The Mon Valley Providers Council presents:

The Communicator

October - December 2023

Contents

Property Tax/Rent Rebate Update

Studies Show: Heritage Students Are Excelling

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

Overcoming Challenges to Achieve Dreams

Free Job Training Services for Youth Ages 18-24

FAFSA and Student Aid Webinar

23rd Annual HIV/AIDS Awareness Walk

Office Space Available for Rent at HSCMV

Tenant Agencies & Services at HSCMV

Communities Served

About the MVPC

MVPC Steering Committee

2023 MVPC Members

Expanded Eligibility for Property Tax/Rent Rebate in 2024

Office of Senator Jim Brewster

173,000 more people will be eligible for the Property Tax or Rent Rebate next year! Starting in mid-January 2024, the Department of Revenue will open the filing period for eligible individuals to submit applications for rebates on property taxes and rent paid in 2023. Several changes are being made to the program:

- The maximum standard rebate is increasing from $650 to $1,000.
- The income cap for both renters and homeowners will be made equal and increase to $45,000 a year. The income cap for homeowners will increase from $35,000. The income cap for renters will increase from $15,000.
- The income caps will be tied to the cost-of-living moving forward, meaning those who receive a rebate won't lose their eligibility in the future due to no fault of their own.

There are no changes to the forms or schedules used for filing a rebate application, meaning prior applicants will use the same process to file their applications that they are accustomed to. Applicants of the Property Tax/Rent Rebate program must still fall under one of the previous four categories to qualify. This means the program will continue to benefit eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older.

Call Senator Brewster's office at 412-664-5200 for more information about the rebate program.

The Communicator is the official newsletter of the Mon Valley Providers Council (MVPC), an alliance of over 70 human service agencies serving more than 37 communities in the Mon Valley of Allegheny County. The MVPC is a program of the Human Services Center Mon Valley, a United Way Agency. To learn more about the MVPC, our member agencies, and their services, read this edition and visit our website at www.hscmonvalley.org.

human services center mon valley

519 Penn Avenue, Turtle Creek, PA 15145
412-829-7112 • 412-829-4363 (fax)
www.hscmonvalley.org
www.facebook.com/HSCMonValley

A copy of the official registration and financial information of the Human Services Center Mon Valley can be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Studies Show: Heritage Students Are Excelling

Heritage Community Initiatives

For forty years, Heritage Community Initiatives (HCI), a human services nonprofit based in Braddock, Pennsylvania, has been committed to pragmatic programs that impact the lives of thousands of individuals and families across 49 communities in Allegheny County. In fact, the organization is the only nonprofit in all of Pennsylvania that is dedicated to directly addressing three constructs of socioeconomic mobility – Transportation, Education, and Nutrition. This decades-long commitment of providing unparalleled access to these essential services has not only resulted in millions of rides, thousands of children given a best-in-class start to their education, and hundreds of thousands of meals served, but also has made a broader measurable impact. A recent study commissioned by Heritage and conducted by The Hill Group showed that the economic and societal impact of Heritage Community Initiatives results in over $33 million dollars infused into the regional economy each year.

Studies conducted this year concluded that over 90% of students at Heritage Education Programs are exceeding in key areas such as math, literacy, and social-emotional development– and 90% of 3-4 year olds have increased their verbal vocabulary in the past year. Heritage offers the highest quality early learning experiences in curriculum based classrooms led by professional educators, 70% of whom have at least a Bachelor's degree and 100% of whom have at least an Associate's degree. Heritage provides engaging partnerships, educational collaborations, daily scratch cooked meals made in-house, and provides school year wrap-around care for pre-kindergarten and school aged students.

Heritage Community Initiatives is the only organization in our region to offer Head Start, Early Head Start, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, and accept Child Care Works child care subsidy with additional scholarships available – Heritage programs are for every child. Fall enrollment is happening now. Call 412-271-3300 to secure your child's place today.

Heritage
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

BE A TAX PREP HERO

Now, more than ever, low-income families need help filing their taxes.

When you become a volunteer tax preparer or greeter, you change lives and make an immediate difference. Last year, volunteers saved working families **more than $2 million** in tax prep fees, leading to $10.6 million in refunds.

