

COVID-19 Community Assessment Update

June 2020



This update to the DuPage County Community Services Community Assessment was completed in June 2020 in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

I. Background

This Community Assessment Update is in response to a global health pandemic that has not only affected every community in the United States but has also led to the most significant economic disruption since the Great Depression. This assessment is an initial effort to capture some of the emerging needs in the community as well as to forecast how those needs may evolve over the coming weeks and months.

In December 2019, the novel coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) was discovered to be the causative agent for acute respiratory and flu-like symptoms and began infecting increasing numbers of people in the Wuhan Province of China. The first case in the United States was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on January 22, 2020. Despite efforts to contain the virus, by March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. By March 17, 2020, all 50 US States had confirmed cases of the virus.

Because of the highly contagious nature of COVID-19, the alarmingly high rate of fatalities associated with it and the lack of a vaccine or treatment, the only effective way to prevent mass illness is through restricted travel, physical distancing, frequent hand washing, coughing in elbows, not touching the face, and staying at home. By mid-March 2020, with the virus clearly past the stage of effective isolation and contact tracing, local, state and federal public health officials recommended extreme measures to minimize a public health catastrophe: mass quarantine, physical distancing, and a virtual lockdown of all public gatherings and economic activity.

While all types of people are getting sick from the disease, older adults and people of any age who experience serious underlying medical conditions, many of which are more prevalent in African American communities, and, to some extent, Latinx and Native American communities, are at increased risk for severe symptoms from COVID-19. Persons of color, immigrants, and women are also disproportionately impacted by underlying health conditions linked to poverty, face discrimination in medical care, and are more likely to work jobs that require them to leave their homes. Also, persons with disabilities or chronic conditions are more vulnerable to COVID-19 due to their inability to

thoroughly isolate themselves (need for hands-on care), physical impairments, environmental barriers, or interrupted services. The following additional populations experience differential exposure and extensive corresponding implications as a result of the pandemic: frontline workers, persons experiencing homelessness, gig-economy workers, low-income communities under quarantine, especially in urban settings, rural communities, tribal communities, incarcerated persons and returning citizens.

Children, families, individuals, and Community Action Agency staff may experience heightened stress, anxiety, and trauma as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Loss of income, heightened food insecurity, housing and energy instability, lack of access to transportation, lack of basic supplies, and increased domestic violence are growing factors as the crisis unfolds.

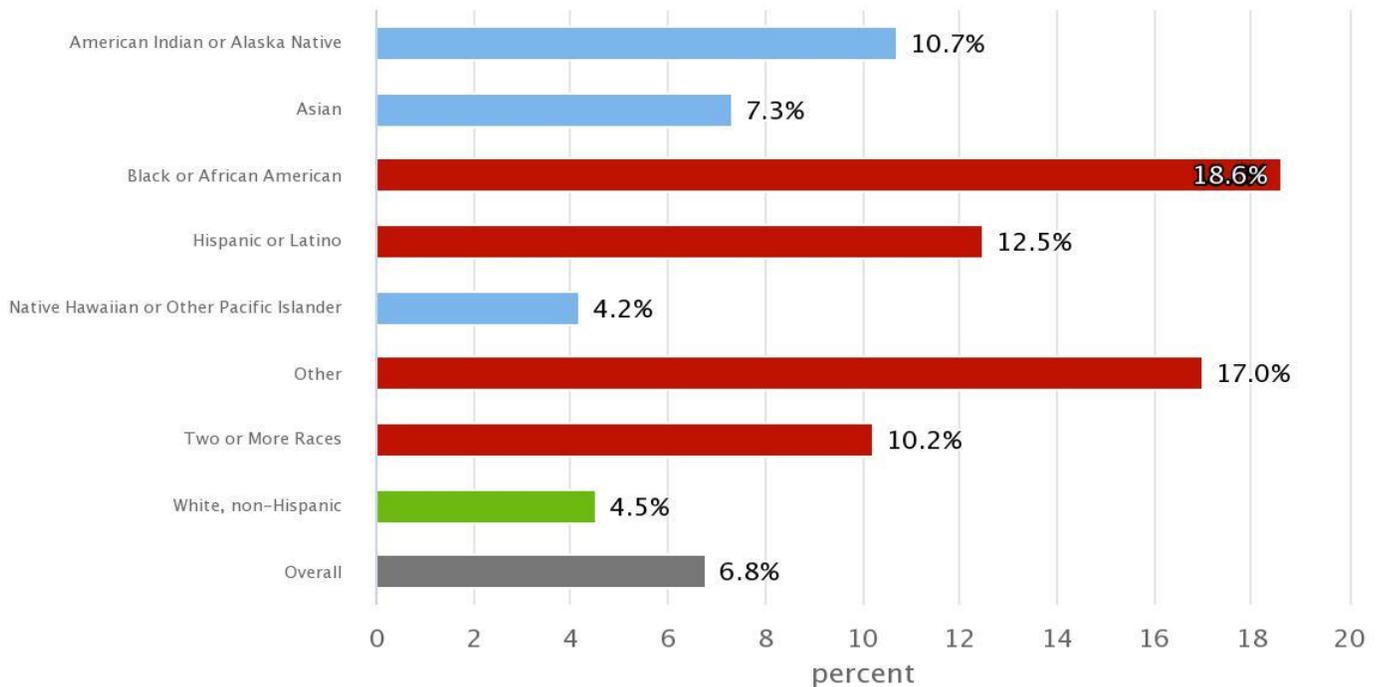
Because of the urgent and widespread needs affecting all sectors of the community, this Community Assessment update is intended to provide some initial information to describe the scope of this crisis on our community and to support the many different responses that will be required to address emerging and evolving needs. It is likely that as needs evolve, some of those needs will not be captured in this update and therefore some necessary community responses may not connect to the needs identified in this document.

