

Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) and Homelessness Diversion

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Mindy Mitchell

Mia Bryant

Sr. Technical Assistance Specialists

National Alliance to End Homelessness

April McNeal

Your Way Home Homeless Prevention Program Manager

Office of Housing and Community Development

Montgomery County (PA) Department of Health and Human

Services

Emily Mosites, Ph.D., MPH

Sr. Advisor on Health & Homelessness

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



Maximize the Impact of Historic Funding: Community Considerations

1. Reduce the number of people experiencing **literal homelessness**.
2. Help people with the **highest needs**.
3. Reduce **racial disproportionality and disparities**.
4. **Create and strengthen partnerships between CoCs and Rental Assistance Providers**
5. **Create cross-sector referral systems that will work to use ERA to reduce homelessness**
6. **Act with urgency.**



Source: [Kingsnorth Church Of England Primary School](#)

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE

MAKING THE CONNECTION TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

From the US Department of Treasury



Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA or ERAP)

Role of Grantees

U.S. Department of the Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Fact Sheet

- **Help families experiencing homelessness gain access to assistance**
 - For vulnerable families that do not have a current rental obligation—which is a requirement for emergency rental assistance eligibility—Treasury is creating a commitment letter process to help those families gain access to assistance.
 - ERA can help families who have lost, or are at imminent risk of losing, their housing, by **paying for relocation assistance**, prospective rent, security deposits, and **temporary hotel accommodations**.

Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA or ERAP)

Role of Grantees Cont...

- **Drive towards equal access by removing language and cultural barriers in securing emergency rental assistance.**
 - Grantees who cannot provide such services themselves should be engaging partners with the capacity to do so to ensure equal access to emergency rental assistance for all eligible households.

Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA)

FAQ's

Who is eligible to receive assistance in the ERA and how should a grantee document the eligibility of a household?

A grantee may only use the funds provided in the ERA to provide financial assistance and housing stability services to eligible households.

- a. To be eligible, a household must be obligated to pay rent on a residential dwelling and the grantee must determine that one or more individuals within the household has qualified for unemployment benefits or experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, **or experienced other financial hardship due, directly or indirectly, to the COVID-19 outbreak;**
- b. One or more individuals within the household can demonstrate **a risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability;** and
- c. the household has a household income at or below 80% of area median income.

Treasury strongly encourages grantees to rely on the self-certification of applicants with regard to whether their financial hardship meets these statutory eligibility requirements

Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA)

FAQ's

3. How should a grantee determine that an individual within a household is at risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability?

- Documentation which may include
 - (i) a past due utility or rent notice or eviction notice,
 - (ii) **unsafe or unhealthy living conditions (which may include overcrowding)**, or
 - (iii) any other evidence of risk, as determined by the grantee.

Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA)

FAQ's

26. May rental assistance be provided to temporarily displaced households living in hotels or motels?

- **Yes.** The cost of a hotel or motel room occupied by an eligible household may be covered using ERA assistance within the category of certain “other expenses related to housing” (as described in FAQ 7) provided that:
 - i. the household has been temporarily or permanently displaced from its primary residence or does not have a permanent residence elsewhere;
 - ii. the total months of assistance provided to the household do not exceed the applicable time limit described in FAQ 10; and
 - iii. documentation of the hotel or motel stay is provided, and the other applicable requirements provided in the statute and these FAQs are met.

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF HOMELESSNESS DIVERSION

Connecting with Homelessness Diversion



What is Diversion?



Diversion is an intervention designed to immediately address the needs of someone who has just lost their housing and has become homeless that are seeking shelter by assisting the person or household find safe alternative housing immediately, **rather than entering shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness.**

Implementing Diversion Practice

Diversion Requires:

- Coordinated entry process and shelter front door
- **Resourceful staff trained** in:
 - Mediation, conflict resolution
 - Strength based assessment
 - Problem solving
 - Motivational Interviewing
 - Trauma Informed Care and Racialized Trauma Informed Care
- **Linkages** to mainstream services and natural supports
- **Flexible** funds

Enhancing the Diversion Housing Plan with ERA/ERAP



Emergency Rental Assistance: *Another tool in your “diversion resource” toolbox*

- Understand how to access ERA/ERAP
- Integrate ERA resource into housing plan when appropriate
- Create warm handoffs to ERA/ERAP

