



COVID-19 DHS Provider Meeting

July 8, 2021



General Information

DHS Provider Meetings are now being held at 4:30 PM every other week over the summer, on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

Active Solicitations

NEW RFP for a Provider of Functional Family Therapy through Child Welfare: An Evidence-Based Intervention*

- Proposals are due 3 p.m. Eastern Time on Wednesday, August 11.
- Join us for an optional pre-proposal information session via Microsoft Teams from 11 a.m. to noon on Thursday, July 22. See the RFP for details.

[Link to DHS Solicitations](#)

RFP for Rethinking the Allegheny County Jail Facility (Consulting Services)

- Mandatory pre-proposal Meeting July 20th at the Allegheny County Jail
- Proposals are due 11:30am Eastern Time on Wednesday, August 18.

[Link to Solicitation](#)

Public hearing for the Allegheny County Human Services Plan

There will be two virtual public meetings to talk about the 2021-22 County Human Services Plan and its implementation, scheduled for:

- Monday, July 12, 2021
1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

<https://zoom.us/j/96340764510>

- Thursday, July 15, 2021
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

<https://zoom.us/j/93206727246>

Introductory video: <https://vimeo.com/569954935>

Ice Cream Fundae Outreach Events

Pressley Ridge is hosting four outreach events:

- Penn Hills, 7/17, 2:30-4:30pm at CYF Parking lot
- McKees Rocks, 7/17, 11am-1pm
- Hill District, 8/14, 11am-1pm
- North Side 8/14, 2pm-4pm

PA Budget 2021-2022

- Last week, Gov. Wolf signed the State Budget totaling \$40.8 billion, a significant increase over last year's Budget, which includes \$1 billion from the \$7.3 billion received from the American Rescue Plan (ARP).

- The new Budget exceeds the Governor's proposed Budget, announced in February prior to the ARP, which totaled \$37.8 billion.
- The General Assembly has indicated a preference to hold on to the unallocated ARP funds to see what needs develop through 2024, when the funds expire.
- The Budget increases funding for state DHS by 27% from last year to \$7.3 billion (includes billions in one-time increases from federal Medicaid funds).
 - Restrictions were put in place to prevent DHS from creating new programs or receiving supplemental funding without authorization by the General Assembly.
- Key investments in the Budget:
 - \$30 million for gun violence prevention through community programs managed by the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)
 - \$282 million to help public and private nursing homes, assisted living and personal care homes with costs for personal protective equipment, staff testing and pandemic-related costs
 - \$300 million for basic education
 - \$50 million for special education funding
 - Approximately \$350 million for learning loss

Policy Update – State

- Acting DHS Secretary Meg Snead announced an agreement with the federal government that allows extra emergency SNAP benefits to continue to be distributed in Pennsylvania; the agreement was necessary as the state's emergency disaster declaration ended.
 - The disaster declaration was ended by the General Assembly last month following the passage of a constitutional amendment in June allowing the legislature to end such gubernatorial declarations.
 - The emergency SNAP benefit addition totals approx. \$150 million a month and benefit almost 1 million Pennsylvanians; nearly \$2 billion in extra SNAP dollars have been distributed so far during the pandemic.
- Last week, Gov. Wolf signed Act 41 ("Heather's Law") into law, which seeks to improve notification standards when someone in drug or alcohol treatment leaves against medical advice.
 - Requires treatment facilities to notify an emergency contact designated by the patient if they leave the facility against medical advice and have not revoked consent.
 - The call must occur no later than 12 hours after the patient leaves.

How can a family receive advance Child Tax Credit? (Just Harvest)

Already filed a 2019 or 2020 tax return?

- The payments will start automatically. You don't need to do anything.

Had earned income in 2020, but haven't filed a tax return yet?

- Free virtual help filing your return at [GetYourRefund.org/cwf](https://www.getyourrefund.org/cwf)

No earned income in 2020 or not required to file?

