



# County of Allegheny

## Office of the Controller

Performance Audit Report on  
Allegheny County Department of Human Services  
Children of Incarcerated Parents Programs  
For the Period  
January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021

February 13, 2023

**Corey O'Connor**  
Controller

104 County Courthouse  
436 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Phone: (412) 350-4660  
Fax: (412) 350-3006

E-mail: [Controller@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:Controller@alleghenycounty.us)

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# County of Allegheny Office of the Controller

104 Courthouse 436 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-2498  
Phone (412) 350-4660 Fax (412) 350-3006



January 26, 2023

Ms. Erin Dalton  
Director  
Department of Human Services  
Human Services Building  
One Smithfield Street  
Fourth Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

**Performance Audit Report on**  
**Allegheny County Department of Human Services**  
**Children of Incarcerated Parents Programs**  
**For the Period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021**

Dear Director Dalton:

We conducted a performance audit to determine how the Allegheny County Department of Human Services identifies and meets the needs of the children of incarcerated parents. Our procedures were applied to the period from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021. However, certain data we reviewed extended through September 30, 2022. Our performance audit was performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

The results of our procedures revealed that since the current programs for incarcerated parents are tailored to a specific population, the Department of Human Services should work with the Jail to expand its outreach to the general population of incarcerated parents and increase program accessibility to allow participation by more incarcerated parents and their children.

We offer recommendations so that the Department of Human Services can better assist this vulnerable population. The results of our audit are detailed in the attached report.

Director Dalton  
January 26, 2023  
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We would like to thank the management and staff of the Department of Human Services, the Allegheny County Jail, and the program providers who were involved for their courtesy and cooperation during our audit.

Kind Regards,



Corey O'Connor  
Controller



Lori A. Churilla  
Assistant Deputy Controller, Auditing

cc: Honorable Patrick Catena, President, County Council  
Honorable John Palmiere, Vice-President, County Council  
Honorable Rich Fitzgerald, County Executive, Allegheny County  
Ms. Jennifer M. Liptak, Acting County Manager, Allegheny County  
Ms. Mary C. Soroka, Director, Budget and Finance  
Mr. Ken Varhola, Chief of Staff, County Council  
Ms. Sarah Roka, Budget Manager, County Council

## **I. Introduction**

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Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) research has found that children of incarcerated parents need special care to mitigate the negative consequences that parental incarceration has on this vulnerable population. This includes improved visiting conditions at the Jail, strengthened supports for relatives who take on the role as caregiver, and enhanced services to children in emotional crisis. Although there are no specific federal or state funds designated to serve this population, DHS allocates funding to provide services to children of incarcerated parents in Allegheny County through contracts with Pittsburgh Mercy and Amachi Pittsburgh.

According to statistical data provided by DHS for the period January 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022, there were 5,220 parents that were incarcerated in the jail at some time between January 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022. These parents had a total of 11,969 children aged 18 or under. The table below shows the breakdown by age of the child at the time their parent was booked into the Allegheny County Jail.

<b>Age of the 11,969 Children at the time their Parent was Booked into the Allegheny County Jail</b>			
<b><u>Child Age</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage</u></b>	<b><u>Cumulative Percentage</u></b>
Under 1 Year	1,008	8%	8%
1 to 5 Years Old	3,309	28%	36%
6 to 12 Years Old	4,775	40%	76%
13 to 17 Years Old	<u>2,877</u>	<u>24%</u>	100%
	<u>11,969</u>	<u>100%</u>	

*Source: Figures were calculated using data provided by DHS*

Individuals incarcerated in the Allegheny County Jail (Jail) have access to electronic tablets that allow them to contact family and friends through phone calls, electronic messaging, and scheduled video visits. While this is an option for incarcerated individuals to maintain contact with their children, there is a cost to the incarcerated individual associated with these services. However, to reduce this financial impact, incarcerated individuals received \$100 each month (this was increased to \$125 in October, 2022) from the Jail's Incarcerated Individual Wellness Fund that can be used for these services. In addition, incarcerated individuals are also offered a free 10-minute phone call every day using the phones on the pods (this is paid for by the Jail). The services offered by Pittsburgh Mercy and Amachi go beyond the access offered through the tablets and are provided at no cost to the incarcerated individual or the family.

### **Amachi Pittsburgh**

Amachi Pittsburgh (Amachi) provides support to children of incarcerated parents and their families to empower children to overcome the challenges of parental incarceration and to reach their full potential through its Mentoring Program and the Amachi Ambassadors program (a youth leadership program).

# I. Introduction

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## *Mentoring Program*

The mentoring program supports positive development of children of incarcerated parents by challenging them to excel academically and in extracurricular activities, helping them improve their relationships with others, exposing them to educational and cultural events and opportunities, and by working alongside caregivers to reinforce a stable environment grounded in values and a belief in family. Mentors meet with the child a minimum of four hours per month for a minimum of one year. They establish goals and engage in activities conducive to positive youth development with an objective of reducing the likelihood of children entering the justice system.

## *Amachi Ambassadors*

The Amachi Ambassadors is a leadership development program for high school students of incarcerated parents. Using a customized curriculum, students are provided a minimum of 72 hours of educational enrichment and leadership during the year through semi-monthly workshops held at the Amachi offices. The students also participate in events such as conferences, community forums, public hearings, debates, and culturally enriching activities.

## *Child Participants*

Amachi provided information on the number of children in each program from January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. We summarized the participants in each program based on DHS's fiscal year end. Children can participate in both programs and would be included in the counts for both programs if this occurred.