No professional experience is necessary. We provide free training. Morning, afternoon, and evening shifts are available. Last year, **our volunteers prepared over 640 returns, bringing nearly $700,000 in refunds back to our community**. Many households use their refunds to pay for basic needs like food, housing, and utilities.

Our site in **Turtle Creek** will be open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from January to April. You can **make a difference where you live and work** by volunteering with us.

Continuing education credits are available for volunteers!

- **CONVENIENT**
- **REWARDING**
- **SHORT-TERM COMMITMENT**

To learn more about volunteering, contact Stephanie at seson@hscmonvalley.org or 412-437-8229.

United Way
United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania

FREE TAX PREP

human services center mon valley

Overcoming Challenges to Achieve Dreams

Goodwill of Southwestern PA

Alexis and her two children

As a devoted mother of two, Alexis embarked on a challenging journey to balance her education aspirations with the responsibilities of parenthood. However, her determination to succeed and the unwavering support of Goodwill's EARN Program would prove to be the key ingredients in her recipe for success.

Alexis's dream had always been to become a nurse, a noble calling that she pursued diligently. She initially enrolled at California University of Pennsylvania, but the demands of motherhood and other hurtles in life made it increasingly difficult for her to manage her academic commitments. Faced with the daunting task of juggling childcare, transportation, and finances while pursuing her education, she made the tough decision of putting her career aspirations on pause.

Alexis made the courageous decision to enroll in Pittsburgh Technical College's (PTC) Practical Nursing Program. However, the transition to this new chapter in her life was far from straightforward. She needed a reliable support system to help her navigate the challenges to schooling and employment that lay ahead. She found the EARN program through Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania and found that this program would prove to be an invaluable resource, offering a comprehensive range of services tailored to her specific needs.

Goodwill's EARN Program supported Alexis's education by providing childcare to her two children, transportation, financial assistance, and more to help her find success on her journey to becoming a nurse.

Throughout her journey, Alexis's determination never wavered. She remained focused, leveraging the support of the EARN Program and other services offered by Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania. On June 29, 2023, Alexis achieved a remarkable milestone in her life. With the steadfast support of Goodwill's EARN Program and her unwavering dedication, she proudly graduated from PTC's Practical Nursing Program.

Continued on next page

Alexis's story serves as a testament to the power of determination, resilience, and community support. Balancing parenthood with educational aspirations is no small feat, but with organizations like Goodwill offering a helping hand, dreams can indeed become a reality. Alexis's journey is a shining example of what can be achieved when individuals are empowered to overcome obstacles and reach for their dreams.

Interested in learning more about EARN's free services? Call 412-632-1710 or visit www.goodwillswpa.org/earn to learn more.

Administrative offices for Goodwill EARN & Work Ready are located in Lawrenceville at 118 52nd Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201 (free parking; on bus line). Services can be provided at this and other Goodwill locations throughout Allegheny County – virtually or in person.

Free Job Training Services for Youth Ages 18-24

Goodwill of Southwestern PA

YouthWorks, a program of Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania, is now recruiting young adults, ages 18-24, who can benefit from free programs Goodwill has to offer.

YouthWorks helps young people who need help finding a job, enrolling in a community college or university, or who are looking to make a career change. YouthWorks can also help youth get their GED in addition to many other support services including transportation, financial literacy, and individualized community-based case management services.

Specific young adult programs include:

Retail Training Program – targeting young adults looking to begin a career in retail but need work experience. The 12-week program prepares individuals for a job in retail and pays $11.00 while training in a Goodwill store. Youth who successfully complete the program are guaranteed a job at a Goodwill store in their community.

IMPACT Job Search – targeting young adults considering college or starting a job search. This program offers premier job readiness curriculum, mobile case management, assistance with resumes, mock interview, and job search planning.

For more information, visit www.goodwillswpa.org/youth-services.

To enroll, call 412-632-1742 or visit www.goodwillswpa.org/youth-info.

FAFSA and Student Aid Webinar

Staff from PHEAA will discuss the financial aid application process, what types of aid are available for students, and strategies to think about affordability before applying for post-secondary school admission.

Staff will also discuss the newly redesigned FAFSA and answer your questions.