Successful Diversion Outcomes

**Permanently Back with
Friends or Family**

**Return to Own
Residence**

**Temporarily Diverted
While Seeking New
Housing**

**Permanent Relocation
To Safe Place Out of
Town**

CoC's Role in the Larger Context of Ending Homelessness

Your “to-do” list to make it happen

- Know who has the funding and the current requirements
- Build partnerships with those providers
 - Understand the current requirements
 - Advocate for changes to help at risk and homeless persons get assistance when they do not meet the “current standards” for traditional rental assistance
- Create warm handoffs to providers for persons seeking shelter through coordinated entry
 - Make the connections to the ERA providers
 - Assist clients in accessing the resources
 - Assist with submission of paperwork to meet eligibility requirements

EXAMPLE OF A COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP USING ERA TO REDUCE LITERAL HOMELESSNESS

Your Way Home

Office of Housing and Community Development
Montgomery County PA Department of Health and Human Services





Emergency Rent & Utility Coalition (ERUC)

April McNeal, Masters of Applied Family Studies

Your Way Home Homeless Prevention Program Manager
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

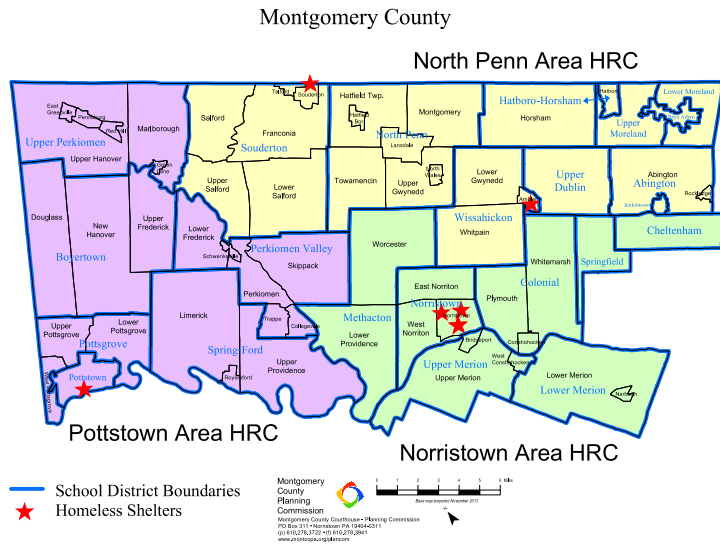
Norristown, PA 19404-0311

610-278-3506

amcneal@montcopa.org

About Your Way Home

Your Way Home is a public-private partnership whose mission is to ensure that everyone who lives, works, learns, and invests in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania has equal opportunity to live in an affordable home and a thriving community.



Your Way Home Homeless Crisis Response System



YWH Emergency Rent & Utility Coalition

The objectives of the **Your Way Home Emergency Rent and Utility Coalition** are to:

- Raise public and policymaker awareness of the needs of low-income and ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families and individuals in Montgomery County who are on the brink of homelessness due to poverty caused by a health crisis, job loss, pay inequality, underemployment and/or systemic racism.
- Advocate for more public and private funding for emergency rent and utility programs.
- Create a forum for emergency rent and utility service providers and funders to share resources, best practices, lessons learned and innovative solutions.



YWH Emergency Rent & Utility Coalition

- Montgomery County received direct & state pass-through ERA1 & ERA2 allocations.
- \$64.4 million received so far, another \$40.3 million expected.
- Framed equity as a core component from the beginning of program design.
- Partnered with 6 community-based organizations.
- Committed to the use of HMIS & Coordinated Entry existing structures.



How do you apply?

- Call Your Way Home by dialing 2-1-1 or
- Text your zip code to 898-211 or
- Visit www.yourwayhome.org/eruc

Are there qualifications?

At the time of application:

- Must be a Montgomery County resident
- Household income restrictions apply
- Experienced loss of income or financial hardship due to COVID-19
- At risk of homelessness or housing instability without this assistance

Partners

ACLAMO
¡Hablamos español!