### **Amachi Program Participants**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Number of Participants During the Period</b>	
	<u>Mentoring</u>	<u>Ambassadors</u>
January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021	69	2
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	44	18
July 1, 2022 - September 30, 2022	38	34

Amachi works with children whose parent is housed in several different institutions. However, according to Amachi, only three (3) of the children (one in the Mentoring program and two in the Ambassadors program) had an incarcerated parent in the Allegheny County Jail.

## *Funding*

DHS awarded Amachi \$150,000 each year for fiscal years ended June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and 2022 for the mentoring and ambassador programs. The contracts cover expenses such as personnel cost, fringe

## **I. Introduction**

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benefits, indirect costs, facility expenses/utilities, laptops, and office supplies associated with the programs. Actual payments totaled approximately \$296,000 for the two fiscal years.

### **Pittsburgh Mercy**

Pittsburgh Mercy runs the Family Support Program and the Extended Family Support Program at the Jail. According to DHS, the purpose of these programs is to “reduce recidivism among a target population of men and women who are serving a sentence in the county Jail and are at medium-high risk of reoffending; and to improve critical outcomes for their children, including reduced child protective services and reduced juvenile justice involvement”. Their goals include increasing the child and family’s wellbeing, decreasing involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and reducing recidivism and incidents of violent crime for incarcerated parents after release.

#### ***Family Support Program***

The Family Support Program provides parenting and relationship classes as well as increased communication opportunities to parents incarcerated in the Jail. Classes are 90 minutes long and last for six weeks. Currently, due to health and safety protocols, classes are grouped based on which housing pod the incarcerated resides on, and class size is limited to approximately 15 to 17 incarcerated parents. Three pods of men attend Monday/Wednesday, an additional three pods of men attend Tuesday/Thursday, and two pods of women attend Friday. Those enrolled in the classes are eligible for coached phone calls where a Family Support Specialist offers the parent support and coaching during a phone call with their child. Monthly contact visits between the parent and child were also held in a special room in the jail. However, these in person visits are currently still suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions. The targeted participants are those parents likely to be incarcerated in the Jail for at least eight weeks to permit them to complete the class, allowing time for possible delays.

#### ***Extended Family Support Program***

The Extended Family Support Program provides support services and home visits for the children and families of the incarcerated parent. The Family Support Specialist works with the child and family to help them understand the jail’s processes for phone calls and visits and will help prepare the child when their parent is returning home from the Jail. The “Family Advocacy Support Tool” (FAST) is used to assess the family’s needs, and the Family Support Specialist will refer the family to appropriate resources and enroll them in services to help address the issues they are facing. A monthly support group event is held at Pittsburgh Mercy’s facility and one to two monthly outings (e.g., the zoo, museums, baseball games, back-to-school shopping) are held for children and their caregivers. The Family Support Specialist will follow-up with the family after the parent returns home from the Jail. For a child and the family to be eligible for this program, the parent must be enrolled in the Family Support Program classes described above as well as the Jail’s Re-Entry Program. The Jail’s Re-Entry program is a joint effort by the Jail Collaborative to provide pre-

# **I. Introduction**

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and post-release services to incarcerated individuals serving a county sentence in the Allegheny County Jail or alternative housing facility. In addition, the incarcerated individual must be serving at least a 3-month sentence, be of medium or high risk to recidivate based on a validated assessment tool, have county probation or parole following their sentence, and not be involved with a specialty court. The Extended Family Support Program is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

## ***Incarcerated and Child Participants***

DHS and Pittsburgh Mercy provided information on the program participants and timelines for both the Family Support Program and the Extended Family Support Program for the period from January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

- April 2019 – Enrollment of incarcerated parents began
- Fall 2021 – Enrollment of children and families began
- January 2022 – Family events began
- March 2022 – Support groups began

Based on information provided for the Family Support Program parenting class, 183 incarcerated parents started in the class during 2021 and 139 incarcerated parents started in the class between January and September 2022.

During 2021, the families of seven (7) incarcerated parents were involved in Extended Family Support Program, and an additional 13 entered the Program between January and September 2022. A total of 11 families exited the program during this period, leaving nine (9) families in the program as of September 30, 2022.

- 15 events were held during 2022. Examples include outings to the Carnegie Science Center, Chuck E. Cheese, the Children’s Museum, PNC Park, Kennywood, Sandcastle, as well as shopping trips.
- Four (4) support group meetings were held during 2022.

## ***Funding***

In 2018, DHS received a grant for \$748,902 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to specifically address the needs of children of incarcerated parents. DHS used the grant to fund the Extended Family Support Program through Pittsburgh Mercy. The grant was originally for the period from October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2021, however, due to original funding delays as well as delays resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the grant term was extended through September 30, 2023. The budget for the grant was allocated as follows: \$589,238 for the Pittsburgh Mercy provider, and \$66,979 for project management, \$24,603 for training, technical assistance and IT support, and \$68,082 for indirect costs of DHS. Outside of the grant, DHS also funds the Family Support Program. For fiscal years ended June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021 and 2022, DHS paid Pittsburgh Mercy \$127,795 and \$97,964 respectively for the Family Support Program.



## **II. Objectives, Scope, and Methodology**

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### **Objective**

To determine how DHS identifies and meets the needs of children with an incarcerated parent.

### **Scope**

Our audit procedures covered the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. However, certain data we reviewed extended through September 30, 2022. We conducted our audit in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

### **Methodology**

Methodologies used to accomplish our objective included, but were not limited to the following:

- Interviewed Department of Human Services, the Jail, Amachi, and Pittsburgh Mercy personnel to gain an understanding of the available services and related processes.
- Examined documentation and records provided by DHS, Amachi, and Pittsburgh Mercy related to program objectives and operations.
- Performed testing for a sample of participants at both Amachi and Pittsburgh Mercy.
- Reviewed contracts and payment information from the County's accounting system to determine funding sources and amounts paid for the identified programs.