Thursday, November 16, 2023
12pm - 1pm
On Zoom

RSVP to receive the Zoom link:
https://hscmonvalley.org/monthly-webinar/

Questions? Contact Katie:
412-436-9537
kgascoine@hscmonvalley.org

PHEAA
Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

human services center mon valley

23rd Annual HIV/AIDS Awareness Walk

Turtle Creek, PA – The Human Services Center Mon Valley (HSCMV) hosted the 23rd Annual Mon Valley HIV/AIDS Awareness Walk on Saturday, October 7, 2023. It was HSCMV's second time hosting this event in Turtle Creek. Fifty-seven participants attended the Walk which went through Turtle Creek and Wilmerding. AHN – Center for Inclusion Health provided free HIV testing for the event. After the Walk, participants enjoyed a continental breakfast and had the chance to learn about resources and services offered by Aids Free Pittsburgh, The Open Door, Pittsburgh Area Center for Treatment of HIV (PACT)/UPMC Center for Care of Infectious Diseases, All of Us PA Research Program at the University of Pittsburgh, Macedonia FACE, Internal Medicine-Recovery Engagement Program (IM-REP), Latterman Family Health Center, AIDS Free Pittsburgh, AHN – Center for Inclusion Health/Positive Health Clinic, and Allies for Health + Wellbeing. This year's winner of the traveling trophy, awarded to the team with the most participants, was the Human Services Center Mon Valley.

The Walk is hosted annually by HSCMV's HIV/AIDS Working Group and aims to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in the Mon Valley specifically. The proceeds generated from the Walk support other HIV/AIDS awareness and education events hosted throughout the year by the Working Group, including events for World AIDS Day and National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. The Working Group would like to thank the Walk's sponsors and participants for their continued support and commitment to making this event possible year after year. They would also like to thank the volunteers and the Turtle Creek Police Department, the Turtle Creek Fire Department, and the Pitcairn Police Department for all of their hard work on the day of the event.

human services center mon valley

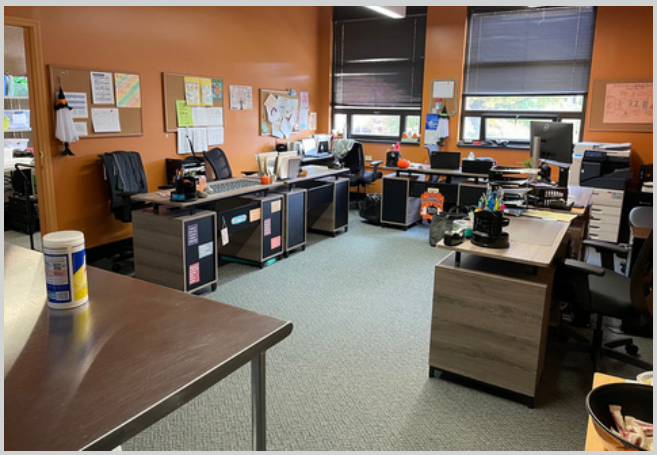
OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

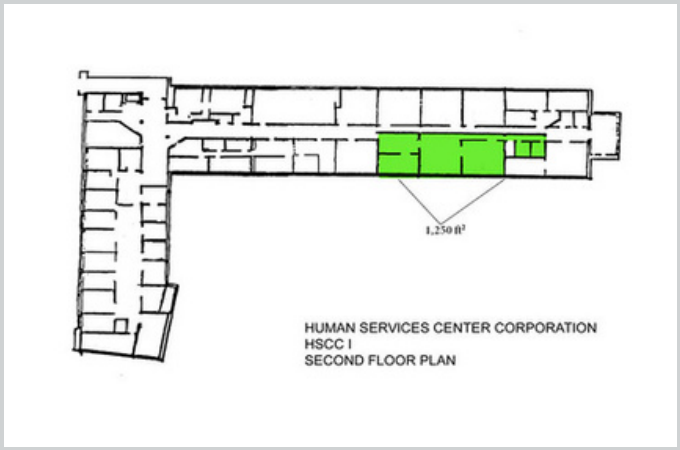
Is your agency looking for an office suite complete with two kitchenettes and a private restroom? Space in the Human Services Center Mon Valley could be the right fit!

