



**COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting**

**April 8, 2021**



## General Information

As a reminder, DHS Provider Meetings are held each Thursday at 4:30 pm.

DHS has [released two solicitations](#):

- RFQ for Design, Content and Digital Strategy
  - Six categories of work; Applicants may seek qualification for any/all categories.
  - Proposals due April 30
- RFP for Housing Mobility Services for Families in the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8)
  - Proposals due April 23

The tax deadline was extended to May 17!

- Here are some specific situations where an individual may receive money by filing taxes:
  - If individuals don't usually file taxes because lack of earnings from work or receiving disability benefits, may not have received stimulus payments.
  - If job loss or income dropped in 2020, should file taxes so the IRS has most recent income information.
  - If children are living in a household in 2020, may be eligible for another payment later in 2021.
  - If tax was withheld from 2020 unemployment benefits, individual should file taxes, as a portion of 2020 unemployment benefits are no longer taxable and could result in a tax refund.
- Client self-sign-up for local tax assistance: [getyourrefund.org/justharvest](https://getyourrefund.org/justharvest)
  - Email Kristie Weiland Stagno ([KristieW@justharvest.org](mailto:KristieW@justharvest.org)) to refer a client who has no internet access or with other barriers (e.g., language, disability, homelessness) that make virtual tax prep impossible. Include the client's name and phone number.

Ivan Juzang joined the call to share the Spread Truth not COVID Campaign.

- The campaign was created by and for the target audience. The advisory board contained representatives from marginalized communities.
- The campaign uses two channels: Digital media (reach) and community-identified channels (dialogue)
  - Website: [www.TruthNotCOVID.org](http://www.TruthNotCOVID.org), Social Media: @TruthNotCOVID, Truth Not COVID YouTube channel
  - The YouTube channel includes videos in multiple languages and formats
  - All messages are trauma-informed, strength-based, doable and sharable and acknowledge economic challenges.

- Emphasize making informed choices
- The organizers are asking community leaders to join the campaign! Training on the digital community engagement toolkit will be provided.
  - Training starts May 1.
  - Register at [MEETrainingPortal.com/AlleghenyCounty](https://MEETrainingPortal.com/AlleghenyCounty).
- The campaign will last through September and messaging will be responsive to the needs of the community, including back-to-school issues.
- Print materials will be translated into ten languages.

#### Covid-19 Metrics

- Cases are going up; we are seeing about 10% increases from last week to this week. PA state's early warning system dashboard can be found here <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Monitoring-Dashboard.aspx>.
  - The case rate began increasing around March 4.
  - We are seeing a bit of an increase in hospitalizations but not in ICU bed usage.
- 20% of people are fully vaccinated and 18% have received one shot <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Dashboard.aspx>

Vaccine Eligibility is expanding. By April 19<sup>th</sup>, everyone will be eligible! Here are some upcoming clinics and how to register:

- ACHD First Dose Clinics in Castle Shannon, Ross, Hill District, McKeesport
  - [Vax4.alleghenycounty.us](https://Vax4.alleghenycounty.us) or call 2-1-1
- AHN Johnson and Johnson Clinics April 9 and 10 at Next Tier Connect in Monroeville
  - [Ahn.org/coronavirus](https://Ahn.org/coronavirus) or call 412-DOCTORS
- UPMC Johnson and Johnson Drive-Up Clinics April 15 and 15 Galleria at Pittsburgh Mills
  - [Vaccine.upmc.com](https://Vaccine.upmc.com) or call 833-676-1995

Anna Ettinger, Senior Research Scientist on The Pittsburgh Study joined the call to discuss the Family Strengths Survey.

- They've transitioned to a monthly survey frequency and have about 300 participants/month.
- They look at measures of child thriving, like basic needs, physical and mental health, relationship and connection to others.
  - They are seeing many families continuing to struggle with keeping children connected and helping children be well-adjusted socially, mentally and emotionally.
  - Parents are also struggling with helping themselves feel well-adjusted.
- About 15% of adults reported unmet healthcare needs, about half for dental care. For kids, about 7% have unmet needs, also mostly for dental care. A loss of insurance due to job loss may be affecting this.