### III. Findings and Recommendations

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#### *Finding #1*

#### **There is Limited Outreach to the Families of Children with Parents Incarcerated in the Allegheny County Jail**

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**Criteria:** Incarceration of a parent breaks up families and creates an unstable environment for children that can have lasting effects on their development and well-being. Children and their families can face numerous struggles when a parent is incarcerated, including impaired parent-child bonding, below average academic performance, anxiety and stress, developmental regression, as well as homelessness and financial difficulties. The needs of these children of incarcerated parents need to be addressed to mitigate the negative consequences that parental incarceration has on this vulnerable population.

**Condition:** Individuals incarcerated in the Jail are not identified as a parent until this individual is processed through intake, arraigned, and then assigned a cell on a pod, and only then if the incarcerated registers for parenting classes.

To be eligible to register for the Family Support Program, the incarcerated must be in the Jail for at least eight weeks, because the classes are scheduled for six consecutive weeks.

Jail and Pittsburgh Mercy staff, when preparing for the next round of parenting classes, will visit the pods to determine if any incarcerated have an interest in registering for these classes. However, information about the child and the child's caregiver is not collected until the incarcerated parent attends class. Additionally, we have been told that barriers exist when attempting to determine if incarcerated have children. For instance, there can be a perception that any involvement with DHS can lead to negative outcomes such as the child being taken from the caregiver and placed into the child welfare system. Therefore, the willingness of incarcerated to share information about their children could be negatively impacted.

We requested and DHS provided statistical data on Service Utilization for Children of Incarcerated Parents for the period January 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022. This statistical data identified 5,220 parents that were incarcerated in the jail at some time between January 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022. These parents had a total of 11,969 children aged 18 or under. While this statistical data may not be a total representation of the number of children affected by incarceration in Allegheny County, or the total number of incarcerated parents, it is the only data related to this

### III. Findings and Recommendations

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population that is available through DHS. Therefore, this statistical data was used throughout our report.

Throughout the year, DHS conducts general outreach to connect any family in need with the services offered by contracted providers and community organizations. A couple examples include the numerous family centers located throughout the County and drop-in centers for at-risk youth. However, families and children affected by incarceration may not have previously had a need for these services and may not know who to contact if an urgent or short-term need arises due to parental incarceration.

DHS's service model does not include specific outreach to the families of all incarcerated parents. Alternately, outreach to the families of incarcerated parents is contracted by DHS to Pittsburgh Mercy. However, DHS does not provide Pittsburgh Mercy or Amachi the information it has access to for families that previously utilized a DHS service. For Pittsburgh Mercy to contact the family, the incarcerated parent must be enrolled in the Family Support Program parenting class and be willing to provide the family contact information to Pittsburgh Mercy. As discussed in Finding #2 (see page 12), enrollment in these programs is limited, thus limiting the number of families Pittsburgh Mercy can contact. Since Amachi is not involved in the parenting classes, they have no access to information on incarcerated parents and their children. According to Amachi, only three of the children in its programs during the period January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022 had a parent incarcerated in the Allegheny County Jail.

According to DHS, families and children that do not participate in the Pittsburgh Mercy and Amachi programs, often participate in other DHS services, and DHS believes that the majority of children of incarcerated parents who need support are being reached. However, according to the DHS statistical data, only 4,652 of the 11,969 children (39%) received a DHS service within one year of their parent's incarceration. Therefore, there is a risk that the remaining 7,317 (61%) children and families need assistance but are not aware of the DHS services available to them.

**Cause:**

Even though DHS is not required to reach out to this vulnerable population, it does subcontract with Pittsburgh Mercy to conduct the Family Support Classes at the jail and the Extended Family Support Program for incarcerated children and families. However, there is no specific process in place to identify and contact incarcerated parents and their families to ensure they are aware of the services available through DHS, its providers, and community organizations. In addition, limited, if any, contact information on the families is provided to Pittsburgh Mercy or Amachi by DHS.

### III. Findings and Recommendations

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**Effect:** Children negatively impacted by the incarceration of their parent may not receive the much-needed services and ultimately have a higher risk of becoming involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice system.

**Recommendations:** We recommend that the Department of Human Services work with the appropriate staff at the Allegheny County Jail and the contracted providers (when necessary) to implement the following recommendations:

- Implement strategies to determine the population of incarcerated individuals with children as early as possible. Explore options to obtain parental status, family contact information, and permission to reach out to the family during Intake. Specifically, design a form to capture this information. This form should include clear language that informs the incarcerated individual that this information will only be used to connect caregivers and families with available programs and resources.
- Take steps to reduce the barriers related to identifying the full population of children of incarcerated parents. Communicate that the goal is to help the children and keep them out of the child welfare system and juvenile justice systems. This could include interviewing a group of incarcerated individuals in the jail that can share positive outcomes that they have experienced by working with programs through DHS and sharing this with the incarcerated individuals on the electronic tablet provided to them.
- Work with the jail to ensure the incarcerated parents identified through its system are provided information on the services available through DHS, its providers, and community organizations and encourage the parent to convey this information to the family.
- Present information to incarcerated individuals about the programs that are available to help their children and families while they are detained in the Allegheny County Jail.
  - Display posters in common areas such as intake, on the pods, in the medical unit, etc. that lists available services and contact information for these providers that may be of assistance to the incarcerated individuals' children and families.
  - Provide the Corrections Collective Resource Guide (see attachment I) and other relevant documents to all incarcerated individuals as soon as possible. This guide details services that are available and provider contact information to address the basic needs the family may have while the parent is incarcerated (such as food assistance, housing, mental health services, etc.). This

### **III. Findings and Recommendations**

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information, and a link to the resource guide should be included on the incarcerated parents' tablets and printouts should be made available on each pod.