- Use the IRS Non-filer's portal [IRS.gov/childtaxcredit2021](https://www.irs.gov/childtaxcredit2021)

What You Need

- Full name
- Current mailing address
- Email address
- Date of birth
- Valid Social Security numbers (or other taxpayer IDs) for you and your dependents
- Bank account number, type and routing number, if you have one
- Identity Protection Personal Identification Number (IP PIN) you received from the IRS earlier this year, if you have one

Child Tax Credit Questions

- [JustHarvest.org/CTC](https://www.justharvest.org/CTC) for FAQs and updates
- For providers: Elaina Mitchell – 412-431-8960x212 elainam@justharvest.org
- For clients: 412-431-8960, choose tax help option taxhelp@justharvest.org

Violence Prevention: Recent Trends and Research

For more detail and visualizations, see the slide presentation

<http://dhstraumaresourcelibrary.allegHENYcounty.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Provider-Briefing-7-8-21.pdf>

Street Violence Fact Sheet

- Street violence is gun violence that primarily occurs within the public spaces of our cities and towns. Overwhelmingly, young black men are the victims.
- Over 80% of homicides in Allegheny County are committed with a firearm, annually and cumulatively.
- Street violence is not random. It is heavily concentrated in space. Most gun violence occurs in just a small number of higher need communities.
- Nationally, street violence is much lower than it was in the early 90s, however, our higher need communities still experience an unacceptable and disproportionate amount of gun violence.
- A very small percentage of at-risk young men in our highest need communities are responsible for most gun violence. Many of these young men have experienced significant trauma and have easy access to a gun. Perpetrators and victims are overwhelmingly of the same race.
- The same small number of young men most at risk for committing gun violence are also most likely to be victims of gun violence. Over 80% of individuals involved know each other, per social network analyses.
- Most street violence tends to result from “beefs” and is retaliatory.
- Violence can be prevented and reduced.

Homicide Trends in Allegheny County

- Prior to 2020, homicides had been decreasing since 2016.
- 17% increase in homicides from 2019 to 2020, reversing gains made over past few years.
- 39% increase in homicides from 2020 to 2021 (28 to 39), from data from January through April of each year

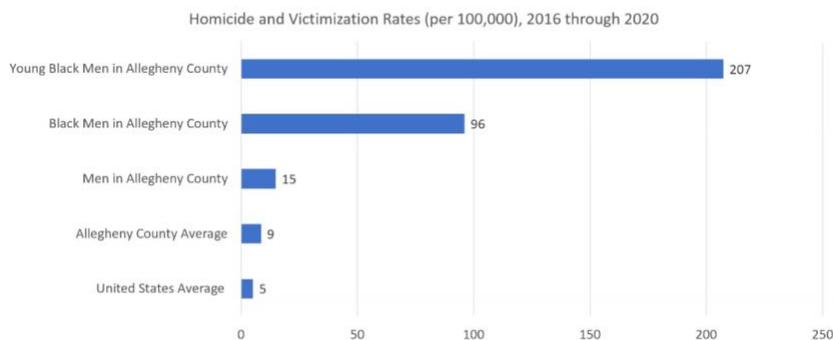
Homicides and Non-Fatal Shooting Trends in City of Pittsburgh

- Despite making up 25% of county population, the City of Pittsburgh accounts for 40% or more of homicides, annually.
- After two years of significant decline in 2017 and 2018, homicides + non-fatal shootings have been increasing since 2019.
- 10% increase in homicides plus non-fatal shootings from 2019 to 2020 with 30% increase in Homicides alone and 5% increase in NF shootings alone
- 54% increase in homicides plus non-fatal shootings from 2020 to 2021 (50 to 77), for data from January through April of each year

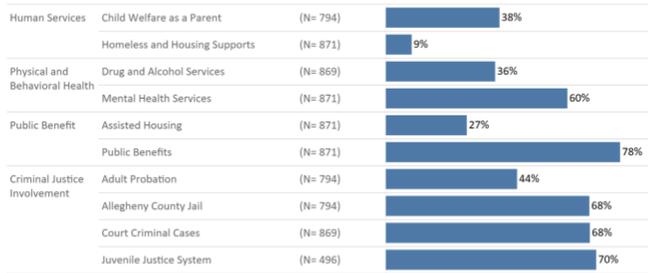
Likely Contributors to Spike in Homicides and Non-Fatal Shootings in 2020 and 2021, according to experts like Patrick Sharkey:

- Record sales in purchase of guns and increase in gun-carrying
- Social isolation from key institutions and programs, resulting from social distancing
- Legal cynicism, resulting from public displays of police violence

Comparative Homicide and Victimization Rates



Service involvement of homicide victims



- To calculate N (the eligible population), we followed these criteria:
- Child welfare services were only available as of 2002 and were available for victims who were under age 18 at any point between 2011 and 2020.
 - Child welfare as a parent, Adult Probation, and Allegheny County Jail includes only victims who were 18 years or older at the time of death
 - Drug and alcohol services includes only victims who were 14 years or older at the time of death
 - Court criminal cases includes victims who were 10 or older at the time of their death
 - Juvenile justice system information was available for victims who were 11 through 18 at any point between 2011 and 2020.

