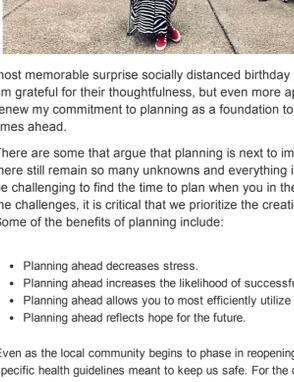




[COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESOURCES](#) | [Financial Help](#) | [Seniors & Adults with Disabilities](#) | [Veterans](#) | [Crime Victims](#) | [Justice Involved](#)



Director's Message Planning Ahead

This month, I became one of the many people who joined the Quarantine Birthday Club. It is no secret that I really like birthdays, but this year was very different. I was not inspired to make any plans and definitely had no energy to celebrate.

Fortunately, I am surrounded by a Division of Community Services team that live by the African proverb that "tomorrow belongs to the people who plan for it today". They not only secretly planned, but delivered a most memorable surprise socially distanced birthday party to ensure that I did in fact celebrate. I am grateful for their thoughtfulness, but even more appreciative that they helped me to reset and renew my commitment to planning as a foundation to approach our work together during these times ahead.

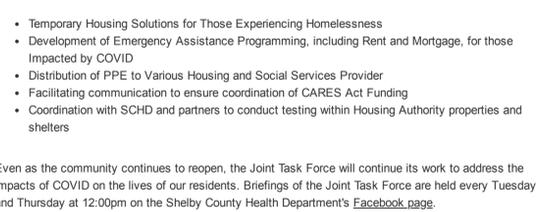
There are some that argue that planning is next to impossible in a situation like COVID-19 where there still remain so many unknowns and everything is changing so rapidly every day. It also can be challenging to find the time to plan when you are in the midst of responding to a crisis. In spite of the challenges, it is critical that we prioritize the creation of plans even more during this crisis. Some of the benefits of planning include:

- Planning ahead decreases stress.
- Planning ahead increases the likelihood of successful results
- Planning ahead allows you to most efficiently utilize money, time, and human resources
- Planning ahead reflects hope for the future.

Even as the local community begins to phase in reopening segments of business, we will continue to have specific health guidelines meant to keep us safe. For the distant future, life will not look as we remember. Face masks, Zoom meetings, disinfectant shortages and 6 feet distance markers will continue to be a part of our daily lives. While we don't know exactly what to expect, there is great value in taking time now to plan for the months ahead. Our plans may not be perfect and likely will change along the way, but having a plan is our best shot at getting through this pandemic together.

Stay Safe.

Dorcas Young Griffin
Director of the Division of Community Services
Shelby County Government



COVID-19 Joint Task Force

On March 20, 2020, Shelby County Government and the City of Memphis collaboratively mobilized the COVID-19 Joint Task Force. The priorities of the Joint Task Force include:

- **Safer At Home Compliance:** Communication of health directives and orders, social distance and guidelines for isolation and quarantine
- **Testing, Tracing and Case Finding:** Ensuring availability and access to testing, identification of contacts of those exposed
- **Predicting the Surge and Capacity:** Using data to predict timing of peak of disease in the community and assessment of existing resources to address
- **Preparing for the Surge:** Ensuring necessary facilities, manpower, protocol and equipment necessary to address surge
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Developing policies for use and creation of channels for procurement and distribution
- **Preparing to Reopen:** Identifying indicators for safety reopening and developing policies and plans for phasing reopening

The Joint Task Force is comprised of 16 Emergency Support Function (ESF) subgroups that work on specific issues. The Shelby County Division of Community Services and City of Memphis Housing and Community Development are leading efforts of ESF-6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Temporary Housing and Human Needs. Since the beginning of the task force, this ESF continues to work on a variety of issues, including:

- Temporary Housing Solutions for Those Experiencing Homelessness
- Development of Emergency Assistance Programming, including Rent and Mortgage, for those Impacted by COVID
- Distribution of PPE to Various Housing and Social Services Provider
- Facilitating communication to ensure coordination of CARES Act Funding
- Coordination with SCHD and partners to conduct testing within Housing Authority properties and shelters

Even as the community continues to reopen, the Joint Task Force will continue its work to address the impacts of COVID on the lives of our residents. Briefings of the Joint Task Force are held every Tuesday and Thursday at 12:00pm on the Shelby County Health Department's [Facebook page](#).