- Determine if there are appropriate incentives that would motivate incarcerated parents to work with DHS and the Jail to ensure the needs of their children are met.

**Management's  
Response:**

The response from the Director of Human Services begins on page 35.

### III. Findings and Recommendations

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*Finding #2*  
**Programs for Children of Incarcerated Parents  
Have Limited Accessibility**

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**Criteria:** Children of incarcerated parents have needs unique to their situation regardless of the circumstances surrounding their parents' incarceration, and their families can also experience added stress and concerns. Parental incarceration can be a traumatic experience for children, and they can face issues such as shame or fear surrounding their parent's incarceration, loss, or grief from separation from their parent, limited contact with their parent, placement with an alternate caregiver, as well as overall financial concerns and struggles to obtain basic needs faced by the family.

**Condition:** The Allegheny County Department of Human Services recognizes that children of incarcerated parents have unique needs not faced by other children. Even though there is no government mandate or dedicated funding for programs for this population, DHS has allocated limited funding for these services and secured a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to fund the Extended Family Support Program to benefit these children. However, limited funding and other barriers to service this population limit the accessibility of these services.

*Limited Availability to Enroll in Classes*

Typically, the Family Support Program parenting classes at the Jail are targeted to incarcerated parents likely to be in the Jail for at least eight weeks so the individual can complete the Family Support class. Currently, only one housing pod can be in the classroom at one time due to Covid-19 restrictions, so only a limited number of housing pods can attend each six-week session. This results in incarcerated individuals that would benefit from the class not being able to attend.

*Limited Eligibility for the  
Extended Family Support Program Classes*

While the parenting classes and visits ultimately have an impact on the children, the direct support that is offered through the Extended Family Support Program is only available to children and families of incarcerated individuals that are enrolled in the parenting classes as well as the Jail's Re-entry Program. The Jail's Re-Entry program is a joint effort by the Jail Collaborative to provide pre- and post-release services to incarcerated individuals.

### **III. Findings and Recommendations**

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servicing a county sentence in the Allegheny County Jail or alternative housing facility. In addition, the incarcerated must be serving at least a 3-month sentence, be of medium or high risk to recidivate based on a validated assessment tool, have county probation or parole following their sentence and not be involved with a specialty court.

Additionally, other barriers exist to providing services to these children. The incarcerated parent must give Pittsburgh Mercy permission to contact the family, and the caregiver of the family must agree to accept these services. Parents and caregivers may not be aware of the numerous services offered through DHS, and the benefits these services can provide. In addition, they may have the perception that any DHS involvement is intrusive and may lead to more negative outcomes. Therefore, parents and caregivers may fear that participating in any DHS services could result in the child being placed into foster care.

#### ***Restrictive Guidelines Limit Participation***

The statistical data provided by DHS identified 5,220 parents in the Jail between January 1, 2021, and September 30, 2022. We noted that 412 were still in the jail as September 30, 2022, and 4,808 had been released. The chart below, which was prepared using the statistical data provided by DHS, shows the length of stay for incarcerated parents identified by DHS. Since the release date, and the total length of stay, for the parents still incarcerated in the Jail is unknown, we only analyzed the 4,808 parents that have been released.

### III. Findings and Recommendations

<b>Length of Stay in the Allegheny County Jail for the 4,808 Released Parents</b>			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Cumulative Percentage</u>
1 to 2 Days	917	19%	19%
3 to 10 Days	1,256	26%	45%
11 to 30 Days	789	16%	61%
31 to 60 Days	379	8%	69%
	3,341	Not eligible to participate in parenting classes due to length of stay	
61 to 90 Days	199	4%	73%
	3,540	Not eligible to participate in Extended Family Support Program due to length of stay	
91 to 180 Days	380	8%	81%
181 Days to 1 Year	407	9%	90%
1 to 2 Years	307	6%	96%
Over 2 Years	174	4%	100%
	4,808	Total Number of incarcerated parents (Released as of 9/30/22)	

*Source: Figures were calculated using data provided by DHS*

The Pittsburgh Mercy Family Support and Extended Family Support programs are tailored to a specific population of incarcerated parents. Based on the statistical data provided by DHS, we noted the following:

- Only 31%, or 1,467 of the incarcerated parents (length of stay between 61 days to over 2 years), could be eligible to participate in the Family Support parenting classes.
  - 69% of the population, or 3,341 incarcerated parents, could not participate in the Family Support parenting classes due to the 8-week restriction.



### III. Findings and Recommendations

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- Only 27%, or 1,268 of the incarcerated parents (length of stay between 91 days to over 2 years), could be eligible to enroll in the Family Support parenting classes and the Extended Family Support program due to the requirements associated with the length of time the individual is in the Jail.
  - 73% of the population, or 3,540 incarcerated parents, could not participate in the Extended Family Support program due to the additional requirement to be in the Re-Entry program which requires a minimum sentence of 90 days.

**Cause:** A lack of dedicated funding as well as additional barriers to service, which are identified above, limit the number of children DHS can assist. Although DHS tailored these programs to a target population, it appears that the enrollment requirements may be too restrictive to reach the majority of the population of incarcerated parents based on the statistics provided by DHS.

**Effect:** Children negatively impacted by the incarceration of their parent may not receive much-needed services and ultimately have a higher risk of becoming involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice system.

**Recommendations:** We recommend that the Department of Human Services work with the appropriate staff at the Allegheny County Jail and the contracted providers (when necessary) to implement the following recommendations:

- Obtain dedicated funding through grants or private foundations to allow for expanded service offerings.
- Explore options for additional appropriate programs to allow participation by more incarcerated parents and their children, specifically for parents who are housed at the jail for less than 30 days.