The *community* assessed in this document, related to the below information, is defined as the following: DuPage County, Illinois.

The needs assessed will inform services to those affected by the crisis. It is significant to note that Congressional action will permit FY20 and special supplemental CSBG funding to serve families at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (as defined by [the US Census Bureau](#)). Specific programs or strategies will target the demographic groups most affected. Given persons of color are being disproportionately affected by both the health crisis and by the resulting economic disruption, an equity lens must be used to view current and emergent needs related to this crisis.

According to American Community Survey 2018 5 Year Estimates, 161,799 individuals in DuPage County live below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Racial and ethnic disparities can be seen by poverty status as well, as shown in the chart below. These data provide background to illustrate the extent of poverty and disparities known prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

People Living Below Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity
County: DuPage



Source: American Community Survey (2014–2018)

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II. Local public health response

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 (then known as 2019 novel coronavirus) in Illinois was announced on January 24, 2020. The case was a Chicago resident in her 60s who had recently travelled from Wuhan, China. On January 30, 2020, public health officials announced a second case – the spouse of the first travel-related case, and the first documented person-to-person spread of the virus in the United States. A third Illinois case was announced on February 29, 2020, and Governor JB Pritzker issued a disaster proclamation on March 9, 2020.

The State of Illinois issued guidance limiting large events and promoting social distancing on March 12, 2020 and announced statewide K-12 school closures the next day. On March 16, 2020, restaurants were closed to on-site dining. Governor Pritzker then issued a statewide stay-at-home order, effective March 21 – April 7, which was then extended through the end of April. All public and private gatherings of any number of individuals outside members of a household were prohibited and all non-essential businesses were ordered to cease operations (though allowing working from home where possible). The order allowed residents to leave their home for the following reasons: health and safety, necessary supplies, outdoor activity, work at essential businesses, and to take care of others. This included an exemption to work for or obtain services from human services organizations. On April 23, 2020, Governor Pritzker announced a modified stay-at-home order to continue through the end of May, mandating that residents wear a cloth face covering when six feet of social distancing is not possible,

allowing the reopening of some outdoor recreation such as golf and state parks, and allowing curbside pickup at some non-essential businesses.

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in a DuPage County resident was announced on March 15, 2020. Two days later, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported an outbreak of COVID-19 at a long-term care facility in DuPage County. As of May 25, 2020, DuPage County has reported 7,195 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 338 confirmed deaths.

On May 5, 2020, Governor Pritzker announced Restore Illinois, a five-phase plan to safely reopen the state. The plan divides the state into four regions that can move from phase to phase independently of one another, based on cases and capacity, testing, and contact tracing. DuPage County, along with the city of Chicago and the other collar counties, is included in the Northeast Region. During most of May 2020, DuPage County was in Phase 2: Flattening. Some of the limitations in place during Phase 2 include: no non-essential gatherings, essential gatherings limited to 10 or fewer, non-essential stores open for delivery and curb-side pick-up, childcare in groups of 10 or fewer or essential workers.

On May 29, 2020, DuPage County, along with the rest of the state of Illinois excluding Chicago, moved to Phase 3: Recovery. As of June 5, 2020, DuPage County remains in Phase 3. Limitations of this phase include:

- Gatherings: All gatherings of 10 people or fewer are allowed with this limit subject to change based on latest data & guidance
- Travel: Travel should follow IDPH and CDC approved guidance
- Health Care: All health care providers are open with DPH approved safety guidance
- Education and childcare: Remote learning in P-12 schools and higher education; Limited childcare and summer programs open with IDPH approved safety guidance
- Outdoor recreation: State parks open; Activities permitted in groups of 10 or fewer with social distancing
- Businesses:
 - Manufacturing: Non-essential manufacturing that can safely operate with social distancing can reopen with IDPH approved safety guidance
 - “Non-essential” businesses: Employees of “non-essential” businesses can return to work with IDPH approved safety guidance depending upon risk level, tele-work strongly encouraged wherever possible; Employers are encouraged to provide accommodations for COVID-19-vulnerable employees
 - Bars and restaurants: Open for delivery, pickup, and drive through only
 - Personal care services and health clubs: Barbershops and salons open with IDPH approved safety guidance; Health and fitness clubs can provide outdoor classes and one-on-one personal training with IDPH approved safety guidance
 - Retail: Open with capacity limits and IDPH approved safety guidance, including face coverings

*Excerpted from Restore Illinois: A Public Health Approach to Safely Reopen Our State, May 5, 2020

As a result of this unprecedented public health crisis, DuPage County Community Services is updating its Community Assessment because there is currently a significant impact on the community, and several short, intermediate, and longer-term impacts are expected.

