

# What Connects Us

**Allegheny County Department of Human Services**



1/27/2022

## Provider Briefing

# Agenda



**4:30 – 4:40 PM:** Policy / Legislative Update and Active/Upcoming Solicitations

**4:40 – 4:50 PM:** Announcements

- Disaster Resilience Training
- Pandemic Workforce Network
- Latinx Needs Assessment
- LGBTQIA+ Needs Assessment
- Public Comment Period Open for Digital Equity Planning Grants
- HHS/ACF National Call to Action on Racial Equity

**4:50 – 5:30 PM:** DHS Priorities



# Join the DHS Team!

<https://alleghenycounty.bamboohr.com/jobs/>



# Policy and Legislative Update

# Free Covid tests and masks



- **COVID-19 test distribution from the federal government**

- Each household is eligible for four free at-home antigen tests.
- Quick sign-up using name and mailing address: <https://www.covidtests.gov/>.
- Individuals who need help placing an order online can call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489).

- **Free N95 masks will soon be available at local pharmacies and community health centers**

- In Western Pennsylvania, locations include CVS, Walgreens, Rite-Aid, Walmart, Giant Eagle and Health Mart.
- While the program launched this week, it isn't expected to be fully up and running for one to two weeks.

# Federal



- **Private health insurance reimbursement for at-home tests**
  - Purchases of at-home rapid Covid tests are now eligible for reimbursement based on an Administration requirement for private insurers to cover eight at-home tests per individual per month.
  - Details from CMS are available [here](#).
- **Federal student loan repayment freeze extended through May 1, 2022**
  - The Department of Education has a [resource page](#) to help borrowers prepare for payments to resume this spring.
- **The IRS has designated February 28th as EITC Awareness Day**
  - IRS has [materials available](#) to help organizations spread the word about the earned income tax credit to ensure eligible individuals do not miss out.

# Federal



- **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**

- The Broadband Benefit Program is now the ACP, a benefit program that helps households afford internet service through a discount of up to \$30 per month.
- Eligible households can receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute between \$11 and \$50 toward the purchase price.
- Eligibility and program application information available [here](#), as well as a consumer outreach toolkit in multiple languages.

- **Filing taxes for 2021 to collect remaining child tax credit amounts**

- While half of child tax credit (CTC) amounts were provided monthly to most parents for the six months between July and December, the remaining half will be distributed through tax filings.
- Treasury and the White House have re-launched a revamped website – [ChildTaxCredit.gov](https://www.irs.gov/childtaxcredit) – with several new features to help taxpayers file their taxes and access the remainder of the expanded CTC (or the full amount of the CTC if not received monthly).



# Federal – Safety Net



- **Uncertain future of Build Back Better, the Administration’s \$1.75 trillion social safety net bill.**

- Without all 50 Democratic Senators supporting the House-passed bill, the Senate is unable to proceed with the Budget Reconciliation process. The Administration and Senate Dems are hoping to negotiate an alternative package.
- The Build Back Better Act would have funded universal pre-k, additional child care subsidies, a one-year extension of the increased Child Tax Credit, a continued Emergency Rental Assistance Program, and much more to strengthen the safety net.

## **Update on programs created and funded by pandemic recovery and relief legislation:**

- **Emergency Rental Assistance Program:** DHS has distributed \$74.6 million to approximately 13,000 Allegheny County households to cover eligible rent and utility costs.
- **Older Youth Pandemic Relief Program (federal Chafee program funds):** DHS distributed \$2,000 payments to approximately 1,900 young adults, while also using the outreach to connect two-thirds of recipients to other resources.



# State

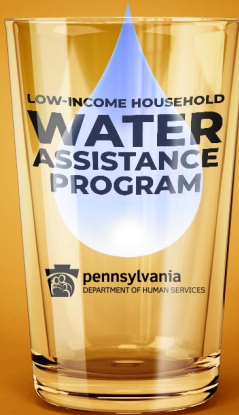


- **The PA Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program ([LIHWAP](#)) is now accepting applications**

- LIHWAP was created by Congress during the pandemic as a temporary program, modeled after the Low-Income Home Energy Program (LIHEAP), to assist families experiencing hardships with their drinking water and wastewater bills.
- Pennsylvanians can apply online through [Compass](#), via a [paper](#) application (Spanish [version](#)), by calling the Statewide Customer Service Center to request an application (877-395-8930 or PA Relay at 711 for the hearing impaired), or in-person at a local state-run County Assistance Office.
- PA DHS has developed social media graphics and flyers if your organization would like to promote the program, available on the state's [LIHWAP website](#).