**Management's Response:**

The response from the Director of Human Services begins on page 35.

## **V. Attachment I**

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To mitigate the negative consequences that children of incarcerated parents experience, DHS should work with the Jail to expand its outreach to target this vulnerable population as well as increase the accessibility of its programs. Although DHS is not required to reach out to this at-risk population, jail time can be equally disruptive to families, making it difficult for remaining caregivers to maintain housing, a job and childcare.

DHS has contracted with Amachi and Pittsburgh Mercy to provide services which target these incarcerated individuals as well as their children. However, our procedures showed that most incarcerated parents in the Jail are not eligible to participate in the DHS programs due to restrictive entry requirements. Our audit also disclosed that there is no specific process in place to identify and contact incarcerated parents and their families to ensure they are aware of the services available through DHS, its providers, and community organizations. By spreading awareness to these families as well as developing programs with less restrictive enrollment requirements, DHS can help these incarcerated individuals and their families develop the skills necessary to resume their role as providers, while reducing their likelihood of returning to jail. In addition, families who are struggling while a parent is incarcerated could be made aware of the programs available to them to help cover basic needs while providing stability and support to the children.

# **Corrections Collective Resource Guide**



**Enclosed is a list of community-based organizations and additional resources in Allegheny County. Please use this guide in preparation for your return to your community. If you come across any errors in this guide, and you are able, please notify Allison Haley-Lewis, co-convener of the Corrections Collective, via email at [ahaley.lewis@gmail.com](mailto:ahaley.lewis@gmail.com) . Our team will work to rectify these errors. We hope the resources listed here empower you in your journey forward.**

**Thank you,**

**The Corrections Collective**

**RESOURCES ARE GROUPED BY THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES**

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# CHILDCARE



[Amachi Mentoring Program](#) Provides mentoring services to youth with one or both parents incarcerated.

[Amachi Ambassadors](#) is a specialized youth organizing, advocacy, and leadership development program for high school students impacted by parental incarceration.

1830 Forbes Avenue, 2nd Floor Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
412.281.1288



Offers reduced-rate childcare and parenting education to low-income working parents

Apply [online](#)  
Locations in Northside & Swissvale



## [Emergency Childcare Services](#)

Offers free emergency childcare for children aged 0-6

To schedule an intake, call 412-924-0726  
6435 Frankstown Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

# COMMUNITY SHELTERS



[Second Avenue Commons](#)- Provides [shelter](#) to adults of all gender identities experiencing homelessness, as well as [primary medical care](#) services and an [engagement center](#) offering a variety of basic services and linkage to other resources.

700 Second Avenue, Second & Third Floors, Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
412-775-9001



## [Housing & Homeless Services](#)

The Allegheny Link is a county hotline to direct Allegheny County residents to services such as emergency housing. Some shelters require a referral from the Allegheny Link.

866-730-2368



## [Bethlehem Haven](#)

Provides emergency shelter to women experiencing or at risk of homelessness. If seeking shelter call 412-391-1348 ext. 250

905 Watson Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

# COMMUNITY SHELTERS



EAST END  
COOPERATIVE  
MINISTRY

community. transformation. hope.

## Emergency Shelter and Recovery House

Provides emergency shelter to individuals of all gender identities experiencing or at risk of homelessness

If seeking shelter call 412-345-7135

6140 Station St, Pittsburgh, PA 15206



## FamilyLinks

Provides emergency shelter to youth of all gender identities experiencing or at risk of homelessness

If seeking shelter call 866-583-6003

1601 Fifth Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15219



## Genesis of Pittsburgh

Provides emergency shelter to pregnant individuals over the age of 18 experiencing or at risk of homelessness

If seeking shelter call 412-766-2693

185 Dakota Avenue, Bellevue, 15202



## Light of Life Rescue Mission

Provides emergency shelter to individuals of all gender identities experiencing or at risk of homelessness

If seeking shelter call 412-803-4120 (men) or 412- 258-6134 (women)

913 Western Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15233



## McKeesport Downtown Housing

Provides emergency shelter to individuals of all gender identities experiencing or at risk of homelessness

If seeking shelter call 412-664-9168

523 Sinclair Street, McKeesport, PA 15132

# COMMUNITY SHELTERS



## Pleasant Valley Shelter

Provides emergency shelter to men experiencing or at risk of homelessness. If seeking shelter call 412-321-4272 between 10am-11am

1601 Brighton Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15212



## Shepherd's Heart Veteran's Home

Shepherd's Heart Veteran's Home (SHVH) Also known as the House Hope (HoH) is a transitional housing for homeless veterans.

Shepherd's Heart Fellowship, 13 Pride Street, Pittsburgh, Pa 15219  
Church Office: 412-281-1305      Veteran's Home: 412-277-9895



## Veterans Leadership Program

Provides emergency shelter to veteran experiencing homelessness with permanent disability

Referrals are made through the Allegheny Link: 866-730-2368

# EMPLOYMENT



Provides employment assistance to people with disabilities as well as counseling about how employment will affect government benefits

1-888-272-7229

711 Bingham Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203



## AHEDD

Provides employment assistance to people with disabilities as well as counseling about how employment will affect government benefits

866-902-4333

3300 Trindle Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011



# EMPLOYMENT

## Employment Institute



Offers workforce development programs for individuals aged 14+

For more information fill out an [interest form](#) online



## Career Development

Provides employment assistance services for veterans

For assistance call 412-481-8200



## PA CareerLink® - Allegheny County

Provides general and individualized employment assistance services

412-248-JOBS (5627)

Locations in Downtown and Forest Hills



## Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center

Offers free employment assistance to anyone over 16

For more info call 412-441-6950

113 N. Pacific Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15224



## PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Provides vocational rehabilitation services to help persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain or maintain employment

412-392-4950

531 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

# EMPLOYMENT

## UPMC Pathways to Work Job Center

Your UPMC career is waiting for you.

