



# Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

---

## Prevention & Early Intervention

We appreciate your patience as we all try to respond to the rapidly changing circumstances and do our best to adjust to the needs of our communities, families, and staff. Based on input PEI has received from its network of contractors and grantees, we are offering the following guidance to assist you and your communities if you are affected by COVID-19. Instructions for obtaining authorization and documenting expenses are also explained below. Please read carefully.

### **Eligible Activities**

Below is a list of eligible activities that, with authorization from PEI, may be appropriate options to support children, youth, families and your communities at this time.

### **Virtual Supports to Families**

- While DFPS continues to see clients and visit people's homes, we understand that families have expressed concern about their well-being in continuing the voluntary, supportive services our providers offer. In these situations we encourage you to explore virtual options to continue assisting families in a manner that maintains safety for all parties involved. Services that could be virtual include:
  - Intakes;
  - Family and individual coaching or counseling;
  - Crisis counseling, including creating plans for families for conflict resolution in a crisis;
  - Case management, mentoring and other forms of online support or service delivery;
  - Support and parent education groups or other virtual discussion groups;
  - Home visits; and
  - Convenings of the Youth Advisory Committee and Community Collaborative Committee;

*Note: Models are putting out support on how to shift some of these services to a virtual modality, we encourage you to follow model direction.*

- Provide virtual training opportunities related to:
  - Trauma and recovery from trauma for youth, families, professionals and community members;
  - Stress, anxiety and uncertainty for youth, families and staff;
  - Using web-based approaches for virtual visits.

- Make any necessary budget adjustments to be able to connect families with as much basic needs support as possible, up to \$250 in value per family with not more than half being utilized for food assistance. All basic needs support will be approved by your contract manager.
- Partner with public health officials and/or community health workers to conduct home visits together to help address concerns or provide information to families.

### **Parenting Support Options**

- Kits (basic needs, books/activities for kids) for families who are currently without work or stuck at home that could be delivered without contact.
- Develop resources and toolkits for families who might find themselves home with children for extended periods. Items could include the purchase of:
  - Legos, board games and educational toys that contribute to learning and family cohesiveness;
  - Jump ropes, balls, chalk and bubbles to promote outdoor time and learning due to being out of structured time and programming;
  - Learning materials, books, workbooks, subscriptions to online learning platforms/apps (such as ABC Mouse) for parents/caregivers with young children and other appropriate platforms/apps for youth.
- Develop and distribute viewing guides for available online movies or shows that have appropriate material to apply reflection prompts for learning objectives.

### **Technological Support Options**

- Purchase needed technology or software for staff to facilitate virtual visits that comply with model guidance and ensure confidentiality.
- Purchase technology or software to support remote supervision, staffing, training, etc. while also ensuring confidentiality.
- Consider any necessary technology needs to provide your Coalition the ability to continue supporting your community.

### **Public Awareness Activities**

- Produce model-informed parent information and education videos, graphics, and posts that can be shared through social media, texting, YouTube channels and other platforms.
- Develop a public awareness and education campaign to implement that includes parenting tips.
- Share existing materials or develop, share, print and distribute (safely with minimal contact) materials families can use to talk to children about COVID-19 and the impact it is having in their community based on messaging from or consistent with guidance from the CDC, DSHS, and your local public health authority.
- Regularly share activities and messaging via social media for children, youth, caregivers and families to both have activity ideas to do and feel connected to community.

- Partner with your local public health official and other agencies to create a health awareness campaign to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.

### **Staff Support and Potential Activities**

- Develop and conduct virtual visit/service training and protocols for staff.
- Pursue professional development opportunities through webinars or other online learning options.
- Provide supports for provider staff impacted by COVID-19.
- Perform any necessary strategic planning, information updates and/or data maintenance.
- Prepare and plan for summer activities that could include community-building activities, events and/or events for children, youth and families after this period of social distancing.

### **Fee-for-Service Grantees (STAR or SYSN)**

Please work with your contract manager and program specialist to complete the following:

- Identify specific activities from the list of eligible activities above.
- Shift funds within your budget to create a COVID-19 budget line item so expenditures can be tracked accordingly.
- Communicate any budget changes and transfers to your contract manager.
- Your contract manager will send back an approved expenditure report or budget.