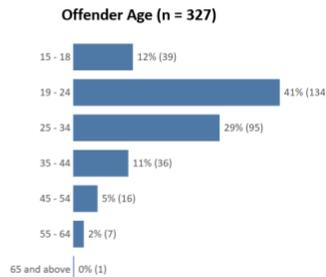
Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Homicide Offenders – Similar to Victims

From 2011 to 2020 there were 518 homicides in Pittsburgh, and 51% (265) of them have been cleared. The Pittsburgh Police provided information on 340 offenders for the 265 homicides cleared. 78% of the offenders are black male, and 70% of them* were between 19 and 34 years of age at the time of their arrest.

Offender race and gender (N =340)

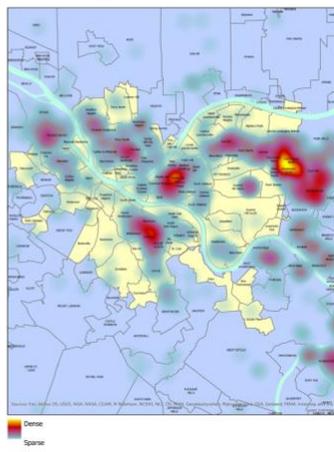
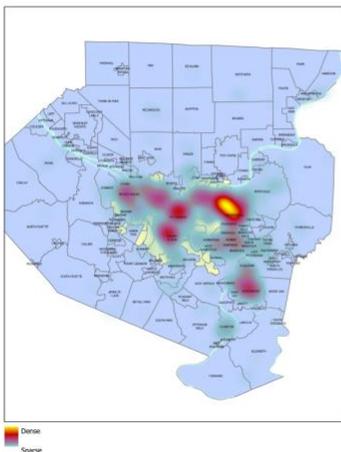
	Female	Male	Total
Black	25 7%	265 78%	290 85%
White	4 1%	42 12%	46 14%
Other	2 1%	2 1%	4 1%
Total	31 9%	309 91%	340 100%



*Age information was available for 327 out of the 340 offenders. Source: Pittsburgh Bureau of Police

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Homicide Hot Spots



Source: Allegheny County Medical Examiner

Allegheny County Department of Human Service

Disproportionate Gun Violence in Higher Need Black Communities is result of Systemic Racism and Exclusion and Disparate Impact

- Explicitly racist housing, lending and land use policies from early 1900s to 1960s
- Still ample evidence of racial steering and lending discrimination to this day
- White flight, outmigration and suburbanization
- Urban renewal
- Disparate impact of deindustrialization on Black workers and communities
- Crack cocaine epidemic, zero tolerance policing and War on Drugs
- Exclusionary Zoning
- *These intentional policy decisions made poor Black communities vulnerable to violence and community trauma as the result of their concentrating disadvantage and disinvestment, socially isolating residents from resources, opportunities, key institutions and networks, and through the entrenchment of legal cynicism resulting from racism in our criminal justice system, all of which destabilized the social fabric of poor Black communities.*

Violence Affects the Entire Community

- IQ scores fell half a standard deviation below average if children took an IQ test within a week of a local murder, when all else was equal. [1]
- Exposure to gun violence is linked to higher risk of suicidal ideation and psychotic experience and higher levels of depression and distress. [2]
- Violence leads to outmigration and further disinvestment. [3]
- Police violence tends to concentrate in poor communities, and exposure to police violence leads to persistent decreases in GPA, increased incidence of emotional disturbance, and lower rates of high school completion and college enrollment [4]

Current State of Violence reduction in Allegheny County, at large

- Group Violence Intervention via Pittsburgh Bureau of Police (PBP) in City of Pittsburgh
- PBP's community relations initiatives and illegal gun monitoring/removal
- Cure Violence in Wilkesburg, sections of Woodland Hills School District and city neighborhoods that feed into Westinghouse
- Juvenile Probation connecting youth with trauma-informed behavioral interventions
- Trauma Response Team via Neighborhood Resilience Project
- Hospital-based intervention and street outreach
- And more

