

Allegheny County
Department of Human Services
One Smithfield Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Phone: 412.350.5701
Fax: 412.350.4004
www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs

THE FUTURE OF DHS: THE 2007 LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE COMPETITION

RESEARCH REPORT



Contributors

Many individuals assisted in the planning and execution of the 2007 Local Government Case Competition. The Department of Human Services would particularly like to acknowledge the contributions of the competition's judges and staff support:

Judges:

- **Judith Barricella**, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- **Bruce Baron**, University of Pittsburgh Institute of Politics
- **Karen L. Blumen**, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- **Erin Dalton**, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- **Caroline Donohue**, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
- **JoAnn Hannah**, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- **Georgia Hernandez**, Chair CYF Advisory Board
- **Mildred E. Morrison**, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- **Tracy Soska**, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work
- **Patricia Valentine**, Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- **Claire Walker**, Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation
- **William Wermuth**, H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management, Carnegie Mellon University
- **Susan White**, Hillman Foundation
- **Hide Yamatani**, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

Department of Human Services Staff:

- Randy Aussenberg
- Eileen Brown
- Steve Chopek
- Shellie Cooper
- Erin Dalton
- Kristen DeComo
- Carolyn Jefferson
- Dana Kunzman
- Chuck Keenan
- Katie Miller
- Charles Odah
- Debbie Pollard

Contents

Introduction	.....1
Background	.....2
Why a Case Competition?	.....2
The Participants: Students and Judges	.....2
The Case: DHS in the Year 2017	.....2
Managing the Competition	.....3
Case Findings	.....3
Students' Ideas for DHS in 2017	.....3
Trends	.....4
Population/Demographic	.....4
Political/Social Other Trends	.....4
Organizational Change	.....6
Technological Changes	.....12
Competition Evaluation	.....13
Students' Feedback and Evaluation	.....13
Judges' Feedback and Evaluation	.....18

Introduction

In November 2007, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) sponsored its first annual Local Government Case Competition with the generous support of the Human Services Integration Fund. The event was successful in engaging and fostering positive relationships with local graduate students while eliciting their creative and analytical ideas about a timely issue facing local government. Specifically, the Local Government Case Competition sought to:

1. Engage graduate students in local environmental and government issues (especially human services);
2. Encourage graduate students to consider employment opportunities with DHS;
3. Utilize local student talent to provide DHS with provocative ideas about making the Department more environmentally sustainable;
4. Build relationships among local graduate students;
5. Open communications between the competition's judges and student participants; and
6. Allow students to practice what they are learning in a supportive atmosphere.

Background

WHY A CASE COMPETITION?

In 2007, DHS celebrated its 10 years as an integrated department serving the community. To commemorate this anniversary, DHS planned a series of events to report back to the community and those stakeholders who have contributed to the innovation and progression of an integrated Department. In addition to a series of programs involving RAND, Carnegie Mellon University, and the University of Pittsburgh, DHS sought to engage students in the celebration through a Local Government Case Competition. Through this competition, DHS sought to apply the creativity and knowledge of local graduate students toward considering how DHS will look in the next 10 years. Competing teams worked to solve a real problem under simulated business conditions such as tight deadlines and incomplete information to formulate workable, action-oriented recommendations. Student teams presented their results to panels of community stakeholders and DHS staff on November 10, 2007.

THE PARTICIPANTS – STUDENTS AND JUDGES

Fifty-two graduate students, divided among 13 teams, participated in the Case Competition. The participants included 11 students from the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA) and 15 students from the School of Social Work (SSW) at the University of Pittsburgh, and 26 students from the Heinz School of Public Policy and Management (Heinz) at Carnegie Mellon University.

The majority of the teams consisted of 1 SSW, 1 GSPIA, and 2 Heinz students. The 2007 Competition was adjudicated by 14 judges, representing community agencies (5), local universities (3) and the Department of Human Services (6). An additional 11 DHS staff members handled logistics and planning, ensuring that the event went smoothly.

THE CASE: DHS IN THE YEAR 2017

The mission for Case Competition participants was presented in the opening night session as follows:

“It is the year 2017. You are human services delivery leaders presenting your accomplishments over the past decade to the community. What has become of human service delivery in the region? What does the Department of Human Services look like? Who is being served? What services are being provided? Where/when are those services being provided? How are those services being provided? What does the workforce look like? [Any] other issues? How do we get from here to there?”

Background

Important considerations:

- Any assumptions your team has made.
- The basis for, or evidence to support, your ideas/plan.
- Big ideas.
- An explanation of the approach you think DHS can use to realize your ideas/plan.
- Critical success factors, barriers and / or risks associated with your ideas/plan.
- Time for the committee members to ask questions.
- Presentation in Microsoft PowerPoint; Executive Summary in Microsoft Word or as a PDF

MANAGING THE COMPETITION

DHS kicked off the Case Competition on Thursday evening, November 8, by introducing the case and answering students' questions. At that time students gathered in their teams and started devising a "game plan" for the following 36 hours. Teams then had all of Friday to independently conduct their research and planning. In their post-competition evaluations, students reported that they spent between five and 24 hours working on the case. All teams reconvened on Saturday morning at 8:30 a.m. to turn in electronic copies of their presentations and hard copies of their executive summaries. Although teams presented to their judging panels throughout the day according to a predetermined schedule, this morning deadline was set in order to prevent any teams from gaining an advantage over their competitors. All competing teams met the Saturday morning deadline.