**Are you at risk  
of having your  
water shut off?**

Help is available. Learn if you qualify at:  
[dhs.pa.gov/WaterHelp](https://dhs.pa.gov/WaterHelp)



# State Legislation



- **On Tuesday, the House Children and Youth Committee held a public hearing on two bills aimed at improving the child welfare provider insurance situation.**
  - [HB 2213](#) would extend a damage cap to providers equal to the cap for counties. The exception here would be sexual abuse damages, which the counties lost damage caps for in Act 87 of 2019, so providers are not more insulated than counties from damages being sought around sexual abuse.
  - [HB 2214](#) would prohibit counties from inserting indemnification clauses in contracts with service providers.
  - DHS submitted testimony in support of the bills. [Link](#) to video recording.

# Local



- **County Council's new term has begun with two changes:**

- Jack Betkowski (D) replaced the seat Tom Baker (R) vacated.
- Michelle Nacarrati-Chapkis (D) replaced the seat Paul Zavarella (D) vacated.
- The make-up of the Council is now two Republicans and 13 Democrats.



# Active Solicitations

# Active Solicitations



## [DHS Solicitations Webpage](#)

### **RFP for Information Technology Support and Professional Services**

- Due Date: Friday, January 28, 2022

### **RFP for Recovery Housing**

- Due Date: Friday, February 11, 2022

### **RFP for Case Management for Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD)**

- Due Date: Friday, February 25, 2022

### **RFP for Countywide Support for Violence Prevention**

- Due Date: Friday, March 4, 2022

### **RFP for Community Violence Reduction Plans for High-Priority Areas**

- Due Date: Friday, May 6, 2022

# Upcoming Solicitations



[DHS Solicitations Webpage](#)

**Three RFPs for Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs will be issued by next week:**

- RFP for Out-of-School Time Programs
- RFP for Teen Out-of-School Time Programming
- RFP for Out-of-School Time Capacity Building through the Department of Children Initiatives

**The RFPs are open to all providers and current OST providers will need to reapply.**

**Proposal deadline is Friday, February 25th.**



# Announcements

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## Disaster Resilience Workshops for Small Businesses and Organizations

All are virtual and run from 1:00 – 5:00 PM

- |           |   |            |
|-----------|---|------------|
| 3/4/22:   | <a href="https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/3061/">https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/3061/</a> | CODE 24038 |
| 6/16/22:  | <a href="https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/3062/">https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/3062/</a> | CODE 10375 |
| 7/13/22:  | <a href="https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/3063/">https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/3063/</a> | CODE 98760 |
| 12/12/22: | <a href="https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/3064/">https://ndptc.hawaii.edu/training/delivery/3064/</a> | CODE 63495 |



# Announcements



## Pandemic Workforce Network

- The network will provide referral pathways for job seekers to access CareerLink services.
- Partner 4 Work is accepting applications from neighborhood-based organizations that want to join.
- Organizations don't need to offer workforce services – just an existing network of clients interested in working.

**For more information:** [Request for Quotes – Career Service Expansion: Pandemic Workforce Network](#)

# Announcements

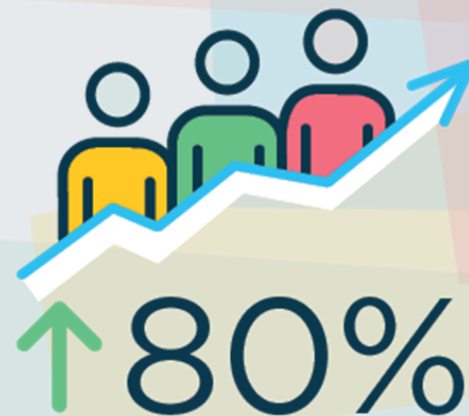


## Latinx Needs Assessment

English and Spanish versions of the assessment, as well as an infographic displaying key results, are available at these links:

<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Resources/Immigrants-Refugees/More-about-Immigrants-and-Internationals.aspx>.

<https://www.alleghenycountyanalytics.us/index.php/2022/01/26/2021-allegheny-county-latinx-needs-assessment/>



The Latinx population of Allegheny County is growing fast.

Allegheny County grew by 2% between 2010 and 2020. By contrast, the Latinx population (those classified as Hispanic or Latino by the Census Bureau) grew by 80% or 34,325 people in the latest Decennial Census.

# Announcements



## 2022 Pennsylvania LGBTQ Health Needs Assessment

- Biannual survey funded by PA Department of Health
- Conducted by the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center in the Lehigh Valley
- Designed to evaluate health needs, health disparities and barriers to care impacting LGBTQIA+ Pennsylvanians
- Collects information on healthcare experiences, nutrition, exercise, tobacco use, drug and alcohol use, sexual health, mental health, and food and housing security
- LGBTQIA+ Pennsylvanians, ages 13 and older, are invited to participate in the survey
- The survey should take less than 25 minutes to complete

# Announcements



## Public Comment Period Open for Digital Equity Planning Grants

- The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) seeks comment on several Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grant programs, including the Digital Equity Planning Grant Program.
- Through this grant, states will develop coordinated strategies across government and the community to address gaps in digital inclusion.
- Written comments are due by February 4th through the [Federal e-Rulemaking Portal](#).

