

COVID-19 Resource Guide

City of Pittsburgh

This informational guide provides an overview of some of the organizations in the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County that may be able to provide you with assistance and other various forms of support during the ongoing COVID-19 Health Crisis.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

(412) 350-5460

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) assists Allegheny County residents, 60 years of age and older, to live safe, healthy, and, when possible, independent lives. They provide services to older adults who face challenges but want to remain in their home by aiding with applying for services, domestic care, nursing home alternative, services in the home and more. Contact them at the hotline number above to be connected to services.

PA 2-1-1 Southwest

Dial 2-1-1 or (888) 553-5778

Dial 7-1-1 for hearing impaired

By simply dialing 2-1-1, trained Resource Navigators can assess your needs then refer you to the best and closest resources in your community. The 211 database contains information on more than 6,000 health and human service agencies. **If you have any additional questions regarding programs around rent/eviction assistance, tax preparation, utility shut-offs, emergency shelter, mental health services, don't hesitate to call 2-1-1!**

FOOD ASSISTANCE

PA 2-1-1 Southwest

Dial 2-1-1 or (888) 553-5778

Dial 7-1-1 for hearing impaired

Call 211 if you have emergency food needs to be connected to resources.

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

For lists information on food banks in your area call **412-460-3663**

Pennsylvania Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

For application assistance call the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank at 1-833-822-7627 or text SNAPPA to 555-888

SNAP helps you and your family buy food needed for good health. You can buy food from most grocery stores and other retailers that sell food. If you meet the program guidelines, you will get a special debit card (called an EBT Card). This debit card comes with a certain amount of money already on it to pay for food. The amount of money you get on the card may depend on three things: household income from all sources, number of people in household, and where you live.

Senior Boxes - Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh is a Distribution Center. Call Lawrenceville United at 412-802-7220 about signing up!

Qualified individuals aged 60 and over with incomes of less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (see chart on pg. 6) are eligible for a monthly box of groceries. Included in the box you'll find a variety of canned fruits and vegetables, peanut butter, beans, cereal, pasta, bottled juice, shelf-stable milk, canned meat and 2 pounds of cheese. Rebuilding Together may be able to deliver your box to your home, please inquire when signing up.

Meals on Wheels

Call Allegheny County Senior Line to Sign Up 412-350-5460 or 1-800-344-4319

Meals on Wheels provide meals to anyone over the age of 60, regardless of income or health. Anyone under the age of 60 must be recovering and rehabilitating from an illness, injury or surgery. Meals can be provided as many days a week as needed. Food can be left with neighbors but cannot be left in coolers or at the front door.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

COVID-19 Housing Stabilization Fund

Call 2-1-1 to apply

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh's (URA) new program for households at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI) (see chart on pg.6) who have been affected by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Housing Stabilization Fund is designed to provide short-term assistance to workers who have experienced a reduction in hours and are facing a financial hardship to pay rent, mortgage, and utilities.

Pennsylvania Unemployment & Workers Compensation Benefits

If you are employed in Pennsylvania and are unable to work because of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), you may be eligible for Unemployment or Workers' Compensation benefits

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION BENEFITS

An application can be filed at the statewide unemployment compensation toll-free number at 1-888-313-7284.

You may be eligible if:

- Your employer temporarily closes or goes out of business because of COVID-19
- Your employer reduces your hours because of COVID-19
- You have been told not to work because your employer feels you might get or spread COVID-19
- You have been told to quarantine or self-isolate, or live/work in a county under government-recommended mitigation efforts

What you need before you get started:

- SSN
- Home address and mailing address (if different)
- Telephone number
- Valid email, if you have one

WORKERS COMPENSATION SERVICES

If you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19 in your workplace, you may be eligible for Workers' Compensation. For information call the PA Workers Compensation Helpline at 717-772-4447

As soon as you know that you have been exposed to COVID-19 at work or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 that you believe is related to your job, you should

report your injury to your supervisor/employer within 21 days of the injury, or when you know of the injury, to be covered completely. You may give notice up to 120 days after the injury to be covered from the date you give notice. Your employer and their insurance company have 21 days to decide whether to cover your condition under workers' compensation.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) **877-345-3382**

The Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program provides temporary benefits to people who, due to a presidentially declared major disaster, lost or had their employment or self-employment interrupted. To be considered, you must not be eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits.

Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA)

To Help borrowers who are at risk of losing their home, the FHFA has directed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac (the Enterprises) to suspend foreclosures and evictions for at least 60 days due to the coronavirus national emergency. The foreclosure and eviction suspension applies to homeowners with an Enterprise-backed single-family mortgage.

***BENEFIT IS NOT AUTOMATIC - borrowers must contact their mortgage service provider as soon as possible if they are affected.**

CARES Act Payments

The CARES Act provides for Economic Impact Payments to American households of up to \$1,200 per adult for individuals whose income was less than \$99,000 (or \$198,000 for joint filers) and \$500 per child under 17 years old – or up to \$3,400 for a family of four. On 4/13/20 payments began to be wired to eligible recipients who previously authorized the IRS to post their refunds (or Social Security payments) through direct deposit. In early May 2020, the IRS will start mailing paper checks to households, at a rate of 5 million per week. The paper checks will first go to the households with the lowest adjusted gross incomes and continue upwards. It could take up to 20 weeks to mail out all checks. **Please call 2-1-1 for questions & assistance.**

Pittsburgh Financial Empowerment Center

1-800-298-0237

Provides professional one-on-one financial counseling-- free of charge. During COVID-19 the Center is providing technical assistance with unemployment benefits, help paying bills, student loan deferments, short term and emergency loans, insurance issues, and avoiding scams.

Helpful tips to avoid scams:

- Calls or emails asking for individuals to provide personal information in order to receive their COVID relief check
- Phone calls stating there is an issue with your social security benefits and/or they may be canceled if you do not act right away
- Letters sent through the U.S. Mail threatening suspension of Social Security benefits due to COVID-19 or coronavirus-related office closures
- Phone calls, text messages or even at home visitors offering COVID-19 tests and/or unapproved treatments

*The best defense is to **say NO** if anyone contacts you and asks for your Social Security number, bank account number, credit card information, Medicare ID number, driver's license number or any other personally identifiable information by phone, in person, by text message, or email.*

UTILITY ASSISTANCE

Gas Utility Assistance Programs

The following are programs available to both Peoples and Columbia Gas customers. Both providers manage a host of assistance programs. Those administered by only one provider will be indicated. To access these programs, call the number listed for your gas provider.

Peoples Gas
(800) 400-9276

Columbia Gas
(800) 537-7431

Customer Assistance Program/Budget Billing

(CAP) participants are given affordable, monthly, long-term bill payment plans so they can maintain their gas service. Payments are based on income, not gas usage.

Emergency Furnace, Water Heater, and Line Repair Program

Provides assistance to income eligible customers who own their home with furnace, primary heat source appliances, and houseline repair issues.

Customer Assistance Referral and Evaluation Services (CARES) *Columbia Gas only

Offers basic budget counseling, customized payment plans, and referrals to energy grant programs and community resources. In cases of extreme hardship, those above income limits may qualify.

Dollar Energy Fund Grants

(800) 764-0111

Provides cash assistance to income eligible customers whose gas service is off or in threat of termination. You must have applied for LIHEAP/Crisis first (when open) and have made a good faith payment on the account within the last 90 days. Program opens October 1st.

Duquesne Light

Customer Assistance Program

This program offers qualifying Duquesne customers reduced monthly payments based on ability to pay and debt forgiveness if terms of the CAP agreements are met. The applicant's household income must be less than 150% of the federal income poverty guideline (see chart on pg.6). Contact the CAP location nearest you for an application.

Holy Family Institute McKeesport (412) 896-4314

Holy Family Institute McKees Rocks (412) 331-8665

Holy Family Institute Beaver Falls (724) 846-6400

Holy Family Institute Aliquippa (724) 788-1564

Holy Family Institute Swissvale (412) 244-8010

Holy Family Institute North Side (412) 322-6588

Catholic Charities Downtown (412) 325-6749

Pennsylvania American Water H2O to Help Others Program

(888) 282-6816

Provides water service assistance to low-income customers who are at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty guidelines (see chart on page 6) in the form of grants of up to \$500 per year, an 85 % discount on the monthly water service charge, and water-saving device and education. They also connect low-income customers to wastewater service assistance in the form of grants of up to \$500 per year, and a 20% discount on the total wastewater charges.