Community Services Agency

Yes, You Can Now Apply for Utility Assistance Online.

There's no denying the financial toll the Coronavirus is taking on our community. We want to help ease the burden. The Community Services Agency continues to provide qualified Shelby County residents with financial assistance for your utility bills, rent/mortgage, and medical prescription payments. **Eligible residents can receive up to \$650 toward their utility bill and \$1000 toward their rent or mortgage.**

And **yes, online applications are now available** for returning clients only. If you have received assistance between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2019, you are now eligible to apply online at: <https://thsolutions.com/TNOnlineApplication>.

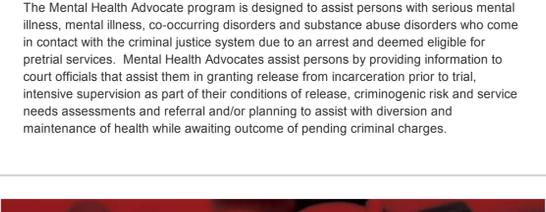
New clients or returning clients who don't want to apply online can apply by email or mail. To apply, call 901-222-4212 or visit www.shelbycountytncsa.org.



COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund

On Thursday, May 14, 2020, Shelby County Division of Community Services partnered with Kroger and the Agricenter International to distribute food and essentials to residents who applied for and were approved for services from the Shelby County COVID-19 Relief Fund Program. Roughly 220 food and essential boxes valued at \$200 per box were distributed to residents. Boxes included items such as meat products, produce, bath tissue, and more.

The Division of Community Services plans to carry on this partnership with Kroger as we all continue to address community needs during the pandemic. In order to receive services, residents must have applied for services and been approved. A new round of applications will be available in the summer. We are committed to serving Shelby County residents through our COVID Emergency Relief Fund so please stay tuned and regularly check back for updates regarding the acceptance of new applications.



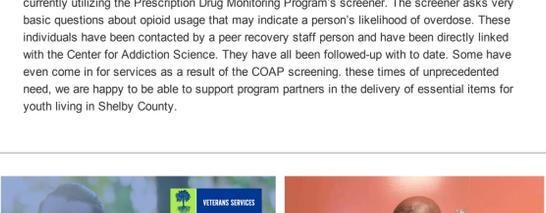
Crime Victims & Rape Crisis Center

Take Care To Self-Care

It's [#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth](#), so we want to remind everyone that anxiety can present in several different ways. Isolation during Covid-19 can make post-traumatic anxiety worse - be sure you're taking time for yourself. Check our Instagram [page](#), of stories and highlights for self-care tips and coping strategies.

During [#MentalHealthAwarenessMonth](#), CVRCC reminds survivors of crime that you're not alone. Trauma symptoms can feel overwhelming on top of this pandemic and our staff is available Monday through Friday, 8am-6pm, by calling 901-222-3950 or by submitting an online request.

www.shelbycountyttn.gov/cvrrc



Behavioral Health Unit on the Frontlines

The Behavioral Health Unit continues to work to help people with mental illness navigate the complex judicial system. Go To Meetings are used to conduct staffing, contact with the judge and participants and case management visits with participants enrolled in the Mental Health Court and Criminal Justice Liaison Program. There are still some face to face contact with participants when services are provided in the community, but for the most part, we have turned to technology as a wonderful means of communication for our programs.

Mental Health Court

Shelby County Mental Health Court diverts persons who are severely and persistently mentally ill from the traditional criminal justice system and engage them in comprehensive community based mental health services and/or substance abuse treatment, medical care, housing childcare, transportation, education and vocational programs while being judicially monitored. It is the intent to structure support and services that can be maintained after participation in the court is complete and avert future episodes of incarceration.

Criminal Justice Liaison Program

The Criminal Justice/Behavioral Health Liaison Project is a community based project which facilitates communication and coordination among community, criminal justice and behavioral health systems to achieve common goals of decriminalizing mental illness, co-occurring disorders and substance abuse disorders. The goals of the project are: early identification of persons with serious mental illness, mental illness, co-occurring disorders or substance abuse disorders who are incarcerated or at risk of incarceration and divert them to behavioral health and community services; continue to develop working relationships and sustainable systems between criminal justice and the community and improve the understanding of needs and rights of persons with serious mental illness, co-occurring disorders or substance abuse disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system.

