



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting

January 21, 2021



General Information

As a reminder, DHS Provider Meetings are held once per week on Thursday at 4:30pm.

COVID-19 Mobile Testing Schedule

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](#) to help clients find testing locations.
- The McKeesport Testing Site is still open.
 - Make an appointment for a free test. You do not need insurance. Registration and testing information available at bit.ly/McKeesportCOVIDTestSite
 - Individuals who are unable to drive can contact the COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-856-2774 for additional options and resources.

DHS has [released two solicitations](#):

- RFP for Family-Centered Service Coordination for Families Involved with Child Welfare and Mental Health Services
 - Proposals due Tuesday, February 9
- RFP for Foster Care Agencies
 - Proposals due Wednesday, February 10

Carolyn Bebb, Free Tax Prep Coordinator at Allegheny County DHS, joined the call to share about this year's free tax prep program.

- The Free Tax Prep coalition, led by United Way, includes many organizations.
- This year we can serve households with incomes up to \$57,000. Please spread the word to working families that they are eligible for important tax credits like the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits. If you have clients who have not received a stimulus check yet, the IRS recommends they file a 2020 tax return to receive these funds.
- We have partnered with GetYourRefund to offer secure virtual tax preparation. Taxpayers need an email address, phone number and internet access (smartphones okay) to participate.
 - Starting on January 25, taxpayers can go to freetaxprep.alleghenycounty.us (to access the DHS tax prep site) or PA211SW.org (to access all county tax prep sites) to sign up. We encourage as many clients as possible to try virtual tax preparation.
- Hybrid appointments are also available but with limited availability. Taxpayers attend two short appointments one week apart. Call 2-1-1 or go to pa211sw.org as soon as possible to schedule.
- Contact freetaxprep@alleghenycounty.us if you have multiple clients who need tax prep help, and we can discuss ways to collaborate.

We will share updates on DHS planning priorities in the coming weeks.

All [PA State metrics](#) are down from last week in Allegheny County.

- Hospitalizations and deaths peaked in December and are going down.

Legislative/Policy Updates

Federal Updates

- President Biden signed 17 executive orders on his first day in office yesterday, including one instructing the CDC to immediately extend the federal eviction moratorium through the end of March.
 - Biden has committed to working with Congress to further extend the moratorium through September.
- Refer to the slide presentation for a list of key individual impacts of the recent federal stimulus. We will continue to provide updates on stimulus payments and rental assistance.

State and Local Updates

- PA Department of Health Secretary Rachel Levine was chosen by President Biden to serve as Assistant Secretary of Health for the US Department of Health and Human Services.
 - Gov Wolf will announce a replacement in the coming days.
- In a [report](#) released this morning, PA's Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) increased its estimate of the COVID-19 related state budget deficit to \$2b.
 - Without additional federal stimulus, either tax increases, spending cuts or borrowing will be a part of the budget negotiations before Fiscal Year 2021-2022 starts on July 1.
- The County Commissioners Association of PA (CCAP) [released](#) its top 5 legislative priorities for the General Assembly: election reform, the expansion of broadband access, solutions to the emergency medical services crisis, protecting funding for county human services and increasing funding for community-based mental health services.
- Local PA State Representative Ed Gainey announced he is running for Mayor of Pittsburgh.
 - Current Mayor Bill Peduto announced last week he is seeking a third term this year.
- On Tuesday, Pittsburgh City Council members Ricky Burgess and R. Daniel Lavelle introduced an ordinance that would ban police from serving "no-knock" warrants in Pittsburgh.
 - A "no-knock" warrant was utilized in the shooting death of Breonna Taylor last year in Kentucky.
 - Currently, no-knock warrants are not utilized in Pittsburgh and are illegal in Pennsylvania, but the legislation seeks to ban them from any future use.
 - The Alliance for Police Accountability in Pittsburgh has also worked toward implementing this ordinance through a referendum.
- Pittsburgh Public Schools Board is considering delaying in-person hybrid learning until after spring break, April 6, 2021. The Board will vote on the resolution at its January 27 Legislative Meeting.

Vaccine Update and Tracking

- According to the [state's dashboard](#), 37,101 partial vaccines (one dose) and 8,700 full vaccinations (both doses) have been administered through 1/21/2021. This is 4% of Allegheny County's population.

- Dr. Bogen shared that Allegheny County has received and is distributing 100,000 vaccines, so the data may be lagged.
- PA Dept of Health released [this map](#) where people in group 1A can receive the vaccine
 - 1A includes:
 - Healthcare workers and LTCR
 - Ombudsmen, Older Adult Protective Services, Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services staff who are required to do on-site assessments in hospitals and 1A long-term care facilities
 - All adults aged 75 and older
 - Adults aged 65-74, Adults 18-64 with a serious underlying condition
 - Anyone covered under Phase 1A who has not yet received a COVID-19 vaccine can contact any of these providers to check availability and schedule their vaccination, but we encourage providers to contact sites and coordinate for their employees who are eligible.
 - Employees should be prepared to show proof of employment.
 - This map is being updated regularly, so please keep checking for new locations with vaccine supply and available appointments.
 - UPMC is offering vaccinations to frontline health care personnel who are not affiliated with a hospital or health system. To request vaccination for your organization, practice or group, please review all information and instructions and complete the on-line form found at [UPMC.com/HealthCareVaccine](https://www.upmc.com/HealthCareVaccine).
 - This request process is ONLY for health care workers in phase 1A who are not affiliated with a hospital or health system!