CADCOM

Pottstown Cluster of
Religious Communities

Manna on Main Street

Family Services of
Montgomery County

YWCA Tri-County Area

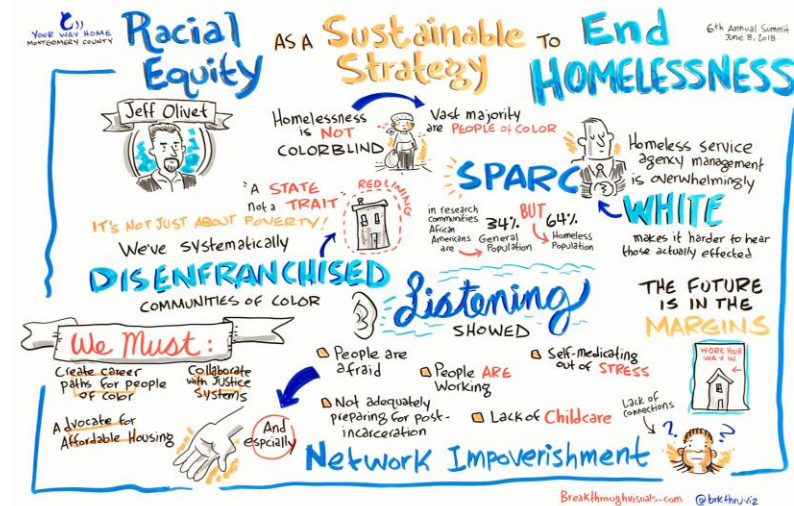


Equity as a Core Strategy to Program Design

- Partnered with Your Way Home agencies primarily led by and serving people of color.
- Utilized the Urban Institute Equity tool for targeted zip code prioritization.
- Embraced the use of HMIS to track data and outcomes by gender, race, ethnicity, income, etc.
- Utilized the existing infrastructure of community-based organizations, coordinated entry, and a public-private partnership.
- Utilized a hybrid coordinated entry approach; applicants can access the program via phone, online, or in person.
- Stayed away from third-party software because it did not meet the needs of households most at risk of homelessness.

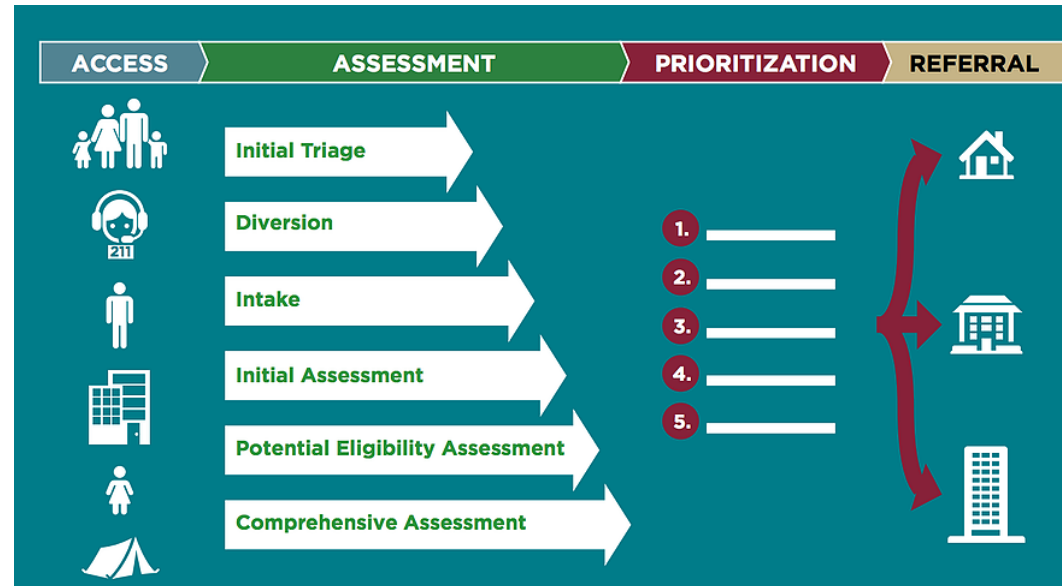
From the [National Low-Income Housing Coalition Research Brief](#):

“There is a positive correlation between partnering with local nonprofits who have experience with rental assistance and application completeness and higher ratios of households served.”



ERUC, Coordinated Entry, & HMIS

- Expanded the use of Coordinated Entry 2-1-1 Call Center to pre-screen for ERUC eligibility.
- All households passing pre-screen are entered into HMIS as a household and referred to an ERUC agency.
- 2-1-1 also pre-screens for the homeless crisis response system and will often do dual referrals to ERUC as well as Street Outreach, Emergency Shelter, & other homeless providers



All emergency shelter, street outreach, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and ERUC providers enter into HMIS!

ERUC Prioritization

- Household income does not exceed 50% AMI, preferably 30% AMI, or Unemployed 90 days prior to application.
- Reside in an identified zip code with higher shares of households living in poverty, cost-burdened low-income renters, severely overcrowded households, or unemployed people.