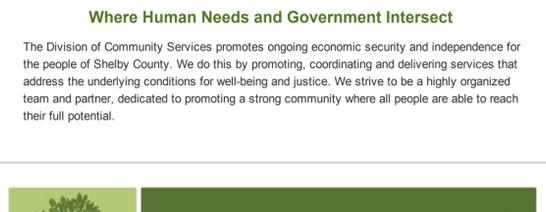
Mental Health Advocate

The Mental Health Advocate program is designed to assist persons with serious mental illness, mental illness, co-occurring disorders and substance abuse disorders who come in contact with the criminal justice system due to an arrest and deemed eligible for pretrial services. Mental Health Advocates assist persons by providing information to court officials that assist them in granting release from incarceration prior to trial, intensive supervision as part of their conditions of release, criminogenic risk and service needs assessments and referral and/or planning to assist with diversion and maintenance of health while awaiting outcome of pending criminal charges.



Addressing the Opioid Crisis

Since April, the Office of Justice Initiatives has been working tirelessly to continue addressing the opioid crisis even amid COVID-19. The global pandemic has presented opportunities for us to shapeshift and adjust with the ever-changing needs in these unprecedented times. Pretrial Services has been able to screen 96 individuals for High Risk of Overdose. Out of 96 individuals, 52% answered yes to one of the preliminary questions. Even though there are a few questions that trigger a response to refer to treatment, we follow up with every individual. We are currently utilizing the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program's screener. The screener asks very basic questions about opioid usage that may indicate a person's likelihood of overdose. These individuals have been contacted by a peer recovery staff person and have been directly linked with the Center for Addiction Science. They have all been followed-up with to date. Some have even come in for services as a result of the COAP screening, these times of unprecedented need, we are happy to be able to support program partners in the delivery of essential items for youth living in Shelby County.



Veterans Services

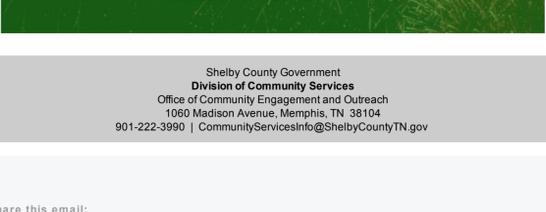
Veterans Office Reduces Wait Times

A second Veteran Services Officer (VSO) position was announced in April and filled on May 1, 2020 to help provide the area's Veterans with continued quality service. This position is important to our Veterans during these uncertain times with regard to their family's financial security due to the Coronavirus.

But how can adding one person make a difference to the Veterans in the Metropolitan Memphis area? This important addition:

- reduces the appointment wait time for Veterans.
- reduces the turnaround time of calls made by veterans seeking assistance from four days to same day or one day.
- allows more Veterans in Shelby County to receive assistance via phone or in person (when necessary).

Despite the adjustments that have been made in the availability of needed services, the Veterans Services Office has never closed and remains open during regular work hours to provide the assistance that might be needed to file claims NOW. We can be contacted at 901.222.4237.



Aging Commission of the Mid-South

Serving Seniors Via Social Media

The Aging Commission of the Mid-South is now providing rich information and resources on their new [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. Follow them where they provide information and assistance to connect seniors, adults with disabilities, their families and caregivers with the tools needed to maximize their independence and safety in their community.

Learn more about: Meals On Wheels, CHOICES, In Home Respite, Legal Assistance, Personal Care, SNAP, State Health Insurance Plan, Transportation, Homemaker Services, Public Guardianship, Senior Center Activities, Prevention Of Elder Abuse

Division of Community Services

Outreach Ramps Up Through Virtual Meetings

We never closed and continue to meet with crucial partners to connect residents with the services they need. Please follow us for the most up to date information and to speak directly with a representative through the messenger systems on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

Our staff is using phone, email, online information, video chatting, and social media to continue to serve you. Email CommunityServicesInfo@shelbycountyttn.gov, call 901-222-3990, or visit us at www.shelbycountyttn.gov/community-services.

Where Human Needs and Government Intersect

The Division of Community Services promotes ongoing economic security and independence for the people of Shelby County. We do this by promoting, coordinating and delivering services that address the underlying conditions for well-being and justice. We strive to be a highly organized team and partner, dedicated to promoting a strong community where all people are able to reach their full potential.

Shelby County Government
Division of Community Services
Office of Community Engagement and Outreach
1060 Madison Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104
901-222-3990 | CommunityServicesInfo@ShelbyCountyTN.gov

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