III. Immediate impacts on the community

DuPage County, Illinois, a collar county of Chicago, has a population of 931,743 persons (American Community Survey 2018 5 Year Estimates). Twenty-three percent of DuPage County population is under the age of 18. Sixty-two percent of the population is age 18-64 and 14.5% of the population is age 65 and over. DuPage County consists of 52% females and 48% males. The majority of the population in DuPage County is White, with Asian being the next largest demographic (see Table 1 below). About 14% of persons in DuPage County are Latinx. An estimated 62,203 people (6.8%) in DuPage County live below the federal poverty level (American Community Survey 2018 5 Year Estimates).

Table 1. Race Demographics in DuPage County Compared to State and National Levels

	DuPage County	Illinois	United States
White	721,721 (77.5%)	9,189,185(71.7%)	234,904,818(72.7%)
Black or African American	44,287 (4.8%)	1,824,125(14.2%)	40,916,113(12.7%)
American Indian and Alaska Native	2,037 (0.2%)	31,864(0.2%)	2,699,073 (0.8%)
Asian	108,727 (11.7%)	690,822(5.4%)	17,574,550 (5.4%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	426 (0.0%)	4,582(0.0%)	582,718(0.2%)
Mixed Race	24,795 (2.7%)	318,413(2.5%)	10,435,797 (3.2%)

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates

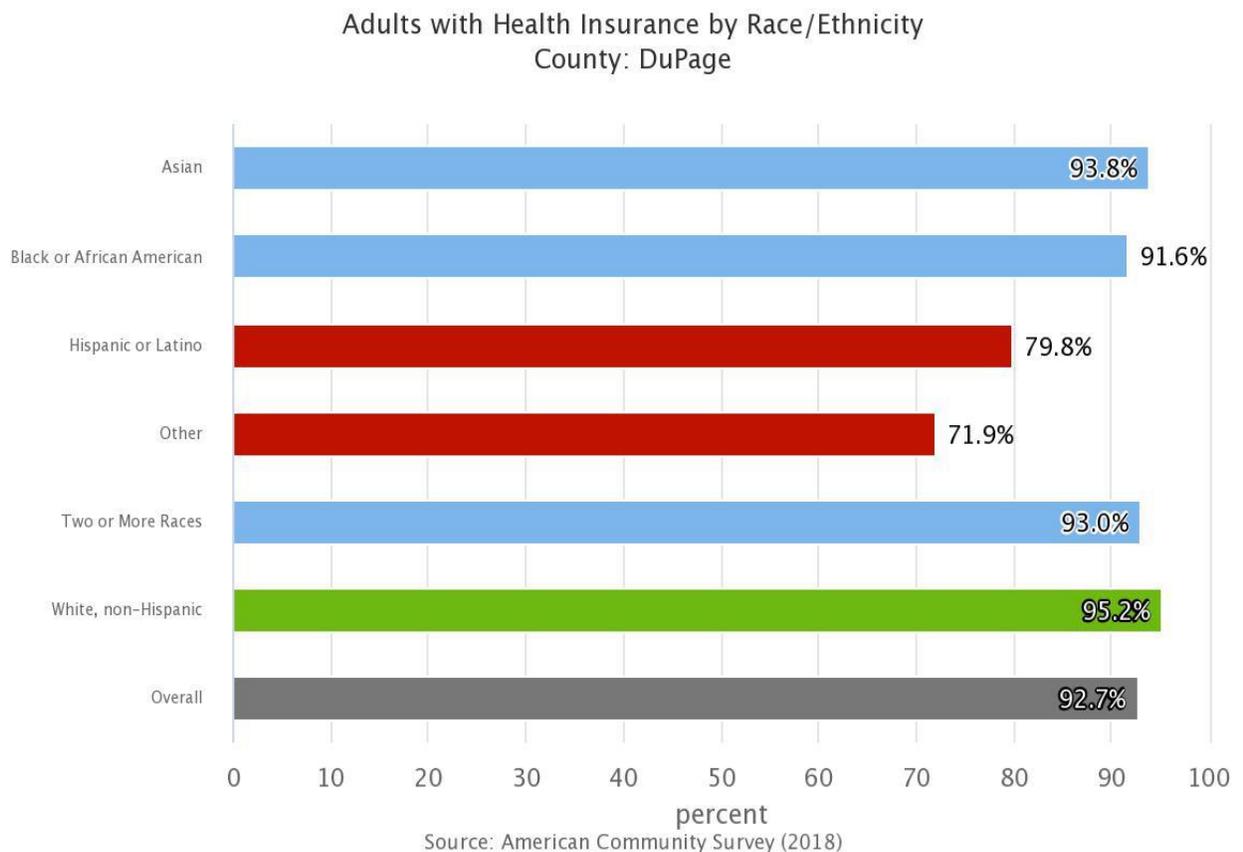
The immediate impacts of COVID-19 have been felt across all sectors of society. Some of the greatest impacts relevant to the Community Action Network have been in the areas of health, education, employment, human services provision, and community resources. According to the Engagement Network’s COVID-19 Vulnerability Footprint tool, vulnerability in DuPage County is highest in the following areas:

- Census Tract 8409.07 (Bloomingdale and Addison)
- Census Tract 8455.06 (Westmont and Downers Grove)
- Census Tract 8465.04 (Naperville)
- Census Tract 8443.01 (Lombard and Downers Grove)
- Census Tract 8455.02 (Clarendon Hills and Willowbrook)
- Census Tract 8442.02 (Lombard)

Vulnerability in these communities is based on high population density and high concentration of uninsured individuals and individuals aged 65 or older. While the prevalence of insurance coverage is high in DuPage (92.7% of adults ages 19-64 have some type of health insurance coverage), Latinx

residents and residents identifying as some other race are less likely to have insurance (see Chart 1 below).