### Pathways to Work

Provides employment assistance for jobs within UPMC for anyone under/unemployed or with a disability

[pathwaystowork@upmc.edu](mailto:pathwaystowork@upmc.edu)

### Trade Institute of Pittsburgh

The Trade Institute of Pittsburgh's mission is to empower men and women with significant barriers to employment through skill building and career opportunities.

We offer a 10-week tuition-free training program in masonry and carpentry, life skills courses, and social service supports. Students are matched with a career in a variety of trades or trade-related fields upon graduation.

ADDRESS: 7800 Susquehanna Street Pittsburgh, PA 15208

QUESTIONS / ENROLL: 412-243-2970



### Workforce Development

Offers workforce development services as well as employment events such as job fairs and hiring events

412-904-4700

249 N Craig St, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

# EXPUNGEMENT/PARDON ASSISTANCE



Allegheny County  
Bar Association

## Allegheny County Bar Foundation

Pro Bono Pardon and Expungement Services

Offers assistance clearing no-violent criminal records.

412-402-6677



## Pittsburgh Pardon Hub

Offers assistance with criminal record expungement, pardons, and Clean Slate

412-904-4700

249 N Craig St, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

# FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



Just Harvest

## Free Tax Return Preparation

Provides free assistance with filing tax returns every tax season.

# FOOD ASSISTANCE



## Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank

Supplies food pantries throughout the Pittsburgh area and runs walk-in and drive-up food distribution events on set dates.

412-460-3663 ext. 655



Just Harvest

Offers assistance with applying for SNAP/Food Stamps as well as the Fresh Access program to help recipients buy more fresh foods.

412-431-8960

16 Terminal Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

# HEALTHCARE



## [Allegheny County Guide to Health Care Services for Under or Uninsured](#)

Comprehensive, clickable online list of free/affordable healthcare providers in Allegheny County.

### [AbsoluteCare](#)



Provides a range of healthcare services to individuals with Medicare or Medicaid.

412-517-3000 7301 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15208



### [RIvER Clinic](#)

Provides people with medical care immediately following their release from jail, regardless of ability to pay.

Referrals are made onsite at Allegheny County Jail, for



Provides completely free medical and dental care to those 19+ years of age with income within 250% of the federal poverty level.

412-456-6911

212 9th St, Pittsburgh, PA 15222



**East Liberty  
Family Health  
Care Center**

### [East Liberty Family Health Center](#)

Offers primary and dental care to uninsured individuals on an income-based [sliding scale](#).

412-661-2802

Locations in East Liberty, Lincoln-Lemington, and Wilkinsburg.

# HEALTHCARE



## Free Health Center

Offers free primary, behavioral, and dental care to people who are under or uninsured.

412-261-1234

Enrollment is through an [online form](#).



## Squirrel Hill Health Center

Provides discounted medical, dental, behavioral, and OB/GYN healthcare to uninsured individuals with income below 200% of the federal poverty level.

412-422-7442

Locations in Squirrel Hill & Brentwood, as well as a mobile COVID testing unit.

# HOUSING



## AffordableHousing.com

Posts rental listings for Section 8 apartments as well as other affordable housing.



## Pittsburgh Community Services, Inc.

Maintains an affordable housing list and offers housing support services.

412-904-4700

249 N Craig St, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

# HOUSING



## [Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh](#)

Manages Low-income Public Housing in the city of Pittsburgh and lists privately managed affordable housing

412-456-5030



## [ACTION Housing](#)

Offers supportive housing for people with mental, intellectual, and other disabilities, as well as regular low-income housing.

412-829-3910



## [PAHousingSearch.com](#)

Maintains a searchable database of affordable housing units statewide



## [Allegheny County Housing Authority](#)

Manages Low-income Public Housing in Allegheny County and lists privately managed affordable housing

412-355-8940



Oakland Planning and Development Corporation

## [Oakland Planning and Development Corporation](#)

Manages affordable rental housing in the Oakland neighborhood

412-621-7863 ext. 110

294 Semple Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

## HOUSING



### YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh

Offers single-room occupancy housing at multiple locations in Pittsburgh

412-227-3800



### Housing Initiative

Offers assistance for Latino and Hispanic Pittsburgh residents to attain housing

412-530-5244

1555 Broadway Avenue, Second Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15216

## IDENTIFICATION



### PennDOT Driver License Centers

The **only** place to acquire state identification in PA. Also provides driver license testing services

Find the location closest to you on [this webpage](#) or by calling 717-412-5300.



### Pennsylvania Division of Vital Records

The **only** place in PA to [acquire a replacement birth certificate](#)

Apply online at [this website](#), via mail, or in person at the address below.

411 Seventh Avenue, Room 360, Pittsburgh, PA 15219



### Social Security Administration

Offers assistance with obtaining a replacement Social Security Card and applying for benefits such as SSI/SSDI and Medicare

Find the location closest to you on [this webpage](#) or by calling 1-800-772-1213.

## LEGAL AID



### Neighborhood Legal Services

Offers civil legal assistance to low-income individuals in the Pittsburgh area (does not take criminal cases)

1-866-761-6572

928 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

## MENTAL HEALTH



### Allegheny Family Network

Through services including peer-to-peer support, education, and advocacy, we partner with families of children with behavioral health needs to improve their quality of life.

425 North Craig Street, Suite 500 Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Phone: 412-246-2030



### FamilyLinks

Provides community-based behavioral healthcare including mental health services and drug/alcohol treatment, as well as case management services

866-583-6003

401 N. Highland Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206



### Glade Run Lutheran Services

Provides a variety of outpatient mental health services in the Pittsburgh area. Locations in Zelienople, Beaver County, Butler, Pittsburgh, and North Hills.