Challenges with Current Efforts

- Demand for street outreach workers and violence interrupters is greater than supply for Cure and other county outreach efforts, including outreach workers with GVI.
- No real sustainable funding model for efforts outside of GVI
- No formalized effort to coordinate street violence reduction efforts across county.
- Given the risks, inadequate pay for street outreach workers and violence interrupters, for all models
- Challenges accessing housing, employment and other basic needs for at-risk population via street outreach and service provision for Cure, GVI and Garland's efforts
- Various programs could use better fidelity to their respective models

Other Effective Street Violence Reduction Efforts that Could Be Utilized

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED): basic upkeep of abandoned lots and vacant homes in neighborhoods most impacted by violence [5]
 - 30% reduction in shootings
- School-based programs with a focus on CBT (focused on neighborhoods with the highest rates of violence) [6]
- Becoming A Man in Chicago
 - 50% reduction in violent arrests
- Meet during school day.
- CBT blended with dynamic youth engagement
- Focus on impulse control, conflict resolution, peer support and future orientation.
- Systematic expansion of summer youth employment to every eligible youth (focused on neighborhoods with highest rates of violence) [7]
 - 18% reduction in homicides

Funding Suggestions: Address Violence Directly and Address Opportunities for Violence

Prioritize expanding Cure violence model (beyond just greater Wilkinsburg area) to AC communities with highest average rates of homicides:

- A) Mon Valley: Braddock, Churchill, Clairton, Duquesne, East Pittsburgh, Homestead, McKeesport, North Braddock, Rankin
- B) East Suburbs: Penn Hills, Swissvale
- C) West/South: McKees Rocks, Mt. Oliver, Stowe

2) Support GVI where needed

3) Provide funding for additional staffing for Garland's hospital-based intervention and street outreach

4) Fund targeted expansion of school-based programs with focus on CBT (Becoming A Man-type models) and summer youth employment (learn and earn). Continue to support existing youth violence prevention efforts.

5) Support existing CPTED efforts.

6) Assist with housing and basic needs access for at-risk population via service provision for CURE, GVI and other models with outreach components.

7) Convene formal, regular meetings with all major players in street violence reduction in Allegheny County.

Key local data sites/reports

Dashboard for Homicides in City of Pittsburgh



<https://pittsburghpa.gov/publicsafety/homicide-data>

DHS report on Homicides in Allegheny County and City of Pittsburgh, 2010 through 2015
[ACDHS_CJ-Homicides-in-Allegheny-County-and-City-of-Pgh_Oct-2017.pdf](#) (alleghenycountyanalytics.us)

Dashboard for Homicides in Allegheny County



<https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2018/05/30/homicides-in-allegheny-county-interactive-dashboard/>

Dashboard for Gun Violence in City of Pittsburgh (shots fired, aggravated assault with firearm and non-fatal shootings)
<https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2016/09/11/gun-violence-city-pittsburgh/>

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

References

- [1] Sharkey, P. 2010, June 29. "The Acute Effect of Local Homicides on Children's Cognitive Performance." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America.
- [2] Smith, M. E. et al (2020, February). The impact of exposure to gun violence fatality on mental health outcomes in four urban U.S. settings. *Social Science and Medicine*.
- [3] Abt, T. (2019). *Bleeding out: The Devastating Consequences of Urban Violence – And A Bold New Plan For Peace In The Streets*. Basic Book, New York.
- [4] Ang, D. (2021, February). The Effects of Police Violence on Inner-City Students. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 136(1).
- [5] Branas, C., South, E. et al. (2018, March). Citywide cluster randomized trial to restore blighted vacant land and its effects on violence, crime, and fear. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*.
- [6] <https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/projects/becoming-a-man>
- [7] Gelber, Alexander, Adam Isen, and Judd B. Kessler. 2016. "The Effects of Youth Employment: Evidence from New York City Lotteries." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 131(1): 423–460.