### **Cost Reimbursement Grantees**

Please work with your contract manager and program specialist to complete the following:

- Identify specific activities from the list of eligible activities above.
- Shift funds within your budget to create a COVID-19 budget line item so expenditures can be tracked accordingly.
- Request approval from your contract manager for budget changes and transfers.

### **Entry of enrollments and documentation for services/events into PEIRS**

- For case management, family or individual counseling for existing clients affected by COVID-19, bill as family or individual counseling using the current enrollment in PEIRS and mark under service tab as “family counseling,” “individual counseling” or “service planning and service coordination” as appropriate unit served. Case management and counseling can be provided virtually, by telephone or in person and are all entered the same way in PEIRS. Use case notes to document this as a COVID-19-related support and save in client file.
- For case management, family or individual counseling for new clients affected by COVID-19, use a new enrollment in PEIRS and mark under service tab as “family

counseling,” “individual counseling” or “service planning and service coordination” as appropriate unit served. Case management and counseling can be provided virtually, by telephone or in person and are all entered the same way in PEIRS. Use case notes to document this as a COVID-19-related support and save in client file.

- For intakes that are completed virtually, please walk-through the completion of forms with the client(s) as part of the virtual visit, having the counselor or staff member complete the paperwork with the family. Then send the attached Annual Data Authorization form to the family to attain their consent. This version of the form allows for the collection of a certified signature. *NOTE: Please be sure that Personally Identifiable Information like social security numbers and dates of birth are never sent via email, unless you are able to send encrypted emails.*
- At this time there is no way for non-home visiting services to distinguish between virtual and in-person sessions in PEIRS. Your program specialist or contract manager may ask you for information about the number of virtual sessions or counseling sessions as part of your regular check-ins or quarterly report so please track this. Additionally, retain any documentation of virtual visits for monitoring purposes, just as you would for in-person services.  
Contracts with home visiting workflows should indicate in the home visit details that a visit location is remote when conducted virtually.

Home Visit Detail Expand All Collapse All

Visit Summary \* Required Field  
± Conditionally Required Field

\* Visit Date: 03/03/2020      Duration: 60 Minutes

\* Visit Location: Remote      \* Home Visitor: Smith, Suzy

\* Subcontractor: Community Healthcare Ctr. Clinic

- Each family may be allotted up to \$250 for basic needs support, with not more than half being utilized for food assistance. Please ensure adequate funds are available in the cost reimbursement category to cover basic-needs assistance. Contractors must (a) purchase all basic-needs support items, (b) keep receipts and (c) track basic-needs support provided to each family in a “COVID-19 Basic Need Support” log. Record this in PEIRS and mark under the service tab as “basic needs support”. The number of units served should be based on the number of times basic needs were provided. For example, the family received \$25 worth of cleaning supplies on Wednesday and then \$125 worth of rental assistance on Friday, there would be 2 units of service. *NOTE: If basic needs is not available for your contract-workflow in*

*PEIRS, it will be turned on soon. Please track this manually until it can be recorded in PEIRS.*

- For related support groups, (a) use support group rate to bill for these services, (b) use new or existing registration in PEIRS and (c) mark as “support group” unit served.
- For trainings on trauma, recovery from trauma or behavior management due to trauma, please ensure sufficient funds are available in the cost-reimbursement category to cover cost of trainings. Record in PEIRS as an event under seminar/conference.

Please note that when entering all non-home visiting services, there is no need to distinguish between virtual and in-person services in PEIRS.

All grantees will be asked to include a brief summary in your upcoming quarterly report explaining how your program has been impacted by COVID-19.

Please send your updated budget document with a brief plan of how you plan to implement specific activities to your assigned contract manager and program specialist by **Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup>**. Use the attached Budget Transfer form to document the changes needed, and enter the amounts into the Budget Transfer tab of your 2030. The contracting staff will review the changes and make adjustments to your 2030 if necessary.

If you have questions, please contact your contract manager.