Chart 1: Adults with Health Insurance by Race/Ethnicity



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These census tracts also fall in municipalities that have higher numbers of COVID-19 confirmed cases, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. DuPage County Municipalities with >200 Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 (as of 06/03/20)

Municipality	Number of COVID-19 Confirmed Cases as of 06/03/20
Addison*	750
West Chicago	716
Glendale Heights	598
Bensenville	477
Naperville*	474
Carol Stream	460
Lombard*	340
Westmont*	307
Aurora	293
Bloomingtondale*	260
Hanover Park	234
Wheaton	219
Downers Grove*	214
Villa Park	213
Woodridge	208
Wood Dale	205

**Municipalities contain part or all of a census tract shown to have the highest vulnerability according to the Engagement Network's COVID-19 Vulnerability Footprint Tool*

Source: DuPage County Health Department COVID-19 Dashboard

On March 11, 2020, DuPage County Health Department established a COVID-19 call center to field general questions from residents about the pandemic. Call topics include general questions about COVID-19, testing, PPE, and reports of positive cases. The call center received 3,804 calls in March, 1,799 calls in April, and 1,040 in May 2020.

Nationwide, early data suggest that the following groups have experienced disproportionately higher rates of infection and/or complications/death as a result the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Males
- Individuals 60+ years old
- People of color, particularly African Americans
- People with underlying health conditions (especially, lung disease, asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, liver disease, severe obesity, and individuals with immunocompromised conditions)

The following outlines the variety of impacts to the local community thus far:

- **Health impacts:**

- Individuals over 60, especially those with underlying health conditions have been shown to be at particular risk for severe health implications from COVID-19. DuPage County has 280,582 individuals ages 55 and older, approximately 30 percent of the total population. As of May 27, 2020, 1,292 DuPage County residents had been hospitalized as a result of COVID-19; 747 (58%) of those were aged 60 or above. Moreover, of the 341 confirmed deaths in DuPage County residents as of May 27, 2020, 341 (95%) were in adults aged 60 or above (DuPage County Health Department, 2020).
- Racial and ethnic disparities can be seen as well – the COVID-19 case rate among Latinx DuPage County residents is 5.0 times higher than the case rate of non- Latinx residents; the COVID-19 mortality rate is 1.4 times lower in Latinx DuPage County residents than non- Latinx residents. The COVID-19 case rate among black DuPage County residents is 2.3 times higher than that of white DuPage County residents and 1.8 times higher than Asian DuPage County residents. The COVID-19 mortality rate for black DuPage County residents was 1.7 times higher than for white DuPage County residents and 2.6 times higher than Asian DuPage County residents (DuPage County Health Department, 2020).
- Fifty-eight (58) long-term care facilities in DuPage County have reported outbreaks of COVID-19, totaling 1,763 cases and 288 deaths as of May 23, 2020 (Illinois Department of Public Health, 2020).
- Community health resources will be stretched thin as resources devoted to those sick with COVID-19 will limit resources available to others.
 - The Western Suburb region of Illinois (i.e. DuPage County and western Cook County) reported 125 of 482 ICU beds available (26%) and 286 of 545 ventilators available (52%), as of May 26, 2020 (Illinois Department of Public Health).
 - There is increased demand for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and local hospital systems have been collaborating with others nationwide to fund domestic production of PPE (AdvocateAurora Municipal Update, May 25, 2020). DuPage County Health Department has been coordinating both distribution of PPE from the national stockpile as well as community donations.
 - There is concern across the country that individuals are not seeking needed medical care for other conditions due to fear of being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 at a hospital or other healthcare facility (“Patients with heart attacks, strokes and even appendicitis vanish from hospitals,” The Washington Post, April 19, 2020). DuPage hospitals report similar concerns. In the most recent week (Week 3) of the U.S. Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey to assess the impact of COVID-19, 43.5% of Illinois respondents reported delaying medical care.
 - Local Federally Qualified Health Centers (Access Community Health Network, Hamdard Healthcare, VNA) have been providing COVID-19 testing.

