

Denver Division of Disability Rights

COVID-19 and Denver Residents Living with Disabilities: A Virtual Town Hall with Mayor Michael B. Hancock

May 26, 2020

Q&A Responses

<p>Q: Many day programs will not make it through this if they cannot bill retainer payments on Mill Levy plans for the duration of the closures. Has this been approved or is this still being discussed?</p>	<p>Response: DHS is exploring a variety of ways to support providers during the global pandemic and resulting economic crisis. We understand day programs are a vital part of individual supports for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) as well as caregivers and seek to do our part in ensuring continued access to service offerings for Denver residents. While retainer payments have not been approved at this time, we continue to monitor <a href="#">updates from Colorado's Department of Health Care Policy &amp; Financing (HCPF)</a> so we can understand changes to essential services as well as identify opportunities for mill levy funds to be applied for the benefit of our residents with I/DD.</p>
<p>Q: Respite and child care resources are also needed for individuals who need to return to work but are a caregiver for a child/adult with a disability.</p>	<p>The DHS Mill Levy Program recognizes and appreciates the critical relief respite and child care resources can provide to caregivers and want to be part of the solution. We are in the process of establishing a mini project fund that can be accessed by community providers looking to innovate service delivery in response to the pandemic and public health concerns. We look forward to announcing our new community partner, who will be responsible for managing the fund and its projects, in the near future.</p> <p>In the meantime, we are following updates from federal and state agencies and leaders that provide guidelines on how respite might be delivered safely. At our May <a href="#">Mill Levy Advisory Council</a> meeting, DHS was asked to be a central point in compiling an informational resource list for virtual support groups, mental health, and COVID-19 information for individuals with I/DD and their families or caregivers. To get more information, contact Crystal Porter at <a href="mailto:crystal.porter@denvergov.org">crystal.porter@denvergov.org</a> and sign up for mill levy program updates.</p>

Q: Relating to those families who don't have access to technology, how are you spreading awareness of the services that can be provided to them when they don't have the technology access the information regarding those services?

Our programs strive to meet people where they are, and we understand residents may not always have ready or easy access to technology. In an abundance of caution, we do not anticipate opening DHS offices for several months. We continue to focus on providing services to our residents while balancing that with our charge to keep employees and visitors safe. Here are some alternative connecting points for our Assistance, Mill Levy Program, and Adult Protective Services teams.

From DHS Food and Adult Assistance:

For those trying to access Medicaid, DHS asks that you submit an application to your human services office of residence or apply online at

<http://www.Colorado.gov/peak>.

For new applicants who lack resources to access online applications or have mobility issues, a document runner service is offered to deliver applications and paperwork to your doorstep. This service is available to Denver residents who are first-time applicants needing assistance with food (TANF/SNAP/Medicaid), child care (CCAP), utilities (LEAP), and child support services. To request this service, call 720-944-1520. Those with existing DHS cases should call 720-944-4DHS (4347), and those with internet access can visit [www.denvergov.org/humanservices](http://www.denvergov.org/humanservices).

Processing times for Medical Assistance is typically within 45 days from the day the department receives the application, but in certain circumstances where a disability determination is needed for Long-Term Care services, it may take up to 90 days. DHS advises residents to keep an eye on notices being mailed from the state and to check your status online at [www.Colorado.gov/peak](http://www.Colorado.gov/peak). If you do not have technology access, you can call our office at 720-944-4347. In addition, if you're inquiring about Long-Term Care services, you can inquire with the single-entry point (Colorado Access, soon to be Rocky Mountain Human Services as of July 1, 2020).

From DHS Mill Levy Program:

All DHS mill levy partners can be accessed by telephone as well as through technology. Additionally, those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (and their families) who need individualized assistance to afford or

	<p>access technology can make requests through your RMHS service coordinator. Those receiving case management from other CCBs should contact your case manager, who should be able to connect with RMHS to complete the request for client assistance. Partners are completing outreach in a variety of ways to ensure residents have access to essential services.</p> <p>Mill Levy Advisory Council meetings have call-in options in addition to video conference participation. If you are experiencing difficulty connecting with the mill levy because of technology access limitations, contact Crystal Porter at 720-944-2909.</p> <p>From DHS Adult Protective Services: Adult Protective Services continues to receive reports of suspected mistreatment of at-risk adults via our hotline (720-944-4DHS) and are able to investigate these allegations with social distancing and protective practices in place. We are utilizing technology to support remote practices for our clients in nursing homes and other facilities. For our high-risk populations, we are minimizing in-person contact and verifying safety via other means whenever possible, but are still working to support clients' needs and wellbeing, delivering needed food or other items, and connecting them to available services in the community.</p> <p>To report suspected child abuse or neglect, call 1-844-CO-4-KIDS (1-844-264-5437).</p> <p>If you need information to remotely access other DHS programs and services, please call us at 720-944-4DHS (4347) for assistance.</p>
	<p>Additional resources:</p> <p>Mill Levy Program information DHS Mill Levy Advisory Council <a href="https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-human-services/about/advisory-council-for-people-with-I-DD.html">https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-human-services/about/advisory-council-for-people-with-I-DD.html</a></p> <p>DHS I/DD Mill Levy services <a href="https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-human-services/be-supported/additional-assistance/disability-services/idd-mill-levy.html">https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-human-services/be-supported/additional-assistance/disability-services/idd-mill-levy.html</a></p>

RMHS Mill Levy Program

<https://www.rmhumanservices.org/ml>

RMHS External Agency Initiatives

<https://www.rmhumanservices.org/our-community-partners>

For any questions about RMHS mill levy services, please contact [MillLevy@rmhumanservices.org](mailto:MillLevy@rmhumanservices.org) or 303-636-5865.

