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GOVERNMENT

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The COVID-19 pandemic and its corresponding response from the federal, state and county government has resulted in a number of operational changes impacting Allegheny County government. A full list of those changes follow:

County Jail

Confined areas at the Allegheny County Jail undoubtedly present challenges, but through experience and defined policies, jail staff are adept at taking precautions to mitigate and eliminate the spread of illness or disease. The jail faces hurdles each year in dealing with influenza and other infectious illnesses between inmates and staff, and, through infection control procedures, the facility has been able to curb these conditions.

With COVID-19, jail administration has taken additional steps, including:

- Increased availability of authorized cleaning agents effective at disinfecting the virus, as well as regularly scheduled mandatory cleaning sessions across the entire facility.
- Reducing access to the jail from non-essential visitors by temporarily suspending professional and social visits.
- Additional screening for new inmates at point of admission and incoming jail staff.
- Conversations with multiple county stakeholders, including the Allegheny County Health Department, to ensure the most up-to-date information regarding epidemiology and risk.
- Continued education of inmates and staff about disease transmission and appropriate hand hygiene.

All stakeholders are actively engaged and are motivated to consider any viable solutions to reduce or mitigate possible risks related to COVID-19, including the possible reduction of the inmate population. Ongoing discussions are occurring with the Office of the Public Defender, Court Administration, Probation and other affiliated parties to determine if there are any individuals that may be eligible for review.

With the exception of the temporary suspension of social and professional visits, inmates have had little change to their daily routines. Presently, there are no restrictions for out-of-cell time due to COVID-19 concerns. In order to mitigate the effects of no outside contact, jail administration began working with the facility's telephone provider last week. Beginning in the next 24 hours, alterations to the service will allow inmates two free phone calls a week. When further changes are made to the system, that availability may also expand.

Allegheny County Jail staff will actively monitor the situation and continue to revisit any operational changes moving forward.

Court of Common Pleas

The Fifth Judicial District of Pennsylvania has declared a judicial emergency. As a result, a number of changes have been made impacting every division of the court and including suspension of jury trials in the civil division

have been made impacting every division of the court and including suspension of jury trials in the civil division, restriction of general motions and housing court motions, the rescheduling of arbitration and Board of Viewers hearings, the postponement of all cases in the magisterial district courts, and stays on execution of orders for eviction or possession of residential properties. Individuals having business before the court are encouraged to read the complete [Order of Court](https://web/20200317214656/https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny_Home/Health_Department/Resources/19/Order%20of%20Court%20Judicial%20Emergency%20Operations.pdf) ([/web/20200317214656/https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny_Home/Health_Department/Resources/19/Order of Court Judicial Emergency Operations.pdf](https://web/20200317214656/https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny_Home/Health_Department/Resources/19/Order of Court Judicial Emergency Operations.pdf)).

Elections

The Elections Division reminds voters that voting by mail is now an option in Pennsylvania. It's an easy, convenient and secure way to cast your ballot. Apply by 5:00 pm on Tuesday, April 21, and return your ballot by 8:00 pm on Tuesday, April 28. To learn more about voting by mail and to apply, visit [www.votespa.com](https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/http://www.votespa.com/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/http://www.votespa.com/>).

All public voting system demonstrations have now been canceled through Tuesday, March 31, including those at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh branches, suburban libraries and Monroeville Mall. In addition, demonstrations at Mt. Lebanon Public Library on April 5 and the Mall at Robinson on April 18 and April 19 are canceled.

The Elections Division reminds poll workers that all training classes have been postponed through Friday, March 27.

Emergency Services

The Emergency Operations Center has been activated in Moon Township. Dedicated staffing will perform ongoing monitoring and assist communities with resource requests.

Allegheny County declared an emergency on March 12. Since then, four municipalities have also made such declarations including Millvale, Penn Hills, Pittsburgh and Shaler.

Fire Academy

The Allegheny County Fire Academy has suspended all training at the academy through April 19, 2020. All mission-critical training will continue as scheduled. Fire Academy operations will continue as normal with full-time staff reporting; however, there is a possibility that additional assignments will be received to support Emergency Services in its mission.