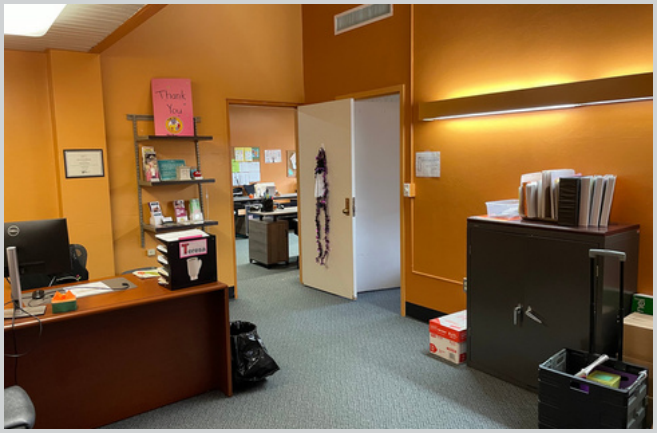
PROPERTY INFORMATION & AMENITIES

- 1250 SF total office space
- Affordable leases include utilities, cleaning and maintenance services, and free parking for both staff and clients
- ADA-compliant and fully handicap accessible
- Meeting rooms and computer lab available
- Access to courtyard
- Located on several Pittsburgh Regional Transit bus lines and a Heritage Community Transportation route

Located on Penn Avenue in Turtle Creek, the Human Services Center Mon Valley (HSCMV) was established in 1982 as a "mall" for human services and currently houses multiple tenant agencies, community outreach services, and youth programming. The HSCMV works within 38 communities in the Mon Valley collaboratively to help children, families, and adults in this area improve their lives. Establishing relationships between tenants and outreach programs to best serve community needs in the area is a high priority.







Available office space is located on the second floor.

This area includes a private restroom, two kitchenettes, and large rooms perfect for meetings and open-concept office space (~1,250 SF).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Stephanie Eson, MSW
Operations & Community Programs Manager

412-829-7112

seson@hscmonvalley.org

human services center mon valley

Tenant Agencies at the Human Services Center Mon Valley

Adagio Health Nutrition Services
412-925-0650

Allegheny County Health Dept. - W.I.C. Program
412-350-5801

Allegheny Intermediate Unit - Community School East
412-464-4043

Braddock Carnegie Library - Turtle Creek Extension
412-829-7112

Early Learning Resource Center
412-350-3577

Eastern Area Adult Services
412-824-6880

Healthy Start
412-247-4009

Human Services Center Mon Valley
412-829-7112

Learn "N" Play Development Center
412-829-0240

Mon Valley Providers Council
412-829-7112

North Hills Community Outreach
412-487-6316

Pantry Network of Eastern Suburbs
412-824-0006

Squirrel Hill Health Center: Turtle Creek
412-422-7442

TCV Community Services
412-824-8510

YouthPlaces
412-434-0851

Services at the Human Services Center Mon Valley

The Human Services Center Mon Valley, located at 519 Penn Avenue in Turtle Creek, provides a variety of services to residents in eastern Allegheny County communities and the Westinghouse/Turtle Creek Valley. For more information on the programs below, contact 412-829-7112.

- **Youth LIFE After-School Program** begins in September. Youth LIFE After-School Program serves 85 youth going into first through fifth grade with academic and social enrichment programming.
- **KOOL Summer Program** is a summer academic enrichment program serving 85 youth going into first through fifth grade in the Fall.
- **Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)** is a workforce development and college readiness program for seniors in the East Allegheny, McKeesport Area, Penn Hills, West Mifflin Area, and Woodland Hills High Schools.
- **Supports for Success** helps individuals seeking to achieve self-sufficiency through employment and/or education by providing referrals and guidance.
- **Free Tax Preparation** is available for individuals with low income. For more information, call 412-437-8229.

Communities Served by the MVPC

Braddock
Braddock Hills
Chalfant
Clairton
Dravosburg
Duquesne
East McKeesport
East Pittsburgh
Elizabeth Borough
Elizabeth Township
Forest Hills
Forward Township
Glassport
Homestead
Jefferson Hills
Liberty
Lincoln
McKeesport
Monroeville
Munhall
North Braddock
North Versailles
Penn Hills
Pitcairn
Port Vue
Rankin
South Versailles
Swissvale
Turtle Creek
Versailles
Wall
West Elizabeth
West Homestead
West Mifflin
Whitaker
White Oak
Wilkins
Wilmerding

About the Mon Valley Providers Council

Our Mission: The Mon Valley Providers Council (MVPC), in collaboration with individuals, families, and groups in the Mon Valley communities, will define and address mutual issues and needs. Building upon the providers and communities, the MVPC will promote agendas and develop resources for collective action.