- Mental health resources will need to be available in new and increased ways to deal with the many different stressors/traumas caused by the pandemic, especially its impact over an extended time period.
 - DuPage County Health Department operates a 12-bed crisis respite program and a 24/7 crisis hotline and has continued these operations during the pandemic. There has been an increase in volume of calls during the pandemic. Callers to the crisis hotline and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (for which DuPage County Health Department is a provider/call center) have needed follow-up and check in calls, indicating that ongoing emotional support is needed, versus a one-time crisis event.
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) DuPage reported an increase in call volume for support (“Human Services and COVID-19 3/24 Call Notes” DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform, 2020).
 - DuPage United and DuPage Sponsors provide mental health services to jail inmates and offers mental health training for police offices.
 - The Illinois Department of Human Services has launched both a Call4Calm text line and a Warm Line offering emotional support.
 - Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, behavioral health had been identified as a community priority based on a countywide community health assessment conducted by Impact DuPage. In a 2018 community survey yielding 1,577 responses, “Access to Mental Health Treatment” was the most common response to the question “Where should the community focus its attention to make things better in DuPage County?” Moreover, a regional shortage of mental health providers had already made it difficult to meet the demand for services, particularly for individuals with Medicaid health insurance coverage.

- Nutrition for school-aged children previously accessing free/reduced breakfast, lunch, and snacks is impacted as many are now removed from that food source due to school closures.
 - Approximately twenty-seven percent (26.7%) of DuPage County public school students are eligible for the free lunch program under the National School Lunch Program (National Center for Health Statistics via www.impactdupage.org, 2018-2019). As a result of school closures, districts and the YWCA CCR&R began offering free meals via delivery and grab-and-go/curbside pick-up in March 2020.
 - The Illinois Department of Human Services has implemented the Pandemic Emergency Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program to provide funds to purchase food to families whose children receive free or reduced lunch when schools are in session. For families already receiving SNAP benefits, the P-EBT funds were automatically added to their accounts.

- The industries of Accommodation/Food Service (32,129, 6.56%), Entertainment/Recreational Services (10,715, 2.19%), and Retail Trade (48,187, 9.83%) comprised 19% of employed civilians ages 16+ in DuPage County prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Claritas, January 2020).
 - In the most recent week (Week 3) of the U.S. Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey to assess the impact of COVID-19, 45.5% of Illinois respondents reported a loss in income.
 - The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Illinois was 4.2% in March 2020 and jumped to 16.4% in April 2020 (Illinois Department of Employment Security, 2020).
 - There is a high cost of living in DuPage County; according to MIT’s Living Wage Calculator, the living wage in DuPage County for a family of four (2 adults – 1 working, 2 children) is \$27.83. Minimum wage is \$9.25.
- **Educational impacts:**
 - On March 13, 2020, Illinois Governor JB Pritzker announced the closure of K-12 schools statewide, effective March 17 – March 31. The closure order was later extended to April 30, and ultimately for the remainder of the school year.
 - Closings of public schools in DuPage County are having an immediate impact on children’s education. Children with less access to resources (broadband internet, computers/tablets, technology expertise, language barriers, etc.) are most at-risk for suffering learning loss during a protracted period of school closure.
 - An Illinois State Board of Education survey of 600 teachers, administrators, and other schools leaders in March 2020 showed that two-thirds felt their district was not prepared for remote learning (“Almost two-thirds of Illinois education leaders say their schools are not prepared to do remote learning” Chalkbeat Chicago, March 16, 2020).
 - There are 206,624 children under the age of 18 in DuPage County, and 7,381 families with children living below the federal poverty level (Claritas, 2020).
 - While 89.2% of DuPage County households have an internet subscription, in six DuPage County census tracts the percentage drops below 75% (American Community Survey 2018 5 Year Estimates). In response to the pandemic, Comcast and AT&T are expanding access to affordable internet subscriptions.
 - Linguistic isolation, where every member of a household age 14 and older has some difficulty speaking English, is present in 4.5% of DuPage County households (American Community Survey 2018 5 Year Estimates). In seven census tracts, linguistic isolation is present in at least 15% of households (range: 15.1% - 28.4%) (American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates).
 - Resources available to support remote learning have varied with some DuPage County schools providing laptops to students and others providing printed packets of material.
 - Caregivers of school-age children must secure day care arrangements for their children or sacrifice employment to care for their children. These same caregivers are also

expected to be primary teachers for their children during the period of the closure. Parents with limited resources face numerous challenges as a result of this situation. The State of Illinois is operating an Emergency Child Care hotline and provider search website.

- Illinois childcare providers are encouraged to reopen during Phase 3 of Restore Illinois. Those that do are required to submit a reopening plan (e.g., policies and procedures related to sanitation, isolation of a sick child or staff member, etc.) to the Department of Children and Family Services. Reduced group sizing and social distancing are required, suggesting that the number of slots available may not meet demand.
- In DuPage County Community Services' 2018 Community Needs Assessment, a client survey yielding 2,496 responses identified "Finding Affordable Childcare" as the top Childcare and Development need.
- **Impacts on human services provision:**
 - Services to vulnerable populations are being curtailed or drastically changed. Some service providers are not operating (libraries, faith communities, Illinois Department of Human Services' Family Community Resource Centers, Goodwill Workforce Connection Centers, Chinese Mutual Aid Association), leaving gaps in services to the community.
 - Catholic Charities provides a variety of social services and operates the only permanent homeless shelter in DuPage County. They had to close the shelter and move all the residents into a hotel. They continue to work with the residents to find permanent housing, however there is great financial strain to the organization to continue to provide their normal services on top of hotel costs.
 - Loaves and Fishes Community Services/Naperville Cares has seen a large increase in requests for housing assistance/rent assistance from undocumented residents. They have also reported resident being unable to afford car payments, car insurance and transportation fees. They have also received numerous requests for hotel assistance from homeless residents. They have some funding to assist however the increased requests will exhaust their funds in a matter of months.
 - Other service providers have had to alter their service provision in significant ways, leaving some family needs unmet. For example, food pantries moved from being choice pantries to providing curbside pickup of prepackaged boxes of food. People's Resource Center, an agency that typically provides job assistance, art classes, education and tutoring, and a clothing closet, suspended all services except for the modified food pantry and financial assistance.
 - Finally, for those service providers continuing to operate, the changed circumstances have required significant, immediate adaptations that will require additional resources to support over a longer period:
 - Many clients do not have computers so utilizing a texting platform to do outreach would be helpful. Telephone system upgrades are also needed to