Human Services

Individuals who may be experiencing fear, anxiety or stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic are encouraged to speak with someone to assist in emotional support:

Peer Support and Advocacy Network (PSAN)

10 AM to Midnight

1-866-661-WARM (9726)

resolve Crisis Services

24 hours/7 days a week

1-888-796-8226

Additional information and resources on mental health care can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [website](https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/https://www.samhsa.gov/)

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/https://www.samhsa.gov/>). The agency's 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.

Kane Community Living Centers

Based on recommendations from Pennsylvania Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Kane Community Living Centers are implementing a no visitor policy.

Exceptions will be made in instances of end-of-life, or when a resident's health becomes severely critical and visitation from immediate family members, friends and religious leaders becomes necessary. In those cases, visitors will be subjected to a brief health assessment and will only have access to their specific resident and the visit may take place in a private area other than the resident's room.

All resident trips outside of the center are also being canceled except those necessary for the resident's health, such as trips to a physician's office that cannot be postponed.

Parks

Currently, outdoor areas and restrooms in all nine county parks are open to the public. However, park users should practice social distancing by staying at least six feet apart from each other. If residents choose to use restrooms, playground equipment, exercise equipment, park benches or other outdoor items with touch surfaces, proper handwashing and/or use of hand sanitizer is strongly encouraged before and afterward.

Hartwood Acres Mansion, Boyce Park Nature Center and North Park Latodami Nature Center are closed through Monday, March 30. Park offices are open [regular business hours](https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147493416)

([/web/20200317214656/https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?](https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147493416)

[LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147493416](https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147493416)) with skeleton staffs to answer phones and email, but officials ask the public not to visit park offices in person. All park business may be conducted by emailing

webmaster.parks@alleghenycounty.us

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/mailto:webmaster.parks@alleghenycounty.us>) or calling 412-350-2455, Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-4:00 pm.

Under guidance from the Allegheny County Health Department, all facility rentals are being canceled through Monday, March 30, and all customers are receiving full refunds. All recreational programs, as well as park ranger and naturalist activities, are canceled through Monday, March 30, and all paid registrants are receiving full refunds. Cookies with Cottontail events are also canceled in South Park (March 22), Boyce Park (March 28), and North Park (March 29). In addition, star parties scheduled for April 3 and April 4 at Wagman Observatory in

Deer Lakes Park are canceled.

Park users who wish to cancel facility rentals or paid program registrations beyond March 30 will receive full refunds. Customers should email name, permit/activity number and phone number to

webmaster.parks@alleghenycounty.us

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20200317214656/mailto:webmaster.parks@alleghenycounty.us>) or call 412-350-2455, Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-4:00 pm. This policy will remain in effect until further notice.

North Park and South Park golf courses are currently closed for annual maintenance and aeration.

Parks officials join the Allegheny County Health Department in encouraging the most vulnerable groups, which include the elderly, those with underlying medical conditions, and those who are currently sick, to avoid large events and mass gatherings, as well as other settings where there is close contact with a large group of people.

Police Academy

The Allegheny County Police Academy is ceasing its academy cadet class effective March 17 with plans to return on April 1. Similarly, all mandatory in-service training classes for municipal agencies have been canceled at the academy and all satellite locations. All firearm training at the academy range is canceled through March 27.

Shuman Juvenile Detention Center

Visitation policies for the children currently housed at Shuman will remain in place at this time, but visitors may be subjected to brief health assessments to maintain the safety of the children and staff at the facility. These policies will be consistently reviewed and evaluated with potential changes if there is a need to mitigate the spread of illness.

Allegheny County Law Library

The Allegheny County Law Library located in Room 921 of the City-County Building is closed until further notice.

Universal Blood Lead Level Testing

ACHD offers free lead testing to under or uninsured children in Allegheny County.

Find more information and clinic hours

(/web/20200317214656/https://www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=6442462147).

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