Phone & Internet

(Please Call Your Service Provider For More Info)

Comcast, 1-800-934-6489

Comcast internet users have unlimited data for 60 days and will not disconnect services or assess late fees for 60 days. Comcast Internet Essentials is offering two free months of Internet to qualified low income customers, call **1-855-846-8376**

Verizon, 1-800-922-0204

Waived late fees & service disruption. Offering two months of waived internet and voice service charges for current Lifeline customers and a new affordable internet option for low income households. Unlimited domestic calling. Automatically adding 15GB of data across nearly all mobile plans.

AT&T, 1-800-288-2020

Offering free public access at its hotspots for 60 days, no late fees, and unlimited data to customers for at least 60 days

Sprint, 1-888-211-4727

Offering expanded roaming access to the T-Mobile network, free international calling, no late fees, and unlimited data for 60 days

Cricket Wireless, 1-800- 274-253

Waiving Reactivation Fees, have BridgePay available, which lets you split your current bill into two payments

If you're provider is not listed we recommend contacting them and ask what adjustments they have made due to COVID-19.

If your utility provider could not solve your utility issue you can seek assistance by calling the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission Consumer Hotline at (800)-692-7380.

TRANSPORTATION

Port Authority

412-442-2000

To make sure riders have enough space to spread out and to prevent overcrowding, Port Authority is limiting the number of passengers who can be on a vehicle at one time. Drivers will pass up stops when their vehicle reaches the limit until other passengers on the vehicle disembark. The new limitations are listed below:

- All riders must wear mask or face covering
- Number of riders on buses are limited. Passengers allowed on the bus depends on size of bus.
- All riders will board and exit through the rear.
- Front door boarding reserved for riders who need the bus to be lowered, to use the ramp or require priority seating.
- Bus riders will simply show their ConnectCard or other fare product to the operator as they board

through the rear doors; cash fares will not be collected due to the restriction.

- Light rail riders will continue to pay at onboard and offboard fareboxes.

ACCESS Transit

412-562-5353

The ACCESS program is included in Port Authority's COVID-19 plan. ACCESS is a door-to-door, advance reservation, shared-ride transportation program provided throughout Allegheny County and to destinations in adjoining counties within 1.5 miles. Please call to schedule ride or get contact information for an ACCESS service provider in your neighborhood.

Travelers Aid Medical Assistance Transportation (MATP)

412-281-5474

Through a contract with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and Office of Medical Assistance Transportation, Travelers Aid can provide roundtrip transportation to eligible consumers to attend billable to medical assistance services.

PRESCRIPTIONS

PACE Prescription Assistance Program

1-800-225-7223

PACE is Medicare and Medicaid program that helps people meet their health care needs. The PACE prescription assistance program is allowing for early prescription refills in order to allow older adults to keep several weeks' worth of medication on hand as is recommended by the current COVID-19 preparedness guidance. PACE will now reimburse refills purchased before 75% of the days' supply has passed except for opioids and other controlled substances – these will be handled on a case-by-case basis. To refill your medication early, simply ask your pharmacy provider. For information about qualifying for PACE, please call

Local Pharmacies

Many local pharmacies across Allegheny County are now offering free delivery for all older adults, even if they are not a PACE beneficiary. When requesting your medication to be filled or refilled, simply ask your pharmacy provider for free home delivery.

MENTAL HEALTH

Peer Support & Advocacy Network

Peer Support and Advocacy Network is available from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. 1-866-661-972

Crisis Services available 24/7 call 1-888-796-8226

Peer Support and Advocacy Network is an organization offering peer support to individuals with mental illness through a variety of programs. All programs focus on recovery and the provision of hope and understanding.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Disaster Distress Hotline is 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. People with deafness or hearing loss can use their preferred relay service to call 1-800-985-5990

SAMSHA's trained information specialists answer calls, transfer callers to state services or other appropriate intake centers in their states, and connect them with local assistance and support.

Resolve Crisis Services

24-hour hotline at 1-888-796-8226

Resolve Crisis Hotline is free for Allegheny County Residents and can be of help if you need to talk with someone about any problem – big or small. **Some examples are:**

- You've had a bad day or a series of bad days.
- You're dealing with the loss of a loved one
- You've lost your job
- You want to help a loved one with any of these concerns.

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Pittsburgh Cares Buddy Program

412-471-2114 ext.200

In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Pittsburgh Cares is hoping to help those who wish to be a "buddy" to someone and to help those seeking a "buddy". People who receive a "buddy" can be people over the age of 60, people who are immunocompromised, or have spouses working on the "front lines" and cannot go to the store, etc. Duties of a "buddy" include check-in phone calls, sharing of any news and information, running errands such as picking

up groceries, medications, etc. (when possible/ if needed). Please call to be a "buddy or receive a "buddy."