Both the Thursday night reception and the Saturday presentations were held at the Human Services Building in downtown Pittsburgh. DHS served catered meals and snacks throughout all sessions.

T-shirts were awarded to all who participated and cash prizes were awarded to three winning teams. The first place team received \$5,000, the second place team received \$2,500, and the third place team received \$1,500.

Case Findings

STUDENTS' IDEAS FOR DHS IN 2017

Many themes emerged from the student presentations, which for summary purposes are organized into three major categories: trends, organizational change, and technological change. This section includes language directly from student presentations without specific student or team attribution.

Case Findings

Trends

Population/Demographics

- Increase in healthy seniors
- Increase in dual caregivers
- Increase in minority (including LGBTQ) and immigrant populations
- Increase in veterans from recent wars will increase the demand for post-traumatic stress disorder treatment, homelessness solutions, and drug and alcohol treatment
- Increase in obese children
- Increase in juvenile offenders: one team predicted that an increase in juvenile offenders will demand that DHS improves human services related support within the juvenile justice and school systems. Another suggests a data-driven focus on child welfare services in attempt to avoid the economic and social costs of juvenile offenders
- Possible decrease in young people who leave the region due to lack of employment.

Political/Social/Other Trends:

- Legalized gambling arrives: DHS will have to expand behavioral health services to address a rise in gambling addictions. One group anticipates gambling as causing higher property values, an increase in low-wage jobs without benefits, and increases in traffic and crime
- Universal health care arrives and DHS is able to connect more clients to services
- Race, income, power disparities remain constant
- Increase in energy costs taxes DHS and its clients
- DHS is environmentally responsible
- Increase in natural disasters and extreme weather and the need to be prepared for it

Several of these identified trends are described in more detail below.

Increase in healthy seniors. Many of the teams highlighted this growing demographic and suggested programmatic/organizational/technological changes to address it.

- Expand of senior interests programs to connect older adults to education, community activities, recreation, employment training and jobs. Education programs for senior include empowerment skills and making seniors aware of their rights and paths of recourse, including financial planning programs for seniors.

Case Findings

...

- Engage Seniors as volunteers
- Create/Expand programs for older women
- Change human resource structure to require retraining geriatric social workers. One group suggests an agency focus on increasing the percentage of workers with specialized training in gerontology
- Increase independent living programs: innovative technologies from Blueroof combine hardware and software to enable senior citizens and consumers with special needs to live in their own homes longer, safer, healthier and more independently, through the use of:
 - o cameras
 - o motion detectors
 - o pressure sensors
 - o distant home health care nursing
 - o remote monitoring of patients medical conditions (e.g. DM, hypertension...)
 - o remote monitoring of patients commitment to medications.
 - o medical informatics (medical data analysis and dissemination)
 - o bathroom floors with fall detectors.
 - o voice recognition doors

The following represents three slides (of many) that describe teams' interest in older adults

Demographic Shift

- › Older adults aged 60 – 75 are in better health and more active, need different services
- › Expanded "Senior Interests" program to all 64 Senior Centers
- › "Senior Interests" program connects older adults to education, community activities, recreation, employment training, and other programs
- › Encouraged employment opportunities for active older adults at contract service providers

› 16

Improvement in Existing Services: Prevention of Senior Citizen Abuse and Neglect

What:	› Education Programs for Senior Citizens
Why:	› To make senior citizens aware of their rights, common violations of their rights, ways to protect themselves from such violations, and what to do if violated
How:	› Partnerships with senior care facilities
Result:	› Reduction in reports of abuse/neglect and of false reports, increase in victim-reported cases › Overall reduction in resources used to investigate reports

Aging Population - Addressing Changing Demands continued...

- › Preparing the new workforce
 - › Retrain geriatric social workers (Graduate Certificate in Gerontology)
 - › Hartford Practicum Partnership Program - Encourage/ incentivize workers to pursue MSWs and return to public sector
- › Revise and reformat services to meet contemporary needs of older adults
 - › Health and fitness
 - › Recreational activities
 - › Employment and Volunteer Opportunities

› 17

Case Findings

Another major focus of several of the teams is DHS' increasing environmental responsibility and leadership. Specifically, teams thought DHS should institute:

- An environmental policy statement
- Environmentally preferred purchasing
- A green fleet
- Environmental retrofits to LEED standards
- A “green” office culture
- Motion sensitive lighting
- Recycling
- Reduced use of paper
- Increased use of technology
- Supplied laptops to employees
- Purchased alternative energy
- Encouragements/enticements for service providers to go “green”
- Increased partnerships with service providers that provide green housing
- Funding for environmental education projects

Several teams pointed out the unintended benefits of such social responsibility. For example, the opportunities to save money, the positive publicity that can result from such endeavors, and the reduction of sick time and increase of staff productivity.