ERUC agencies dynamically prioritize eligible pre-screened household from a Community Queue in HMIS, using the above-mentioned criteria. ***Not first-come, first-served!***



ERUC & Diversion

Locally Prioritize:

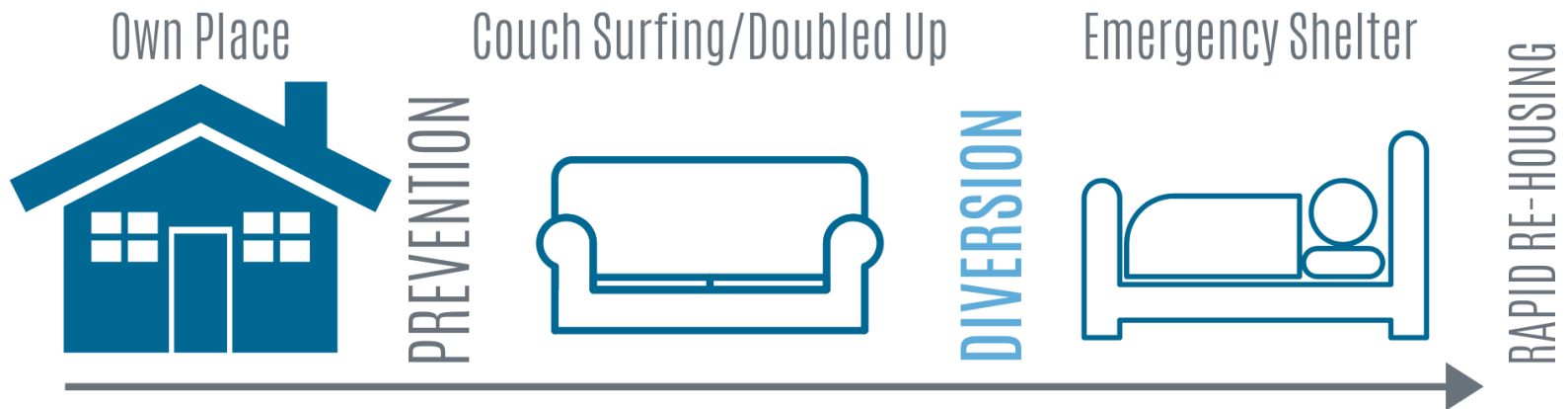
- 30% AMI or below
- Unemployed
- Vulnerable Zip Codes

Serves:

- People in hotel/motel
- Couch surfing
- Accessing CE for homeless services

Coordinates With:

- 2-1-1
- Street Outreach
- Rapid Re-Housing providers
- Prevention providers



ERUC & Prevention

Eviction Prevention and Intervention Coalition (EPIC)

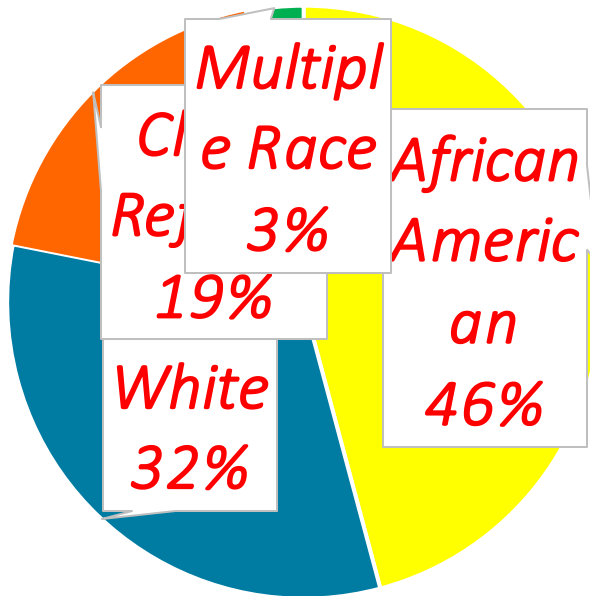
Provides free, limited legal representation + financial assistance and social services to tenants facing eviction in seven of the highest eviction-case Municipal District Courts in Montgomery County.

One of the six ERUC agencies is also the lead social service agency for EPIC.

Thus, ERUC has established relationships with eviction court judges, their clerks, and local court administration.



Households Served: 8,497 (as of 8/12/2021)



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C...