handle the increased volume of calls (“Human Services and COVID-19 3/24 Call Notes” DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform, 2020).

- Additional staffing/volunteers to meet increased demand and replace those who are considered high-risk for complications from COVID-19 (i.e., older adults, those with chronic health conditions).
- The DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform has convened regular “Human Service and COVID-19” conference calls to share information amongst providers during the pandemic, initiated to provide staff of U.S. Representative Sean Casten’s office with an understanding of the impact on Human Services. Themes from these calls include:
 - Safety net services such as food pantries and homeless shelters depend on older adult volunteers to provide services, and older adults are at high risk of complications from COVID-19.
 - DuPagePads, a homeless services provider, shifted away from congregate shelter and began housing elderly clients in motels/hotels and worked with other clients to develop temporary housing plans. These changes bring financial challenges.
 - There is a critical need for toilet paper and hand sanitizer for constituents.
 - Accessing public benefits presents challenges for those with language barriers, without internet access, or with limited phone minutes who must be on hold for long periods of time. Obtaining signatures is a challenge.
 - Many benefits and other COVID-related relief are not available to undocumented families.
 - Partners have seen an increase in food insecurity in their clients and food pantries have seen increased volume.
 - One provider noted an increase in domestic violence-related calls.
- **Community resource impacts:**
 - The impacts of COVID-19 on community resources are numerous and include a reduction in the availability of resources (access to group activities, commercial services), a scarcity of some resources (health care, food and emergency supplies) and/or needs for resources that have not previously been required in this community in any significant capacity.
 - DuPage CRIS (Community Resource Information System) is a comprehensive, basic needs resource database. The top weekly searches during the COVID-19 pandemic to date include special education, housing expense assistance, services for disabled and senior residents, healthcare referrals, and emergency payment assistance. See chart below for additional search data.

- The YWCA Metropolitan Chicago surveyed their Childcare Resource & Referral clients regarding needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, estimating that 3400 individuals indicated that they have the following basic needs. See Table 3 below.

Table 3. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Childcare Resource & Referral Clients Basic Needs During COVID-19

Type of Need for DuPage County Families	Project HELP	Early Head Start	Little Prince	West Chicago Families	Total Number of Families	Number of Individuals* per Family
Food/Food Delivery	50	25			75	75
Gift Cards for Basic Needs	200				200	400
Rental Assistance	150		75		225	225
Bill Assistance	150				150	150
Diapers/Wipes/Formula	100			60	160	320
Household Cleaning Supply Kit	300				300	300
Individual Reusable Face Masks	300				300	1500
Employment Assistance	75				75	150
Computers (Work and School)	30				30	30
Gas Cards	50				50	100
General Financial Assistance	150				150	150
Total # of Families/Individuals:					1715	3400

- The broad impacts of COVID-19 on this community have created an even more urgent need for coordination and collaboration of resources among the public sector, the public health sector, first responders, educators, the business community, the faith community and many others. DuPage County Community Services plays an important role convening organizations, people and resources to support families.
 - DuPage County Department of Community Services has received 1820 calls from March 16, 2020 until May 29, 2020 for assistance about COVID-19. The top requests for assistance include rental and mortgage assistance, utility assistance/LIHEAP, Homeless assistance (hotel rooms and shelter information) and senior services for people who needed caregiver services or questions about the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
 - DuPage County Department of Community Services partnered with Caputo's Fresh Markets to collect and distribute food to seniors that live alone.
 - DuPage County has partnered with Wheaton College to provide alternative housing to first responders who are self-isolating during the pandemic.
 - DuPage County and Choose DuPage have launched Reinvest DuPage, a small business relief grant program to support local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

IV. Anticipated near and long-term impacts

The needs above are already established through initial data and anecdotal reports from customers, staff, board members and community stakeholders. Based on these already-observed events, it is likely that there will be near-term (1-3 months) and longer-term (greater than 3 months) impacts that require immediate planning. A partial, but not complete, list of the anticipated impacts includes:

- ***Prolonged service disruptions***

The disruptions in service delivery to customers are expected to continue for a substantial time. This is likely to lead to ancillary challenges for customers that may become long-term issues.