724-452-4453



### Merakey

Provides a wide range of behavioral healthcare including mental health, intellectual disability, addiction recovery, and family services

888-647-0020

Multiple locations in the Pittsburgh area.



# MENTAL HEALTH



## [Peoples Oakland](#)

Provides immediate access to mental health counseling support and resource coordination.

Walk-in intake available Thursday or call 412-683-7140 x 246 to schedule.

3433 Bates Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213



## [Pittsburgh Action Against Rape](#)

Offers counseling services to children and families who have experienced sexual abuse

412-431-5665

81 South 19th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203



## [Pittsburgh Mercy Behavioral Health](#)

Offers mental health services ranging from outpatient treatment, diversion and stabilization, psychiatric rehab, to residential programs

1-877-637-2924

Walk-in Center: 264 South 9th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203



## [Staunton Clinic](#)

Provides mental health services including outpatient psychiatry, psychotherapy, service coordination, peer support services, intellectual disabilities supports coordination and inpatient services.

1-877-771-4847

Multiple locations in Allegheny County.



## [UPMC Western Psychiatric Hospital](#)

Provides [inpatient](#) and [outpatient](#) mental healthcare as well as case management, peer support, and addiction services

412-624-1000

3811 O'Hara St., Pittsburgh, PA, 15213

# REENTRY PROGRAMS



## Aleph Institute

Aleph offers Re-Entry Programs including job placement, rabbinical counseling, emergency housing and job application training for the newly or soon to be released prisoners. The Aleph Institute works hard to provide all the necessary programs, support, counseling, and assistance the prisoners and families need during this process.

5804 Beacon Street Pittsburgh, PA 15217-2004

412-421-0111



## Aftercare Program

Provides assistance to reentrants including referrals, mentorship, and material assistance.

412-321-3343

540 Suismon St, Pittsburgh, PA 15212



## Child'sPlace

### Mom's Turn

Provides case management services for women after release from jail

412-224-2146

## Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania

### Reintegration Services



Provide services after release from jail including employment assistance and referrals

Referral-based through ACJ and County Probation office

412-589-0013

## REENTRY PROGRAMS



### Reimagine Reentry

Offers a three-year holistic re-entry program including assistance with housing, employment, family, and mentorship

[Apply online](#) or email [contact@re-imaginereentry.org](mailto:contact@re-imaginereentry.org) for more info

100 South Commons Street, Suite 102, Pittsburgh, PA, 15212

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE



### Crossroads

Crossroads has developed a program that combines medication and counseling to provide the most effective treatment for your addiction

### Locations

[Complete this form to make an appointment](#) or call 1-800-805-6989



### Lost Dreams Awakening

Offers recovery support services and operates a recovery community center

724-212-7899

408 8th Street, New Kensington, PA 15068



### POWER Connection

Offers holistic recovery support services to women in Allegheny County coping with a substance abuse disorder. Offers referral services to all genders through the POWER Line

POWER Line: 412-243-8755

# SUBSTANCE ABUSE

## Pathway to Care and Recovery



Provides care screenings and linkage to recovery services/treatment

412-325-7550

Walk-in center at 326 Third Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15222



## Skyline Recovery

Manages sober living homes at several locations throughout the Pittsburgh area

412-475-8231



## Start Your Recovery

Online searchable directory which lists recovery centers and addiction services nationwide

# ALLEGHENY COUNTY ASSISTANCE OFFICE

The County Assistance Office offers assistance applying for state benefits such as SNAP/Food Stamps, Medicaid, and LIHEAP. There are offices at the following locations:

### Downtown Pittsburgh

332 Fifth Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Pittsburgh, PA  
15222

412-565-7755

### Alle-Kiski District

909 Industrial Blvd, New Kensington, PA  
15068

724-339-6800

### Greater Pittsburgh East District

5947 Penn Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Pittsburgh, PA  
15206

412-645-7400

### Southeast District

220 Sixth Street, McKeesport, PA 15132

412-664-6800



**RICH FITZGERALD**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

February 6, 2023

Corey O'Connor, Controller  
Allegheny County Courthouse  
436 Grant Street, Room 219  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

ATTN: Lori A. Churilla, Assistant Deputy Controller

To the Allegheny County Controller's Office:

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services has reviewed the findings in the performance audit for family support services in the Allegheny County Jail. Please see responses below. Thank you for the opportunity to respond. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Response to Finding 1: There is limited outreach to the families of children with parents incarcerated in the Allegheny County Jail

The audit recommends that DHS and the Jail collect data on parental status, family contact information and permission to reach out to the family at intake for all people booked into the jail. It recommends that the county use this information to connect incarcerated parents and families to services. In addition, the audit recommends DHS and the Jail provide identified parents incarcerated at the jail with more information about services (including displaying posters and providing a resource guide to parents incarcerated in the jail), and to incentivize participation in these services by sharing positive stories and outcomes.

DHS supports some of these recommendations and finds others to be undesirable for the very people we are trying to support.

Universal screening at intake to identify parents and children may not be desirable or feasible. The intake process in any jail is a time of crisis for many and research and best practice suggests it is not a good point of engagement. There are also real reasons a person might not want to identify their children to a carceral system, including fear that their children would be subject to the child welfare system or stigmatized/harmed in some way. There is little evidence to suggest that people would trust a correctional officer or DHS staff at the point of intake into the jail to provide this information. Practically speaking, even if people are willing to provide the information, just collecting information on whether the incarcerated person has children is not very meaningful and does not allow for the follow-up with family members or children envisioned by the audit. To execute on the audit recommendation that we outreach to specific

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ERIN DALTON, DIRECTOR  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING • ONE SMITHFIELD STREET • SUITE 400 • PITTSBURGH, PA 15222  
PHONE (412) 350-5701 • FAX (412) 350-4004 • EMAIL DHSINFORMATION@ALLEGHENYCOUNTY.US

caregivers and children, we would have to collect identifying information on each caregiver and child and store it in a database. This strikes us as overreach and the potential benefits do not justify the potential harms.