Lawrenceville United Buddy Program

412-802-7220

Lawrenceville United has stepped up to support those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 by offering to pair interested applicants with "buddies" to do check-in phone calls, pick up and deliver groceries/prescriptions, prepare home-cooked meals, share relevant health information, provide pet care, take out the garbage, collect mail, and more. Lawrenceville United encourages older adults and residents with serious chronic medical conditions to take the advice of the CDC and accept a "Buddy" to have a support system (or a back-up to your existing support system) in the days and weeks ahead. **Applicants do not have to be Lawrenceville residents to apply.**

Spiritual Support

For universal prayer needs, from wanting someone to pray with you or requests for congregations to pray for you please call Andy Hromoko at 412-980-9463. Andy will also be happy to connect you with a diverse array of denominations for your spiritual needs.

Technology Assistance

University of Pittsburgh is offering technology assistance for issues such as connecting to the internet, setting up email, and any other related tech questions. Please call 412.383.0805 (if prompted enter ID: 702 100 473#) from 9:00am-5:00pm.

ABUSE

Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh

412-687-8005, 24 hr. hotline.

People are being asked to stay at home which can be the most dangerous place for domestic violence victims and their children. If you or someone you know is experiencing physical, emotional or psychological abuse from a spouse or partner, call the Women's Center & Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh's 24-Hour Emergency Hotline for help and support.

Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging

412-350-6905 or 1-800-344-4319

Area Agency on Aging accepts calls 24 hrs a day for

concerns about the well-being of a person over the age of 60. Concerns include physical abuse, verbal abuse, mental/emotional abuse, financial exploitation, caretaker neglect/abandonment, & self-neglect. Callers can voice concerns anonymously.

PA Adult Protective Services

1-800-490-8505

The PA Department of Human Service's Adult Protective Services Hotline accepts calls 24 hours a day for concerns about the wellbeing of adults between the ages of 18 and 59 with a physical or mental disability. Concerns include physical abuse, verbal abuse, mental/emotional abuse, financial exploitation, & caretaker neglect/abandonment. Callers can voice concerns anonymously.

ChildLine

1-800-932-0313

If you witness or suspect any abuse of a person under the age of 18 please call the ChildLine. ChildLine accepts calls 24 hours a day. Callers can voice their concerns anonymously unless they are registered as a mandated reporter with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

TAX RELIEF

Allegheny County

Act 50 Homestead Exclusion

412-350-4636

Under this amendment, the initial \$18,000 in assessed value of each owner-occupied residential property and certain farmstead properties within Allegheny County will be excluded from County real estate property taxation.

Act 77 Senior Citizen Property Tax Relief

412- 350-4100 or 866- 282-8297

This program entitles qualified Allegheny County homeowners (aged 60 or under 60 that are permanently disabled) to a flat 30 percent discount on county property taxes. **Deadline to file for relief in 2021 is June 30, 2020.** An approved, qualified applicant continues to receive tax relief as long as they are the property owner/occupant, and the household income does not exceed \$30,000 (calculate using only 50% of gross SSI/SSDI benefits and 100% of all other income).

2020 Income Guidelines:

Area Median Income (AMI) Chart (Annual Income):

| 2020 Income Limits | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 50% AMI | \$29,050 | \$33,200 | \$37,500 | \$41,500 | \$44,850 |
| 30% AMI | \$17,450 | \$19,950 | \$22,450 | \$26,200 | \$30,680 |
| 80% AMI | \$46,500 | \$53,150 | \$59,800 | \$66,400 | \$71,750 |

Federal Poverty Guidelines (Annual Income):

| Household size | 100% | 150% | 200% |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | \$12,760 | \$19,140 | \$25,520 |
| 2 | \$17,240 | \$25,860 | \$34,480 |
| 3 | \$21,720 | \$32,580 | \$43,440 |
| 4 | \$26,200 | \$39,300 | \$52,400 |
| 5 | \$30,680 | \$46,020 | \$61,360 |

Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh is distributing this COVID-19 Resource Guide in Partnership with Lawrenceville United and they will take your calls with general questions about the programs by calling 412-802-7220

Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh is sharing these resources to assist Allegheny County Residents to access resources, we are not responsible for changes in programs or program eligibility or in any unsatisfying experience.