- About 12.8% of participants were food insecure. It has gone down a little bit since the summer (15%). Housing insecurity is at 7%, which has remained the same over time.
- About 10% of participants are reporting unmet utility/phone/internet needs; about 13% reported unmet childcare needs.
  - Primarily seeing an increase in parents and adult family members providing caregiving.
- 50% of parents are somewhat satisfied or dissatisfied with how their child is doing in school.
- Have seen a decrease in concerns about COVID testing. Also saw a big increase in the percentage of people intending to get the vaccine; almost 75% now reporting positive intentions to get vaccinated.
- Future plans
  - Planning to ask about absenteeism in future versions of the survey.
  - Partnering with Washington, Fayette and Greene counties to expand the survey; this will provide a more comprehensive view of Southwestern PA.

## Legislative/Policy Updates

### State and Local Updates

- Pennsylvania schools will receive \$4.9 billion for Pre-K through 12 schools to "return students to classroom learning and equitably expand opportunity for students who need it most."
  - This latest funding was made available by the American Rescue Plan – amounts by district are available [here](#).
- The Port Authority seeks public comment on increasing bus fares to \$2.75 and canceling transfer fees for prepaid Connect Card users.
  - People who pay in cash would continue to pay \$2.75 every time they board, while ConnectCard users would have free transfers during a 3-hour window.
  - Public comment period will run through May 5, with meetings held virtually on Thursday, April 22; Friday, April 30; and Tuesday, May 4.
  - [More information on the meetings and making online public comments here.](#)
- Fifth Judicial District posted amended emergency orders on remote and in-person hearings as well as guidance concerning the CDC eviction moratorium, in light of COVID-19.
  - Amended Emergency Order pertaining to remote and in-person hearings for Court of Common Pleas and Magisterial District Courts can be found [here](#).
  - Order concerning the CDC eviction moratorium can be found [here](#).
- On Tuesday, Pittsburgh City Council voted unanimously to amend the city's emergency eviction moratorium in an attempt to make the ordinance more enforceable in the face of litigation.
  - Under the amendments, landlords who evict without "good cause" can receive a fine of up to \$1,000 or \$2,500 in cases where children are living in the household — a decrease from the \$10,000 fine approved in the original ordinance. The

amendments also remove language prohibiting landlords from refusing to renew a lease agreement.

- Council passed the moratorium on March 2 in an attempt to temporarily limit evictions within city limits. The Landlord Services Bureau filed suit against the ordinance immediately after passage, seeking an injunction against the moratorium. Litigation is ongoing and the courts will ultimately decide if it is enforceable.
- City of Pittsburgh offering free pediatric first aid, CPR and fire safety certifications for childcare providers.
  - All-day training will be hosted by the Office of Equity, Bureau of EMS and Bureau of Fire in partnership with Trying Together and the local ELRC.
  - Trainings will be held on Saturday, April 10 at 10:00 a.m.
  - Registration is required and space is limited.
  - Childcare staff and early learning professionals who work or reside in the City of Pittsburgh are eligible to participate and can sign up [here](#).

### Federal Updates

- The proposed American Jobs plan includes over \$2T focused on jobs and infrastructure. This includes funding to modernize schools and early learning facilities, workforce development, social infrastructure, affordable housing, raising wages and benefits for home care workers, and ensuring broadband access. See the slide presentation for more details.
- FEMA will soon provide financial assistance for funeral expenses when a death was attributed to COVID-19.
  - FEMA will accept applications starting on Monday, April 12th through a dedicated call center (844-684-6333). Assistance is limited to a maximum of \$9,000 per funeral.
  - [Link](#) for details on eligibility, documentation requirements and FAQ.
- The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan application process extended through May 31, 2021.
  - [Link](#) for more information from the U.S. Small Business Administration
- Yesterday, the Biden-Harris administration announced two sets of actions around reducing community violence:
  - investments in community violence interventions, including by leveraging funding through 26 current programs ([White House Fact Sheet](#)); and
  - actions to address gun violence as a public health epidemic ([White House initial actions](#))

### **Program Updates**

None today

## **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**