As is well known, but not acknowledged in the audit, family relationships and dynamics are very complicated. While many children and families will experience significant loss of their loved one to incarceration, even short-term incarceration, for some children and families, incarceration is in fact protective for caregiver and/or their children. The most obvious examples here are for incarceration related to intimate partner violence or child abuse but the dynamics go well beyond simply identifying these charges. Asking for family contact information to reach out without conducting an assessment of the situation may be truly harmful to the children and their caregivers. And engagement and assessment takes time. For the half of parents released within 11 days of booking, there would be little time to do this assessment. This work requires real care, a complexity not acknowledged in the audit.

Therefore, as a result of the above and the lack of research around the impact of short-stay incarcerations of parents on their children, DHS and other stakeholders should consult with formerly incarcerated people, their families and other advocates to understand their needs and perspectives prior to considering identification of children at intake or the proactive identification and engagement of all children of incarcerated parents the audit recommends.

Alternatively, we appreciate the audit recommendations related to making more families and incarcerated parents aware of resources for their children and loved ones. Information about available programs for children and families should be accessible **to all incarcerated people**. This is because there is a high likelihood of underreporting of parental status and the fact that there are many caretakers of children who might not identify as a 'parent' but for whom services might be beneficial, including aunts, uncles, older siblings or neighbors who take on caregiving roles. Identifying people as parents and doing outreach and engagement specifically to them is not worth the risk when we could enhance efforts to reach *all* incarcerated people.

Hanging posters and providing resources on the tablets in the Jail are great opportunities to increase awareness of community-based services for families. We also support provision of information for people at the discharge and release center and creating positive stories of program outcomes for all our programs. Consistent with DHS's broader approach to improving access to services for Allegheny County residents, we could envision opportunities to market a centralized resource number (e.g., 211) to all families with an incarcerated loved one, including those with children, so that they are aware where they can call for help with basic needs and supportive services. In addition, DHS recently established a new team of family resource navigators who are equipped to accept referrals from a variety of partners, including 211. These staff will be able to talk directly to families and connect them to family strengthening services which includes our network of family centers, out of school time programs, childcare and more, depending on individual needs.

Finally, while not specifically recommended, we would support working with programs like Amachi to come into the Jail and provide presentations on the jail housing units to inform people about community-based services for their loved ones. This may also increase awareness of services.

#### Response to Finding 2: Programs for Children of Incarcerated Parents have Limited Accessibility

The audit recommends that DHS obtain dedicated funding through grants or private foundations to expand service offerings and that we explore creating additional programming for incarcerated parents and their children, specifically for parents who are housed at the jail for less than 30 days.

DHS regularly seeks additional funding to pilot new services for people incarcerated in the Jail and their families. Recent examples of successful grant proposals include the Department of Justice grant for Extended Family Support referenced in this audit. The MacArthur Foundation is also supporting the County's effort to rethink the physical design of the jail facility through our participation in the Safety and Justice Challenge. **However, sustainably funding programs for all children of incarcerated parents is not feasible with grant or foundation funding, which is typically small and time-limited and not designed to support ongoing program operations like that envisioned in the audit.**

The current family support programming at the jail was carefully designed to allow for enough time to assess and engage with families. Most of the individuals booked into the jail are there for less than 2 weeks, which does not allow for the time to do this type of assessment and caregiver engagement. In addition, our current more intensive programming is specifically designed to work with parents who are at medium or high risk to recidivate to best target scarce dollars. This is a national best practice, and often a requirement of federal funding.

To implement the audit recommendation, it would cost an estimated \$1.4-\$2.5 million dollars every year to serve parents booked for less than 30 days (see calculation below). While we do not think intensive services is appropriate, feasible or cost effective for this population, we *can* do more to make sure everyone is aware of the resources that are available to them both while they are in jail and when they return to the community. In addition to the posters and resource summaries discussed above, we could work with the Jail to offer low-intensity parenting classes to all residents of the Jail (whether reporting that they are parents or not) through the tablets. In short, we are very invested in enhancing communication about resources to all individuals booked into the jail, and their families.

Finally, the audit concludes that DHS is missing the opportunity to provide services to 61% of children of incarcerated parents. This is based on data DHS provided to the audit that finds that from January 2021 to September 2022, DHS served 39% of the children of incarcerated parents in at least one service. Comparably, DHS served 18% of children and youth under 18 years old in at least one service countywide. So, the level engagement with the children of incarcerated

parents is already more than double that of other children and youth in the county. Not all of these families need services and assuming that the balance of these individuals are not aware and need these services is not founded on any evidence.

**Table 1: Cost estimates for serving parents booked less than 30 days**

	Booked in 2022	Total estimated cost
<b>Less intensive services estimate:</b>		
Dedicated resource navigators for people staying less than 30 days – 6 staff members + supervisor	2,688	\$ 600,000
Supports for families for unanticipated costs (\$300/family)	2,688	\$ 806,400
Total for less intensive supports		<b>\$ 1,406,500</b>
<b>More intensive services estimate:</b>		
Expanding current family programming to support these families (\$906 per person)	2,688	<b>\$ 2,434,875</b>

\*Includes number of parents booked in 2022 for less than 30 days

Sincerely,



Erin Dalton  
Director