



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting
March 25, 2021



General Information

DHS Provider Meetings continue to be held once per week, on Thursday at 4:30 pm.

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

- RFP for Housing Mobility Services for Families in the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)
 - Proposals due April 23
- RFP for Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility
 - Proposals due April 1
 - Proposals submitted through CCBH, not DHS, but can find RFP on our Solicitations page

We are working with the United Way and Mercy to make sure that staff and clients have every opportunity to get the vaccine. Fill out [this short survey](#) to share your information and you will be called if there are extra shots or DHS gets access through the Health Department. There is still limited vaccine supply, so we encourage you to continue exploring other efforts.

Staples is offering free lamination of your COVID-19 vaccine card!

Covid-19 Metrics

- We are in a case plateau. Cases dropped significantly but now are rising slightly. Please remain careful, follow precautions and keep your masks on. PA's early warning system dashboard can be found here <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx>.
- Through 3/10/2021, 15% of people are fully vaccinated and 16% have received one shot. <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Vaccine.aspx#data>

Safety and Justice Challenge Update

Background

- Close to 5 years ago, the MacArthur Foundation announced bold plans to reduce the jail population and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system. Allegheny County was awarded about \$2M to work on reducing the jail population and recently received another \$2M.
- We reached out to you in September and asked for your feedback, and we received close to 100 comments on Neighborland.
- Since the Allegheny County Jail opened in 1995, crime has dropped while the jail population has risen.
- Reducing the jail population increases public safety, reduces costs to taxpayers, lessens disruptions to families, employers and communities, and reduces disparate impact. Despite making up only 13% of the local population, Black men and women make up 66% of the jail population. Roughly 75% of the jail population is struggling with a mental health or substance abuse issue.
- We saw a significant decline in the jail population during COVID-19 and are working to maintain/further reduce it. The current population is 1,573.

Strategies

Our crisis response stakeholder work has made it clear that first responders and law enforcement want a stronger crisis response system. The following strategies have been recommended:

- Reducing booking at first appearance by providing legal representation at the first appearance and implementing a revalidated pretrial assessment
- Making the court system go faster by moving two separate hearings to one day and shifting timeline for preparatory work
- Managing the detainer population through a policy and detainer workgroup; resolving probation violations and new charges together
- Doing racial equity training work with GARE and partnering on an Institute of Politics study looking at policies in the court system and the jail
- Engaging a community advisory committee charged with identifying solutions
- Jail redesign to accommodate smaller populations and make the conditions as hospitable as possible. We are working on a solicitation for partners to work with us on a planning and design process.

Publications

- Our jail population dashboard has been updated and can be found here: <https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2021/03/04/allegheny-county-jail-population-management-dashboards-2/>
- Reports have been published on [police use of force, first 2 years of the MacArthur grant](#), and a long term longitudinal look at [students and their experiences with the justice system](#).

Legislative/Policy Updates

State and Local Updates

- Gov. Wolf nominated Meg Snead to lead the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) in response to Secretary Teresa Miller's announcement that she is leaving on April 30th. The PA Senate will need to confirm the nomination.
 - Snead works in the Governor's Office as the Secretary of Policy and Planning and previously worked in human services policy and for a homelessness nonprofit in Colorado.
- PA Senate Republican leadership confirmed they will not advance a bill to allow an emergency referendum for an amendment to the PA Constitution that would open a two-year window on the statute of limitations to pursue claims of sex abuse.
 - Due to an oversight, the PA Department of State did not properly advertise the proposed amendment passed by the General Assembly and now the earliest the referendum can appear on the ballot is May 2023.
- City of Pittsburgh launched the [OurFuturePGH](#) website to connect youth and families to educational and recreational opportunities provided by City programs.
 - The website includes additional resources for families, from outside community partners, that address needs such as technology, school options and parenting resources.
- PA Department of Health amends universal face coverings order to align with CDC

- Effective March 17th, PA Secretary of Health Alison Beam amended [the existing Universal Face Coverings order](#) from November 2020, to align with the [CDC Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#). People are not considered vaccinated until two weeks after their second dose.
- Allegheny County Health Department extends phase 1a eligibility at county vaccination sites. Beginning immediately, the Allegheny County Health Department will vaccinate individuals aged 16 (Pfizer) or 18 (Moderna) to 64 who meet the Pennsylvania Phase 1A medical conditions. Appointments are required for all sites. Individuals should NOT contact the sites directly. Appointments are announced through Allegheny Alerts and then [posted on the county's COVID Vaccine page](#).

Program Updates

OCS

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

- Program Stats
 - In the first 10 days, we received 4,684 applications (started and submitted)!
 - 2,030 are being processed
 - 33 have been paid a total of \$143,295 at an average of \$4,342 per household.
- There are 8 drop-in locations to access a computer and staff assistance: Focus on Renewal, Gwen's Girls, Kingsley Association, Wilksburg Family Support, Greater Valley Community Services, SHIM Baldwin and Bethel Park locations, and The Wander Building.
 - About 95% of the applications have been completed without assistance. Many landlords are stepping up to help as well.
- Plenty of assistance is still available. Please help get the word out!
 - [Visit covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us](http://Visit.covidrentrelief.alleghenycounty.us) and apply online.
 - Visit one of 8 drop-in centers.
 - Call 412-248-0021 to set up an appointment for a phone application.

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