100% of ERA1 Direct Entitlement funds spent,
now spending ERA1 funds passed-through
from Pennsylvania

- ❖ 15% Hispanic/Latino
- ❖ 67% Female head of household with children
- ❖ 7% with Domestic Violence history
- ❖ 66% at or below 30% AMI

Let's stay connected. . .

Please visit www.yourwayhome.org to:

- Subscribe to our Newsletter
- Attend our Events
- Stay up to date

@YWHMontco – Twitter

April McNeal
Homeless Prevention Program Manager
AMcNeal@montcopa.org
610-278-3506



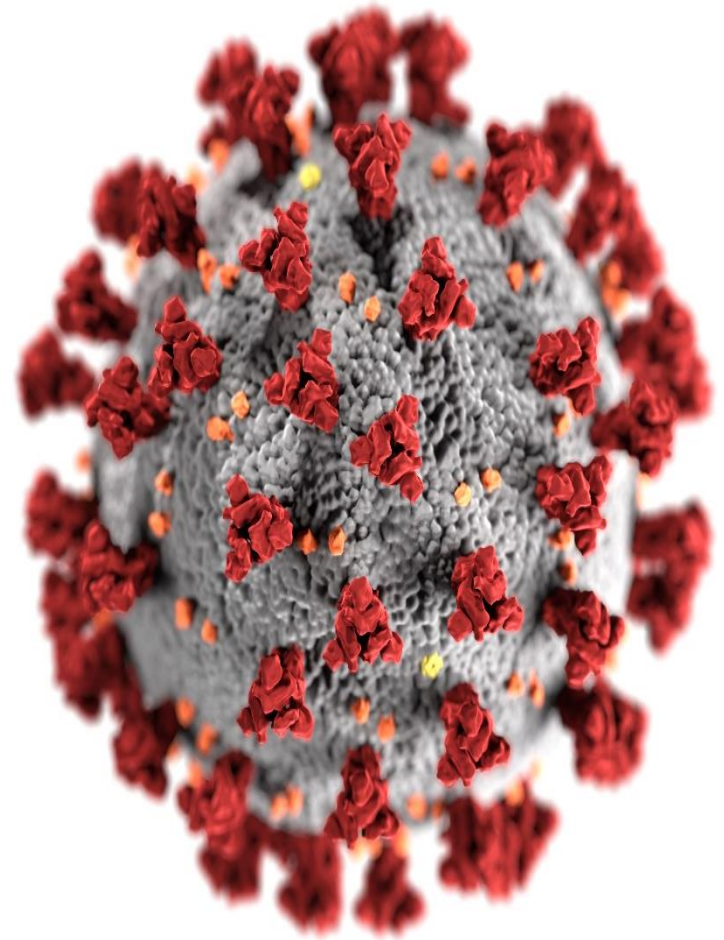
IMPORTANT PSA FROM THE CDC

Dr. Emily Mosites



COVID-19 update

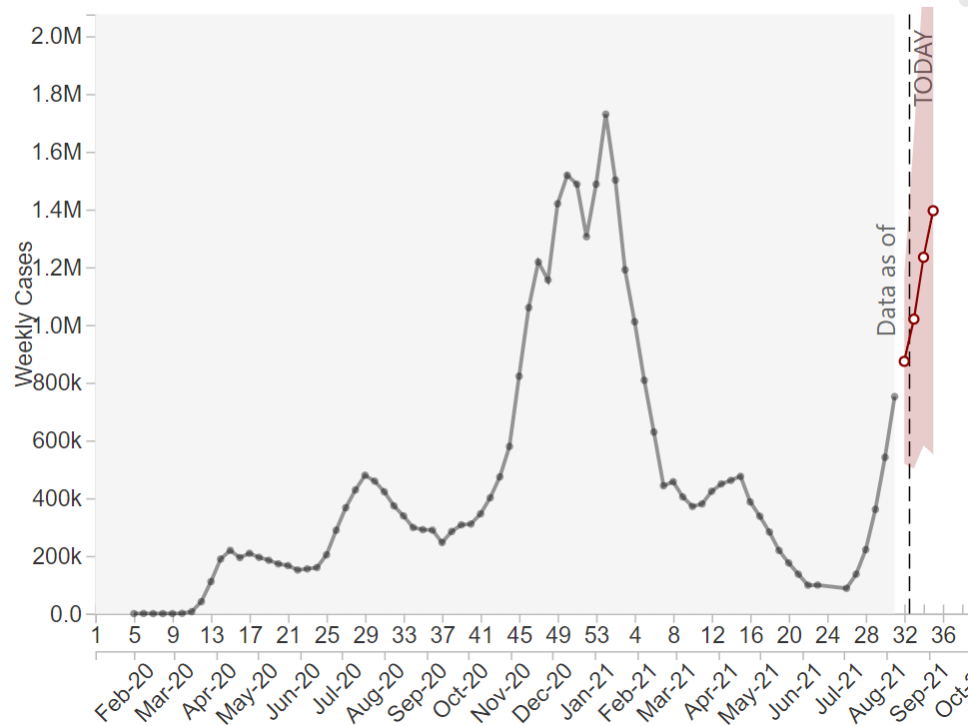
Homelessness Unit
Disproportionately Affected Populations Team
CDC COVID-19 Response