- Head Start and other early childhood education providers have been closed during the pandemic, except for some providing emergency childcare. There is uncertainty about when services might resume and how to address the loss of learning during the closure.
- The migration of many human services to phone and internet platforms (e.g., public benefit applications) presents challenges to residents with limited resources and limited access to technology.
- The lack of summer camps and other childcare options will present challenges as businesses reopen and caregivers are asked to return to work.

- ***Prolonged employment issues***

Sudden layoffs and other employment disruptions are being addressed by emergency response measures; however, it is anticipated that long-term recovery efforts will be required to help customers reconnect to the workforce, particularly those for whom employment assistance has not previously been required.

- The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Illinois was 4.2% in March 2020 and jumped to 16.4% in April 2020 (Illinois Department of Employment Security, 2020). In February 2020, 1,823 unemployment initial claims were filed in DuPage County; that number rose to 29,794 in March 2020 and 36,813 in April 2020, the unemployment rate is 14.8% (Illinois Department of Employment Security, 2020).
- Career centers (e.g. College of DuPage and workNet DuPage) as well as job coaching services (e.g., People's Resource Center) will be needed to address the high volume of unemployed workers. DuPage County will continue to invest CSBG regular funding dollars into job training.

- *Prolonged agency capacity issues*

Policies limiting in-person staff/customer interactions may be in place for an extended period of time and agencies will need to maintain remote work and remote customer-interaction infrastructure to be responsive to these needs in a more sustainable capacity.

- DuPage County Department of Community Services has adjusted the way clients are seen by completing all appointments over the phone. Moving forward, clients will be able to drop off documents, complete appointments by phone or online, and will limit face to face contacts. Clients with no access to technology will be scheduled for a face to face appointment in a socially distanced intake room.
- Safety precautions have been taken by altering the agency intake rooms to include larger spaces and separate entrances. The County is also investing in a contactless appointment check in system for clients.

- *Prolonged community resource coordination*

The short-term community coordination needs cited in this Assessment are presumed to continue into the long-term. Current conditions may persist for an extended period; recovery efforts will require coordination; ongoing community preparedness to guard against a future outbreak will also require ongoing convening and new community readiness strategies based on what is shown to be effective during the current crisis.

- DuPage County Department of Community Services is the lead entity and coordinates the DuPage County Continuum of Care or CoC. The CoC consists of 63 not-for-profit and government agencies. The CoC has been actively coordinating homeless services through the COVID-19 shelter in place order and will continue to coordinate homeless service provision, coordinated entry planning, and supportive services coordination.
- DuPage County Department of Community Services is active with the North East Illinois COAD and coordinates the DuPage Disaster Planning Committee. Both groups coordinate to provide assistance during a natural disaster, pandemic, local disasters such as a fire, and assist in planning a M.A.R.C.
- DuPage County Department of Community Services serves on the DuPage Early Childhood Collaboration and its Steering Committee. We assist in providing information on social services as well as link childcare providers, Head Start, and other educational partners to our services.
- DuPage County CSBG Advisory Board and CSBG Subgrantees play an active role in coordinating services and determining unmet needs.

- DuPage County Department of Community Services serves on the DuPage WIOA Board and One-Stop Center MOU committee that helps direct and plan workforce development funding.
- DuPage County Department of Community Services serves on the DuPage Health Coalition Board. This board oversees Access DuPage that provides health care to the uninsured in DuPage County.
- DuPage County coordinates with the DuPage Community Foundation and United Way Metropolitan Chicago to provide funding to not for profits in DuPage County. This coordination has assisted the County in making funding decisions for the Health and Human Services Grant Fund as to not duplicate funding and services.
- DuPage County coordinates and partners with the DuPage County Health Department and Northern Illinois University to complete the tri-annual comprehensive community needs assessment. This partnership will continue to ensure we have a comprehensive view of the community and assist in providing updated COVID-19 needs throughout the funding time frame.

V. Addressing Equity Implications

Though immediate data may not yet be easily obtained regarding the demographics of those most impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic, previous Community Assessments, as well as countless government and academic studies have established that structural racism, xenophobia, sexism, stigmatization and othering persist – and are often exacerbated – in times of crisis. Community Action recognizes the obligation to ensure that the barriers of structural race, gender, and other inequities are addressed during this time of crisis and beyond. Therefore, it is with this lens that communities are invited to use the equity lens and the question, “why”, to understand the specific needs of the diverse populations served.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights health and socioeconomic disparities in DuPage County. The COVID-19 case rate among Latinx DuPage County residents is 5.0 times higher than the case rate of non- Latinx residents. The COVID-19 case rate among black DuPage County residents is 2.3 times higher than that of white DuPage County residents and 1.8 times higher than Asian DuPage County residents. The COVID-19 mortality rate for black DuPage County residents was 1.7 times higher than for white DuPage County residents and 2.6 times higher than Asian DuPage County residents (DuPage County Health Department, 2020). Latinx and black or African American residents have higher rates of emergency department visits and hospitalizations due to diabetes and hypertension (Illinois Hospital Associate via Impact DuPage, 2016-2018). Median household income for Latinx (\$65,457) and black or African American (\$57,211) residents is significantly lower than the overall

value for DuPage County (\$88,711) (U.S. Census Bureau via Impact DuPage, 2014-2018). Black and Latinx workers are vulnerable during this crisis; they are more likely to work low wage jobs and be without cash savings (Prosperity Now, 2020).

