



**COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**  
**March 11, 2021**



## General Information

As a reminder, DHS Provider Meetings are held on Thursdays at 4:30pm.

The Rental Assistance program is going live on Monday March 15<sup>th</sup> at 8 am!

- <https://covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us/> website is live and you can visit now to sign up for updates.
- Toolkit for Partners is available now: <https://covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us/toolkit-for-partners/>
  - We ask for your help in getting the word out to the community!
  - Palm cards and fliers to promote the program
  - Copy and images to share out on social media
- Drop-in application assistance will be available at Focus on Renewal, Gwen's Girls, Kingsley Association, Wilkinsburg Family Support, Greater Valley Community Services, SHIM Baldwin and Bethel Park locations and The Wander Building

All COVID-19 Metrics continue to decrease in Allegheny County except for ED visits, which remain low.

As a reminder, DHS has [released three solicitations](#):

- CYF Prevention Concept Paper
  - Submit feedback by Thursday, March 24
- RFI for Racial Equity Training and Support Directory
  - Next deadline March 15
  - Ongoing solicitation; deadlines quarterly
- CCBH/DHS RFP for Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility
  - Proposals due April 1
  - Proposals submitted through CCBH, not DHS, but can find RFP on our Solicitations page

### [Report on DHS 2019-2020 Strategic Initiatives](#)

#### Goal 1: Access

- Opened the first floor of an engagement center for people affected by substance use disorder—called “Pathway to Care and Recovery”—in downtown Pittsburgh.
- In partnership with Trying Together and the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, opened an Early Learning Resource Center downtown and in several community-based locations.
- Launched Hello Baby and made a combined total of 402 referrals to Healthy Start and Family Centers for supports between September 1 and December 31, 2020.

#### Goal 2: Quality

- Launched a multi-faceted support strategy for caregivers of older adults, including outreach and education through a variety of community organizations and senior centers.
- Established a Crisis Response Stakeholder Group with Allegheny County Emergency Services to prevent arrest and incarceration for people with behavioral health and/or other human services needs.

- Improved the availability of quality employment opportunities for adults with intellectual disabilities, including by expanding the network of providers that offer job-related supports.

### Goal 3: Use Resources Wisely

- Established the Integrated Monitoring Initiative to improve the impact of DHS's program monitoring efforts and to more systemically work with providers to enhance quality services. It's about partnering and providing support.
- Hired accounting/technology firms to conduct an independent assessment of DHS's fiscal operations in five key areas: organizational structure, budgeting, cost transfers, invoicing and travel and expense reimbursement.
- Collaborated with the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute and Pitt's School of Social Work to better prepare, recruit, hire and advance our child welfare workforce.

## Legislative/Policy Updates

### Federal Updates

- Recent Executive Orders
  - [Promoting Access to Voting](#): Expands access to voter registration and election information, including for individuals in jails and prisons
  - [Guaranteeing an Educational Environment Free from Discrimination on the Basis of Sex, Including Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity](#): Directs the Department of Education to ensure anti-discrimination in schools.
- American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 was passed today, \$1.9 trillion total. The bill focuses on supports to individuals and families, with a specific focus on children. Please refer to the slide presentation for more detailed information on bill provisions. A list of key provisions includes:
  - Direct supports for individuals and families
    - Stimulus payments & additional supports through TANF
    - Expansion of tax credit programs
    - Unemployment benefits extended
    - Additional rental and utility assistance
    - Additional childcare subsidy funding and expanded eligibility
    - Temporary increase to nutrition benefits
    - Estimated Benefits for Pennsylvanians
      - 892,000 children under 17 will benefit from expanded Child Tax Credit (CTC).
      - 140,000 children under 18 will be lifted above the poverty line by CTC expansion.
      - 697,000 workers without children will benefit from the Earned Income Tax Credit expansion.
  - Relief for DHS Providers and non-profits
    - Early education: ChildCare and Development Block Grant, ChildCare Stabilization Fund, Head Start
    - More funding for PPP and Community Navigator pilot program
  - Funding for Human Services-Related Programs

- Housing and homelessness: emergency rental assistance, emergency housing vouchers, housing counseling, homelessness assistance and supportive services, homeowner assistance, fair housing activities
- Children and families: child abuse prevention and treatment, family violence prevention, home visiting
- Older adults: National assistance center on grandfamilies and kinship families, supportive services, strike teams for skilled nursing facilities
- Mental health and substance use disorders: substance use prevention and treatment and community mental health services, mental and behavioral health training, community-based funding for local substance use disorder services, community-based funding for local behavioral health needs and workforce education and training, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Project AWARE, youth suicide prevention, pediatric mental health care access, certified community behavioral health clinics
- Medicaid, CHIP, public health: vaccines and testing, infrastructure
- Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Fund to states and municipalities, including a direct allocation to Allegheny County
- Funding for schools to address learning loss
- Other local economic supports for restaurants, shuttered venues, transit agencies, airports
- Internet connectivity
- FEMA's emergency food and shelter program
- Job training for veterans