Guidance to Provider Community for Vaccine Rollout

- DHS has published [Vaccination Information and Guidance](#). Providers can email their questions about vaccine guidance, as well as share their best practices encouraging staff to get vaccinated to: DHS-ProviderVaccination@alleghenycounty.us.
- Providers in the greater DHS network can play a pivotal role in supporting high vaccination rates among our frontline essential workforce.
- Providers are strongly encouraged to develop a communications plan and to affirmatively message to employees the importance of getting vaccinated.
- We're in the early days of this effort.
 - We expect to provide additional vaccination resources and information as they become available.
 - We are interested in creating virtual meeting spaces for provider staff to engage and interact in person with experts who can talk about Covid-19 vaccines and their benefits.

Program Updates

OCS

Community Learning Hubs have slots available. Find a learning hub that meets your needs:

- <https://tryingtogether.org/community-learning-hubs/>
- Call before showing up to confirm hub is open and has slots available.
- Contact Jace Ransom at jace.ransom@alleghenycounty.us if you'd like help connecting with a hub.

Food

Upcoming Food Distributions:

- Drive-up food distributions are happening on 1/23 (Wilkesburg), 1/25 and 2/1 (Duquesne), 2/9 (Allegheny Valley) and 2/11 (Glassport) – [details and registration here](#).
- Don't forget the [Food Bank's network of food pantries](#) for more consistent access to food.

Health of the Homelessness System

- Providers are still operating, sheltering and taking in new clients.
- Harder to find landlords and units available to our folks.
 - We do have access to Section 8 and Self-Pay SRO units downtown. If interested, contact the Housing Navigator Unit at housingnavigators@alleghenycounty.us.
- Adult shelter beds available at some year-round shelters (EECM & Bethlehem Haven). CALL AHEAD BEFORE SENDING ANYONE.
- Beds filling up most nights at Smithfield and McKeesport winter shelters. People are still being served; the overflow is sent to Safe Haven.
- Shepherd's Heart winter shelter (females) has open beds.
- Youth shelter beds are available at DOCS.
- Several family shelter units are available for families of all sizes.
- 2 Warming Centers are open during the hours when winter shelters are closed. Open centers are at Red Door downtown and McKeesport Downtown Housing. The 3rd warming center, located at Catholic Charities on 9th & Liberty, will be open again beginning Saturday.
- Isolation and Quarantine facilities are up and running. We are receiving high numbers of referrals.
 - Safe Haven & Family shelters are receiving referrals and taking in record numbers of people, including an increased percentage of positive/exposed people.
 - Family I&Q space available.

Housing

- The URA has a mortgage assistance program. For more information, text your ZIP Code to United Way at 898-211, dial 2-1-1 from your phone, or Go to United Way's webpage: <http://pa211sw.org/>. Click on "contact us." From there, you can fill out the form to reach a representative who will help you find services. There is also a chat window in the bottom right corner of the screen: <http://pa211sw.org/>.
- Vaccine Preparation Resources
 - We are working with FQHCs to schedule virtual education and ask-a-physician sessions regarding the vaccine.

- Black Pittsburgh Matters: Physicians Panel addresses COVID: <https://fb.watch/39B8r2VkJFv/>
- CDC Vaccination FAQ for people experiencing homelessness: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/vaccine-faqs.html>
- Opportunities for Youth
 - Our SITY Youth Action Board is looking for new members.
 - Youth give input on programs and services, learn and teach others how to be advocates, and are paid \$10/hour.
 - To join, fill out the SITY application and Code of Conduct, found on the [SITY webpage](https://www.sity.org). Email application or questions to YouthOpp@allegHENYcounty.us
 - The Hope Through Learning Award is a **\$2,500** award available to youth age 24 and under residing in Allegheny County who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness during their school attendance years. Apply on the HCEF website: www.homelessfund.org/hope by 3/31/2021.
- Employment Help
 - Employment specialists have been placed in 7 community organizations across the County. Reach out to CareerLink to sign up! Call or email Sabrina (sclay@careerlinkpittsburgh.org, 412-552-7031) or Samantha (samantha.gillcrese@careerlinkpittsburgh.org 412-436-2249) or log on to <https://bit.ly/35m8yd1>.
- Upcoming Meetings
 - Housing & Homelessness Provider Calls
 - Every other Tuesday @ 9:30 am
 - Next Call: February 2nd
 - Featuring HUD Field Office Director, Phillip McKeough
 - [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
 - [+1 267-368-7515](tel:+12673687515)
 - Conference ID: 883 836 652#
 - Ask a Navigator office hours
 - Every Tuesday, 10:30 am -11 am
 - [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)
 - [+1 267-368-7515](tel:+12673687515)
 - Conference ID: 947 434 365#

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