VI. Conclusion

DuPage County and the state of Illinois have implemented wide-ranging policies to slow the spread of COVID-19, including school closures, closure of non-essential businesses, and stay-at-home orders. There have been more than 7,500 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in DuPage County and more than 350 deaths, as of May 29, 2020. Unemployment initial claims filed in DuPage County rose from 1,823 in February 2020 to 29,794 in March 2020 and 36,813 in April 2020.

Key priorities identified in the DuPage County COVID-19 needs assessment are listed below. CSBG CARES Act funds will address the majority of these impacts. DuPage County will also continuously re-evaluate our County's unmet needs and adjust funding as needed.

- **Unemployment:** Will be addressed through the County's WIOA funding and CSBG general grant funding.

workNet DuPage continues to receive funding for job training assistance through WIOA and through the regular CSBG grant. Currently, the regular CSBG grant is funding two Work Programs one for training stipends to train individuals for careers in high demand fields such as medical assistants, truck drivers and computer related fields. The second program is a pilot program which trains job seekers recovering from addiction in the manufacturing field.

Regular CSBG funding is also supporting several other job readiness, coaching and mentoring programs. We use CSBG funds for Outreach Community Services and 360 Youth Services which provides job skills training, work readiness, GED and other work-related programming to young adults entering the job market. Regular CSBG funding is meeting the gaps identified in our community needs assessment. We will be re-evaluate in 6 months to determine if CSBG CARES Act funding will be needed to address any further unemployment needs.

- **Food insecurity:** Will be addressed through the CSBG Cares Act; County general funds; DuPage Social Service Assistance not for profit fund; and CSBG general grant funding.

DuPage County Community Services will partner with Northern Illinois Food Bank to provide CARES Act funds which will provide additional food credits to the 60 food pantries within DuPage County. The additional food credits will enable each food pantry to purchase more food to meet the growing demand seen since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

Funding will also be provided to the three largest food pantries in DuPage County: People's Resource Center, West Suburban Community Pantry and Loaves and Fishes for personal care items, cleaning supplies and paper products to ensure residents have access to these items to stay healthy. Finally, funding may also be provided to Teen Parent Connection to assist teen parent families with formula, diapers and other baby needs.

- **Utility payments** (gas, water, electric): Will be addressed through LIHEAP; DuPage Social Service Assistance not for profit fund; CSBG Cares Act; and CSBG general grant funding. DuPage County Department of Community Services Intake & Referral and Case Management Units will provide assistance with gas and/or electric for households between 151-200% of poverty and for water bill assistance up to 200% of poverty.
- **Health Care and Mental Health Services:** Will be addressed with County general fund; CSBG Cares Act; and CSBG general grant funding. CSBG CARES Act funding will be used to assist with Access DuPage. Access DuPage is a program which gives undocumented individuals access to primary health care and prescriptions. CSBG CARES Act funding will ensure this population is able to stay healthy during this pandemic when not eligible for other health care programs.
- **Housing (Homelessness, Rent, Mortgage, Eviction/Foreclosure):** Will be address by County General Funds; CSBG Cares Act; Community Development Block Grant; Emergency Solutions Grant; and CSBG general grant funding. CSBG CARES Act funding will provide funding to our Continuum of Care partners to provide help to pay for hotel stays for homeless individuals, moving expenses, household items, and assist in finding housing for homeless families and to prevent evictions/foreclosures.
- **Determining unmet needs after the unemployment benefits end:** DuPage County Department of Community Services will partner with Northern Illinois University and the DuPage County Health Department to redesign and administer a needs assessment to capture comprehensive data to ensure we are meeting the unmet needs of our residents. A full Countywide assessment will start September 1, 2020 and run through June 30, 2021.

DuPage County's goal is to ensure we coordinate services and not duplicate funding and or services. We also are tasked with monitoring social service organizations to ensure unmet needs are being addressed. DuPage County is the entitlement CDBG organization, Emergency Shelter Grant recipient, Community Action Agency (CSBG/LIHEAP/IHWAP), Continuum of Care, WIOA Funding recipient, and IDPH funding for the Health Department.

DuPage County Intake and Referral Service (I&R) is the doorway to social services in DuPage County. We ensure coordination because we are the information clearinghouse for many affiliated agencies and provide central intake and referral for many of the social service programs within the county. DuPage County's vision of "one-stop approach" for social service needs is the main reason CSBG dollars continue to be allocated for program support in this area. The CSBG Advisory Board, DuPage County Board, as well as numerous agencies rely on DuPage County to appropriately screen, refer, advocate, and obtain information for our clients and residents. Intake &Referral Specialists screen all clients requesting services for the County as well as set up appointments for the LIHEAP Program and CSBG Programs. Intake &Referral Staff are also co-located within the Illinois Department of Human Services Family and Community Resource Center in DuPage County.

Linking families and individuals to medical care, food, shelter and other assistance is an essential piece in keeping DuPage County healthy and meeting our mission of self-sufficiency. CSBG Cares Act funding will be integral to ensure our residents rebound from this pandemic.