

Coronavirus Q&A Webinar #8 with DCFS Acting Director Marc Smith

Monday, May 4, 2020 (Recording: <https://vimeo.com/414953141>)

DCFS Acting Director Marc Smith

Thank you for having me on the call today and I appreciate all the members and partners who join our weekly calls for updates. I hope that you find them valuable. I do appreciate being able to provide them to you. And it really puts us in a good situation to make sure that we're all current and we're all on the same page.

Updates:

We will continue our COVID-19 financial support for as long as the Governor's executive orders continue. The 20% increase for residential providers' contracts will be extended through the end of May to match the government shelter at home. This means a 20% increase will be from March 16 through May 31. We will also extend the \$100 per month increase in board payments for each youth in care and paid placement for another month. So in addition to the \$100 increase of board payment for March and April, families will see an additional \$100 for the month of May.

We are releasing new guidelines. **We released [new guidelines last week for managing youth who are COVID-19 positive or exposed](#).** This document provides direction to DCFS staff and private agency staff. The document, which is in a new format, is an effort to make temporary practice changes easier for everyone to review and for DCFS to keep updated. The guidance starts with the table of contents, and includes sections covering everything from consideration for placement of the youth, to how to safely transport youth in the vehicle. We welcome your feedback on the formatting of the document, and any suggestions your team may have for improvements. We're going to use a similar format to release a master document this week that will include all of the COVID-19 related guidance and practice changes in one easy to use document.

I want to also give you an update on the availability of protective gear. **DCFS continues to work around the clock to provide protective gear to our staff and to yours.** DCFS has provided protective gear to our staff and yours, including 8,050 gloves, nearly 500,000 masks, and 997 gallons of hand sanitizer. **Note that we are currently prioritizing all N95 and NK95 masks for staff directly in contact with us and family who are confirmed positive for COVID-19, including residential settings that are struggling to isolate youth who are positive.** We have shipped hundreds of NK95 masks in the last week to assist residential providers.

We continue to share procedural masks with all direct service staff and have additional inventory arriving all the time. **Please continue to use the new forms and mailbox DCFS PPE request for requesting additional protective equipment for your staff.** We received over 100 requests since putting this process in place. Some of you have still been contacting various staff directly, which will delay the process. We continue to work on

supplies every day. We have hundreds of thousands of additional masks and gloves and disinfectant supplies still in order. Whenever we receive additional supplies, we will continue to share them with our POS partners.

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I mentioned last week that DCFS is providing Chromebooks for youth in care who need assistance accessing distance learning. Those 725 Chromebook have been shipped out and were sent directly to the appropriate school district to be configured and distributed to our youth in care.

As you know, we also purchased Chromebooks for use in DCFS and private agency offices to assist families with visitation by video. Those are being set up for DCFS by a private vendor, and we hope to have them shipped out to offices by the end of the week.

DCFS is continuing to work with mandated reporters around the state to help keep an eye on our children while they are spending so much of their time isolated at home. **We partnered with ISBE to send a second notice to every teacher in the state this week, giving them ideas for creative ways to communicate with and assess their students.**

Messages are going out this week to local law enforcement departments across the state of Illinois, including the Illinois State Police, and through various law enforcement associations, asking them to help engage DCFS when they suspect abuse and neglect is happening in the home. Lastly, through the American Academy of Pediatrics and other medical partners, we've sent out tips and reminders for medical professionals across the state of Illinois to make sure they are taking every opportunity to assess children in their care during this crisis.

I know many of you have been raising the issue of excess revenue in the past few weeks, particularly with the COVID-19 crisis. Royce, our CEO, will be covering this topic on Wednesday at the CWAC Finance and Administration subcommittee*. For those of you with questions on excess revenue, please make sure you join that meeting. It is scheduled for Wednesday at noon.

Lastly, we continue to update the frequently asked questions we receive from ICOY. We published and updated on April 30. Please continue to submit your ongoing questions and concerns to DCFS or ICOY and we will do our best to provide clear answers.

I'd like to take one more minute to again thank you and more specifically your staff for their ongoing continued hard work. We have worked very hard to ensure that we continue our good partnership and our good stewardship of the child welfare responsibilities here in the state of Illinois. As you can see from this brief conversation today, we have been reaching out to not only our direct child welfare partners, but the other people across the state including schools, courthouses, our court system, and police partners across the state to ensure that we are all working together to keep our children and families safe. Thank you for your time and attention today. We look forward to our one on one communication.



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ICOY CEO Andi Durbin

Thank you so much, Mark. And that's good news about the extension of the additional resources through the time of the Governor's emergency order. ICOY will have folks on that CWAC call on Wednesday at noon, so if you're not able to participate in that ICOY be a part of that and provide you an update.

***FOLLOW-UP:** To attend the CWAC Finance and Administration subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, May 6 at noon, please email ICOY CEO Andi Durbin (adurbin@icoyouth.org) for the WebEx link.

If you have additional field-specific questions for DCFS around coronavirus, please [submit them here](#).

DCFS will hold a standing listen-only webinar every Monday at 4 pm to address submitted questions and deliver updates. The next webinar will be on Monday, May 4 at 4 pm. [You can register for that here](#).