cdc.gov/coronavirus

Forecasting COVID-19 Cases for the Next 4 Weeks

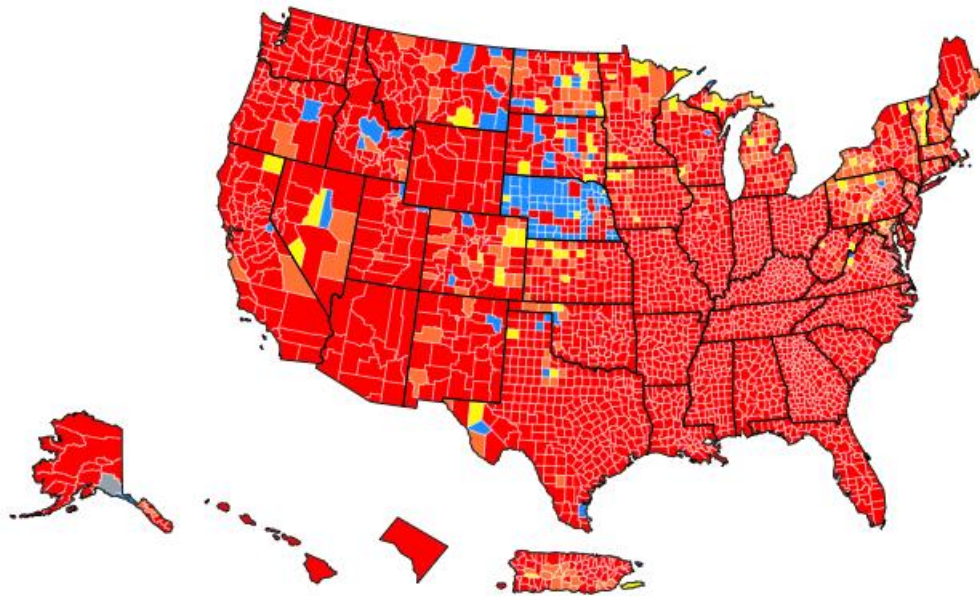
Observed and forecasted weekly COVID-19 cases in the United States



[Forecasting Tracker](#)



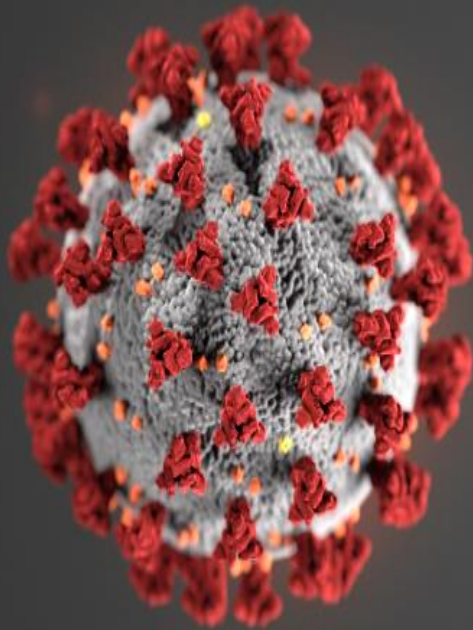
National COVID-19 Transmission by County



● High ● Substantial ● Moderate ● Low ● No Data

[CDC COVID Data Tracker](#)





For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Q&A



Contact us!

Alliance Capacity Building Team

Tashmia (Mia) Bryant
tbryant@naeh.org

Mindy Mitchell
mmitchell@naeh.org

Kay Moshier McDivitt
kmoshiermcdivitt@naeh.org

Kristi Schulenberg
kschulenberg@naeh.org

Your Way Home

April McNeal
AMcNeal@montcopa.org

CDC

Emily Mosites
lw7@cdc.gov