# Announcements



## The HHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF) National Call to Action on Racial Equity

- The call coincides with the upcoming release of the *Equity in Action: Prioritizing and Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Information Memorandum*
- The call will take place on Thursday, February 3rd at 2 pm ET via a live stream to those who have registered ([registration link](#)).



# DHS Priorities

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## What DHS is here to do

DHS provides support and services so that families and neighborhoods thrive.

We prevent crises and support people during their most vulnerable times in life.

We help children and youth grow up safer and healthier and help adults live more securely and independently.

# DHS Priorities



## Our plan: the goals

To serve people in the County, we will work with our partners and communities to:

Create big, wide-open **access** to human services to make sure people get the right help when they need it.

Increase our investments in **economic security**.

**Prevent** harm and **reduce the use of coercion**, so individuals and families can avoid entering systems whenever possible.

Support people, their families and first responders during **crises**.



# DHS Priorities



## Our plan: the strategies

### Access

**Front doors:** Invest in 2-1-1 as the primary front door to information; create a new DHS website that makes it easier for people to find social services and answers to their questions and that allows them to provide feedback about services and access their own client records.

**Common database of services and help:** Build a digital resource with rich, always-current information about the services people need. Share with anyone who wants to use it and make it the source of information that 2-1-1, DHS and any social services organization can use for its website and call centers.

**People who know:** Invest in skilled navigators and community ambassadors connected to existing community hubs; expand mobile delivery of concrete help.

# DHS Priorities



## Our plan: the strategies

### Prevent harm

**Homelessness:** Expand capacity, improve the flow of the housing systems

**Overdose:** Expand harm reduction approaches, methadone in the jail, planning for opioid settlement

**Violence:** Invest in programs proven to reduce community violence and in programs that reduce intimate partner violence

### Prevent overuse of coercive services

**Child protective services:** Return to the purpose of CPS (protecting children at risk); support families who do not need CPS through DHS's network of community-based support and services rather than CYF.

**Juvenile justice:** Implement diversion programs for youth.

**Criminal justice:** Support the county, courts and law enforcement in reducing the number of people arrested and detained by providing data/analytics, community and jail-based programs, and support for their Safety and Justice goals, including redesigning the county jail

# DHS Priorities



## Our plan: the strategies

### Economic Security

#### Federal programs

**Childcare:** Expand availability during non-traditional hours and for short terms

**Public benefits:** Devote even more attention to enrolling DHS clients in benefits that are essential to them and their families

**Transportation:** Invest in transportation so it is not such a barrier to accessing work, childcare or services

**Cash transfer:** Testing cash as a means of prevention for at-risk families

### Crisis

**Mobile response:** Replicate the co-responder model; and expand the number of social work teams that can respond when someone is in a behavioral health, housing or other crisis

**Community response:** Support communities in instituting ways of helping their neighbors in crisis – and help make this part of the 9-1-1 system

**Peer respite:** Establish welcoming, peer-operated spaces where people can find support when their mental health symptoms are escalating or when they need to recover from a crisis



# Next Meeting

**2/24/22**

**4:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

**Meeting notices and reminders will come from the staff of the Office of Equity and Engagement.**

**Here is the link to sign up to receive those notices:**

**<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/Uvw6IMX/ProviderBriefings>**

Or email us at [DHS-OEE@AlleghenyCounty.us](mailto:DHS-OEE@AlleghenyCounty.us)

# Key Contacts



## Questions for the Allegheny County Health Department

- <https://www.alleghenycounty.us/healthdepartment/index.aspx>

## Questions for DHS

- [DHS-COVID19Planning@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHS-COVID19Planning@alleghenycounty.us)
- Use the subject field to indicate if your qq is about CYF, Aging, BH, CYF, ID, Community Services or DHS operations (e.g., contracting, payment)

## Key DHS staff

- Payment inquiries: Dan Evancho [Dan.Evancho@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:Dan.Evancho@alleghenycounty.us)
- Contract inquiries: [Jennifer.Wernert@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:Jennifer.Wernert@alleghenycounty.us) or [Laura.Brigido@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:Laura.Brigido@alleghenycounty.us)

## United Way 2-1-1

- For basic needs assistance or general COVID-19 inquiries call the 24/7 COVID19 Hotline at 1-888-856-2774. Language services available.