 - Waivers and extensions allowable in the first disaster declaration have been continued.
- Mayor Peduto announced that City Planning will begin work on a new comprehensive plan for the City of Pittsburgh.
 - City Planning will begin seeking community input on equitable changes to the zoning code over the course of the next year.

Food

There are three upcoming Food Bank distributions:

1. PPG Paints Arena, 9/4, 10 am, 1001 Fifth Ave, [register here](#)
2. PNC Park. 9/9. 11 am, 644 Reesdale St, [register here](#)
3. Duquesne, 9/14, 5 pm, 1 N Linden St, [register here](#)

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.
 - Please send families to the [Trying Together website](#) for information.
 - There is still space available at many hubs!
- School will begin on Tuesday 9/8, and PPS is working around the clock to complete 1:1 device distribution by the end of October.
- We are using CSBG Supplemental funds to provide one-time emergency assistance for individuals and families throughout the County (except for the City of Pittsburgh). Participating agencies include:
 - Allegheny Valley Association of Churches, contact Beth Kendra at beth@avac.org
 - Human Services Center Corporation, contact Ann Hudson, ahudson@hsc-mvpc.org
 - North Hills Community Outreach, contact Stephanie Kobert, sdkobert@nhco.org
 - South Hills Interfaith Movement, contact Elizabeth Henninger, ehenninger@shimcares.org
- Housing
 - 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.

- The next Homeless Network provider call is on 9/15 at 9:30 am and will focus 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

- PA has launched Team Pennsylvania, a free crisis counseling program, available at 1-855-284-2494 or 724-631-5600. Please share with clients.
- 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.
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>
 - 1-800-273-TALK (8255) – for veterans press 1
 - Provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals
 - The Trevor Project Lifeline
 - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
 - 1-866-488-7386
 - TrevorText: Text START to 678-678
 - Offers around the clock crisis intervention and suicide prevention lifeline for gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people from ages 13 through 24.
 - National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide (NOPCAS)
 - nopcas.org
 - Provides training on recognizing the signs when someone is in a suicidal crisis.
 - Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)
 - <http://www.sprc.org/>
 - Federally supported resource center devoted to advancing the implementation of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, including an extensive library of suicide prevention resources.
- The 5th Annual Pittsburgh Recovery Walk will occur semi-virtually on September 19th. Register Here: <https://pghrecoverywalk.org/>
- NAMI Walks will occur on October 10, 2020. Visit <https://www.namikeystonepa.org/nami-events/namiwalks/> to learn more.

CYF

- September is Black Girls Equity Month.
- If you are worried about a child’s safety, even if you are unsure, contact ChildLine to report your concerns. 800-932-0313 or [PA’s Child Welfare Portal](#)
 - It is more important than ever that adults who interact with families (in person or virtually) are vigilant in noticing and having conversations. Injuries should be reported

immediately, as should changes in behavior on the part of the children and/or concerning behavior on the part of the adults caring for those children.

- We have tip sheets that we can share with you for student and family engagement. It is really important to be checking in and asking questions. We are also in close contact with schools.

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