Who We Are: The MVPC, a program of the Human Services Center Mon Valley, is an alliance of human service and related organizations, which are based in or have a substantial service presence in the Mon Valley. The MVPC serves as a formal network for information and resource exchange among human service providers in the Mon Valley. The MVPC involves its member organizations in Working Groups which address crucial issues in the Mon Valley in the areas of Employment and Training, Health, Housing, and Youth. These four Working Groups involve the participation of over 70 dues-paying members and over 250 staff members of those organizations. Through these standing Working Groups, the MVPC promotes cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among its member and participating organizations in an effort to fill gaps in human services in Mon Valley Communities.

Staff: The MVPC is staffed through the Human Services Center.
Current MVPC staff are:
Dave Coplan, Director
Katie Gascoine, Outreach Coordinator
Annie Rummell, Program Assistant

MVPC Steering Committee

Darla Poole, Chair, Auberle • **Lisa Scales**, Vice Chair, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank • **Kelleigh Boland**, Jefferson Regional Foundation • **Sean DeYoung**, Allies for Health + Wellbeing • **Mary Jo Guercio**, CCAC • **Tiffanee Heywood**, Goodwill of Southwestern PA • **Shari Holland**, UPMC McKeesport/Latterman Health Clinic • **Tanisha Hunt**, Macedonia FACE • **Leah O'Reilly**, Human Services Center Mon Valley • **James Phillips**, TCV Community Services • **Alicia Romano**, Community Health Services • **Bob Sukolsky**, AHN-Forbes Family Medicine • **Lynn Tatala**, AIU Project ELECT • **Christine Zellefrow**, UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Mon Yough • **Laura Zinski**, Immediate Past Chair, Mon Valley Initiative • **Nancy Osterhus**, Ex-Officio Member

2023 Membership Listing for the MVPC

Adagio Health
Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh
AHN-Forbes Family Medicine
AIU Community School East
AIU Head Start
AIU Project ELECT
Allegheny Children's Initiative
Allegheny County Health Department
Allegheny Family Network
Allies for Health + Wellbeing
Auberle
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh
Black Women's Policy Center
Braddock Carnegie Library Association
Century Heritage FCU
Clairton Family Center
Communities in Schools, Pittsburgh Allegheny County
Community College of Allegheny County
Community Human Services
Computer Reach
Discovery House
Duquesne Family Center
East Allegheny Family Center
Eastern Area Adult Services
Every Child, Inc.
Family and Immigrant Connections Program
Family Resources
Forbes Hospital
Fund My Future PGH
Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Healthy Start
Heritage Community Initiatives
Highlands Family Center
Human Services Center Mon Valley
Jefferson Hospital
Jefferson Regional Foundation
Just Harvest
Just Mediation Pittsburgh
Lincoln Park Family Center
Literacy Pittsburgh
Macedonia FACE
McKeesport Agape Center
McKeesport Family Center
McKeesport Hospital Foundation
Mental Health America of Southwestern PA
Mon Valley Boys' Academy
Mon Valley Initiative
Mon Yough Area Chamber of Commerce
North Hills Community Outreach
Omicelo
PA CareerLink Allegheny East
Pantry Network of Eastern Suburbs
Penn State Greater Allegheny
Pittsburgh Financial Empowerment Center
Pittsburgh Regional Transit
Rainbow Kitchen Community Services
Rankin Christian Center
Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh
Squirrel Hill Health Center: Turtle Creek
State Senator Jay Costa
State Senator Jim Brewster
Steel Valley Family Center
Sto-Rox Family Center
TCV Community Services
The Blessing Board
The Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh (Duquesne Family Support Center)
Touching Families, Inc.
University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
UPMC Children's Hospital Family Care Connection
UPMC McKeesport
UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Mon Yough
Veterans Leadership Program
Wesley Family Services
Wilkinsburg Family Center
Women for a Healthy Environment
YWCA Greater Pittsburgh