Panel Discussion

Panelists:

Law Enforcement

- Scott Schubert, Chief of Police, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police
- Chris Kearns, Superintendent, Allegheny County Police
- Lavonnie Bickerstaff, Assistant Chief, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police
- Eric Holmes, Chief of Staff, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police
- Cornell Jones, Director of Street Outreach, City of Pittsburgh

Health & Human Services

- Rod Harris, Deputy Director, Allegheny County Health Department
- Ross Watson, Violence Prevention Program Manager, Allegheny County Health Department

- Liz Miller, Director, Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics, Public Health and Clinical and Translational Science, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
- Alison Culyba, Assistant Professor, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
- Reggie Smith, Outreach and Prevention Specialist, Allegheny County DHS
- Nick Cotter, Analyst, Allegheny County DHS

Community Partners

- Rashad Byrdsong, CEO, Community Empowerment Association
- Richard Garland, Director, University of Pittsburgh, Public Health, Violence Prevention Project
- Taili Thompson, Director, Violence Prevention Initiative, Operation Better Block

Dalton: What has led to the increase in violence?

Richard Garland: The pandemic led to increase in violence. Closure of housing communities. Opportunities can change things that violence has created. We need Re-Entry programs, getting people jobs. I visit gunshot victims in hospital to learn what’s up and to get in front of issues. Housing resources have been a big help – being able to move people from one community to another. The City’s violence intervention and outreach workers help. Building relationships matters.

Taili Thompson: In 2012, outreach workers started attributing violence to social media. That led to research by Dr. Joseph Johnson that showed that social media leads to violence. It progressed from insults/threats/dry-snitching/violence. Social media monitoring – keeps an eye out for potential violence. Leads to potential to mediate a conflict at an earlier stage before it turns to violence. The writing is on the wall and we are not reading it.

Cornell Jones: – social media has been a big factor in the increased violence. With everyone being at home and away from school – there are a lot of beefs going on between “rat crews.” Now that people can be out and see each other, they are shooting each other. With our lack of being able to monitor people, we see that people were taking more chances, using more drugs, all of which leads to this increase in violence.

Rashad Byrdsong – CEO Community Empowerment: We have to look at the root cause of the problem. We see this happening in high needs communities. We need to develop programming and relationships in communities – summer programs, workforce, focus groups to work with trauma... These problems existed before COVID. It’s about exclusion, racism, the need for policy reform. We need to bring police, judges, schools, others all together to talk in a coordinated way. Develop a pipeline. More resources directed to prevention. Teach people to make different choices. Manhood/ womanhood training....Coordination with all of the players. Invest in grassroot community organizations who have the trust of the communities.

Ross Watson and Roderick Harris, ACHD Office of Violence Prevention – We were not taking coordination role. We just wanted to see where we fit in and can help others. Our office is launching an Advisory Board to speak to ways we can collaborate. We want to avoid competing for resources, but we are not the convenors.

Rashad Byrdsong: Coordination needs to come from the top because it is policy that causes this.

LaVonnie Bickerstaff, Assistant Chief Bureau of Police: We are involved in community, however, COVID required that we re-tool. We lost the use of coaches, teachers and others who helped us know what was really going on in the communities. We can't do this work without the community. We have to build trust. Smart policing. We have to build relationships. Community surveys with young folks to find out what they think about community violence and see what they need. We need to ask them. It is our responsibility to build that trust.

Chris Kearns, Superintendent, Allegheny County police: I do not see a spike, but a steady rise. Shift of population has caused change. Municipalities lack resources to stay on top of things and we get called in late.

Alison Culyba, Assistant Professor, UPMC Children's Hospital: We have noted the transformational power of relationships with supportive adults – school/church/community. COVID has cut people off from those support networks. We have created a community-based mentoring program – linking people who've experienced violence to peers/mentors in their community. The tech divide – cut off our ability to connect and support some folks, which has left some people out of their supports.

Erin Dalton: We are working on solicitation to invest in the existing work and expand it. Working with ACHD. Will expand existing programs, implement new ones, and put back in place some of the investments that were here formerly, but not recently.

Reggie Smith, DHS Outreach and Prevention Specialist – We need more job training for young guys, even if just for the summer. And afterschool. We need to give these young men things to connect with.

Nick Cotter, DHS Analyst: No one effort will fix gun violence, but a coordinated effort can! We need sustainable funding. It is no good for anyone when we are competing for same funds. And workers who do this high-stress and risky work should be paid well!

Rashad Byrdsong: We should have community listening sessions – talk to the people.

Our next meeting is on July 22, 2021

- Featured Topic: Child and Family Well-being

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.