For any questions about DHS mill levy inclusion initiatives, please contact:

CTAT, LLC Community Counts! visit

<https://ctatllc.com/disability-programs/community-counts/>

or call 720-389-0670 ext. 1.

Easterseals Colorado DIP (Diversity and Inclusion Program)

visit <https://www.easterseals.com/co/our-programs/learn/disability-inclusion-program/> or call 720-234-3068.

Autism Community Store visit

<https://www.autismcommunitystore.com/> or call 303-309-3647.

Additional eligibility FAQs from Health First Colorado website:

#### **Applying For Coverage / Maintaining Benefits**

- **I usually go to my county for help with my benefits. Is there something else I can do to get help while the virus is spreading?**
  - Changes to your case and documents can be submitted through the [PEAK website](#) or the PEAKHealth mobile app and is received by the county to process; there is no need to be interviewed or submit documentation in-person. Because of the large volume of calls from members, there may be delays in reaching your county worker. We recommend making updates to your information using the PEAK website or PEAKHealth mobile app.
- **Will my application or redetermination be delayed?**

- Processing times for benefits may be impacted in certain situations; however, at this time, the majority of cases are processed within federally required timeframes.

- **Do I need to worry about losing my coverage during this time?**

- If you had coverage on March 18, 2020, we will keep your benefits active until the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency. That means that you will have health care benefits until the end of the COVID-19 crisis.

Applications submitted online through [PEAK](#) are eligible to receive an immediate online determination without the need for a worker to review. Applicants are encouraged to use PEAK to receive a real time eligibility determination.

#### **COVID-19 Economic Impact Payments (stimulus checks)**

- **How will I get an economic impact payment (stimulus check)?**

- Most eligible U.S. taxpayers will [automatically receive](#) their Economic Impact Payments including:
  - People who filed a federal income tax for 2018 or 2019
  - People who receive Social Security retirement, disability (SSDI), survivor benefits, or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - People who receive Railroad Retirement benefits
- Many people who don't normally file a federal tax return are able to receive a payment, including many people with little or no income. If you do not normally file a tax return, you can enter your information on the [IRS website](#) to get your economic impact payment.

- **Are Economic Impact Payments (stimulus checks) counted as income?**

- The relief payment to individuals and families is NOT counted as income for Health First Colorado and CHP+ eligibility.

	<p>From &lt;<a href="https://www.healthfirstcolorado.com/covid/#applying">https://www.healthfirstcolorado.com/covid/#applying</a>&gt;</p>
<p>Q: Does the city have a strategy to address personal hygiene, given that handwashing is essential?</p>	<p>Response: The City and County of Denver is working with stakeholder groups to address a growing need for publicly-accessible restrooms and to evaluate options for providing restrooms in high-use, high traffic locations. For current public restrooms locations and hours, including the two current mobile restrooms downtown, please visit this <a href="#">page</a>.</p>
<p>Q: Regarding public transportation: How will RTD maintain/enforce social distancing on buses now on a Saturday schedule as people return to work.</p> <p>Will Access A Ride continue keeping one passenger at a time.</p>	<p>Response: For questions related to COVID-19 and RTD, please refer to RTD's <a href="#">COVID-19 resource</a> page, where you can find resources and guidelines related to safety, schedule updates, Access-A-Ride, additional transportation options, and answers to FAQ related to COVID-19. For requests related to disability accommodations, you can contact the RTD ADA Manager's office directly at this <a href="#">link</a>.</p>
<p>Q: What can be done to dedicate healthcare treatment resources to those who are identified with neurological disabilities, which places us in the at-risk group?</p>	<p>Response: The DenverGov.org COVID-19 Resource page has a tab specifically for <a href="#">Health &amp; Wellness</a>.</p> <p>Additional resources related to COVID-19 and treatment options can be found from <a href="#">Denver Human Services</a> and <a href="#">Denver Health</a>.</p>
<p>Q: How can people with disabilities ensure our safety in dealing with the police and first responders to any situation involving persons with physical and neurological disabilities?</p>	<p>Response: Residents can submit information about themselves and/or other members of their households who have disabilities to help 911 respond appropriately during an emergency. This information is kept confidential; more info <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

Q: The current pandemic has highlighted the failure of current society to address the massive inequities between the have and the have-nots. As a result, the low-to-no-income and houseless may be reservoirs of the virus for many years to come. What has been done to prevent the massive inequities and inequalities for both disabled and/or low-to-no-income residents from perpetuating the continuation of the SARS-COV-2 virus amongst this demographic and, by extension, the entire population? Now as the many vectors among the have-nots perpetuate the pandemic ever longer and more intensely, the rest of us who are safely sheltered at home can only imagine the suffering due to the lack of resources available for the have-nots. What is the City and County doing to address those inequities?

Response: For updated information on the COVID-19 resident resources and assistance visit the City & County of Denver COVID-19 [Relief Support & Resources](#) page. Information provided includes relief support for housing and food assistance, funding for small businesses and non-profits, health and wellness, and safety information on the virus including [testing](#).

The City has collaborated with the Homeless Leadership Council—composed of Denver’s largest shelter and service providers—to deploy a range of 24/7 sheltering options that include auxiliary shelters, existing shelters, and hotel/motel rooms for persons experiencing homelessness. All options include greater physical distancing, with at least 60 square feet of sleeping space per person. More information [here](#).