### State and Local Updates

- Pennsylvanians are now able to apply for SNAP (food stamps) benefits over the phone
  - [PADHS](#) has created a phone number, 1-866-550-4355, to process applications, collecting the same information that's on the paper form.
  - Enrollment for SNAP statewide has increased by almost 5% from Feb 2020 to Jan 2021, now serving over 1.8 million people.
- On Tuesday, Allegheny County Council passed mandatory paid sick leave for employees of businesses with over 25 employees
  - Employers will need to provide at least five days of paid sick days to employees.
  - Independent contractors, unionized construction workers, seasonal employees, and state and federal workers are excluded from the requirements.

### **Program Updates**

#### OCS

Allegheny County Basic Needs COVID-19 Relief Fund has reopened!

- One-time \$700 grants are available for families with children under 18.
- This is for costs due to COVID-19 other than rent. Please encourage families to apply to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program for that.

- Due to limited funding, please only directly refer eligible households (do not widely advertise).
- Apply here: <http://pa211sw.org/alleggheny-cares/>

#### Health of the Homelessness System

- Providers are still operating, sheltering, taking in new clients.
- Not seeing new Section 8 vouchers or habitability inspections being scheduled yet, one on one briefings are taking place.
- Adult shelter beds available at year-round shelters (Beth Haven, EECM, Light of Life, McKeesport Downtown Housing). CALL AHEAD BEFORE SENDING ANYONE.
- Youth shelter beds available at DOCS for all genders.
- Family Shelters have space available for 1 family of 4 or less. \*When families call the Link early, they are more likely to find alternative arrangements to shelter.
- Winter Shelter and Warming Centers
  - Beds filling up most nights at Smithfield and McKeesport winter shelters. People can still come, overflow sent to Safe Haven.
  - Shepherd's Heart winter shelter (females/non-binary) usually has open beds.
  - Two Warming Centers are open when winter shelters are closed during the day. Open Warming Centers are at the Catholic Charities building on 9<sup>th</sup> Street and at McKeesport Downtown Housing.
  - Closing dates 2021
    - Smithfield Shelter will be open to all genders beginning March 16 – June 30.
    - McKeesport Winter Shelter and Warming Center open through April 9.
    - Red Door Warming Center closed last weekend.
    - Catholic Charities building Warming Center closing on March 15.
- Isolation and Quarantine facilities: Safe Haven has spaces available as needed. Prioritization policy for highly vulnerable referrals still in place. Youth and Family Isolation & Quarantine has one space available for youth and one space available for families.
- Other Updates
  - We are closing out monitoring from 2020 and preparing for 2021 monitoring, and we will share updates when available.
  - We received our full HUD award with slight increases to all PSH and RRH programs. Total award was \$21,805,362
  - We got a big boost to our FQHC partnerships. We were accepted to the The National Center for Complex Health and Social Ecosystem Community Learning Collaborative. From now until June 2022, we will receive extensive technical assistance and project management support to strengthen partnership between shelters and health care providers. Reach out to [Peter.Harvey@allegghenycounty.us](mailto:Peter.Harvey@allegghenycounty.us) if you are interested in working with us.
  - DHS's YHDP team is partnering with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) to host another virtual learning & sharing workshop.
    - Date/time: Tuesday, March 16 from 1:00-2:30 PM
    - [Registration is open](#) and required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing instruction on how to join the virtual meeting.
    - Questions: Laura Saulle, [laura.saulle@allegghenycounty.us](mailto:laura.saulle@allegghenycounty.us).

- National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference Debrief meeting is scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup>. Contact Rob Eamigh for invite to debrief:  
[Robert.Eamigh@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:Robert.Eamigh@alleghenycounty.us)
- Share the good work that is happening on the Kudo board!  
<https://www.kudoboard.com/boards/CpL49xOS>
- Contact Nakia Granberg ([nakia.granberg@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:nakia.granberg@alleghenycounty.us)) to share stories of the impact of your services on clients.

## CYF

Become a respite caregiver!

- An info session is being held tomorrow, March 12 at 1 pm. Join on Zoom, Meeting ID 965 9664 5310; password 852826

Family Preservation & In-Home Redesign 2021 Overview

- As a reminder, in late February 2021 DHS released a concept paper to set forth our proposal for how to redesign the CYF prevention program currently known as “in-home services.” (<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442474008>) The Concept Paper outlines the details of this initiative –please review this paper and provide feedback at [CYFPrevention@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:CYFPrevention@alleghenycounty.us); anonymous feedback can be submitted using [this form](#) by March 24, 2021.

## **How to Reach Us**

- Email us at [DHS-COVID19planning@alleghenycounty.us](mailto: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**