Some of the team-specific slides are included below.



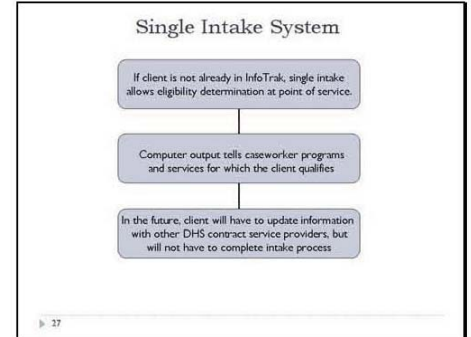
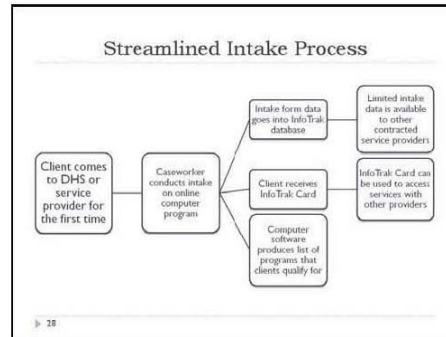
Organizational Change

Numerous organizational changes were cited, including internal organizational changes, provider innovations and expansions in how DHS communicates with its clients.

Many groups had ideas for how DHS would reorganize or reorient itself. The main internal organizational changes follow:

Case Findings

- DHS becomes more integrated. This would include streamlining and centralizing the intake process. Several specific slides are included below.



- DHS becomes more customer (and citizen) focused. One group focused on a philosophical shift from “consumers” to citizens. Under this vision, DHS is not just a safety net but rather a means to empower citizens to go out as agents of change in the communities.
- DHS institutes generalist caseworkers (or grouped teams). Specific ideas include:
 - Assigning a primary service provider contact to clients, so clients do not have to communicate with multiple program office workers
 - Adding a level of “generalist” caseworkers who would be trained in children, adults, and senior issues that could then navigate each of the program offices with the help of “department specialists”
 - Grouping staff from all program offices in regional locations instead of centralized program offices.
 - One group envisions that a primary caseworker will serve as the team liaison.

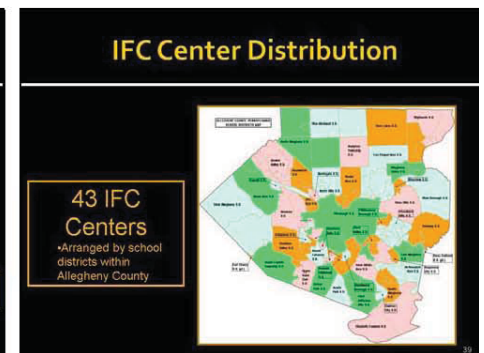
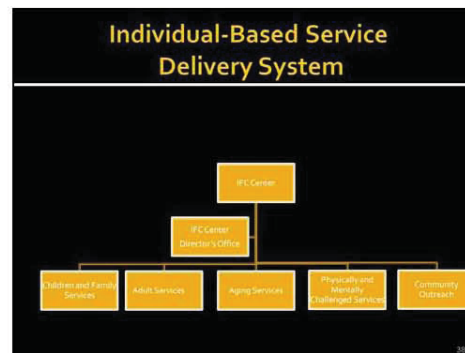
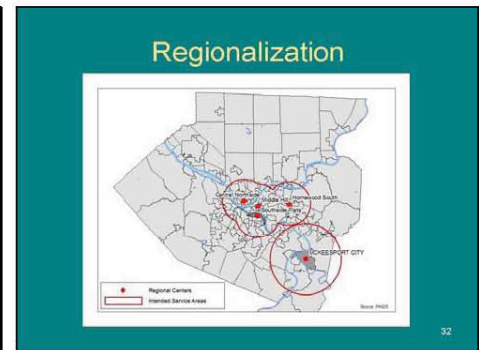
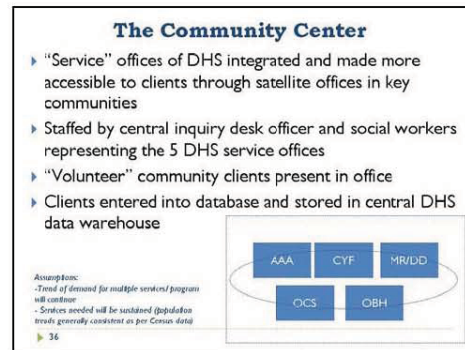
Two specific examples are included below:



Case Findings

- Service Integration Centers (Neighborhood Branch Centers) are created. One-stop shop, community service centers would replace the siloed program offices. Philosophy of such an orientation is to address the whole family and to prevent clients from having to go to multiple offices. Plus, such an orientation would necessitate better knowledge of immediate neighborhood services. DHS will place an evaluation panel into the community, decreasing barriers to consumers beginning services, increasing consumer volume, and reducing wait-times for care.

Several team specific examples are included below.

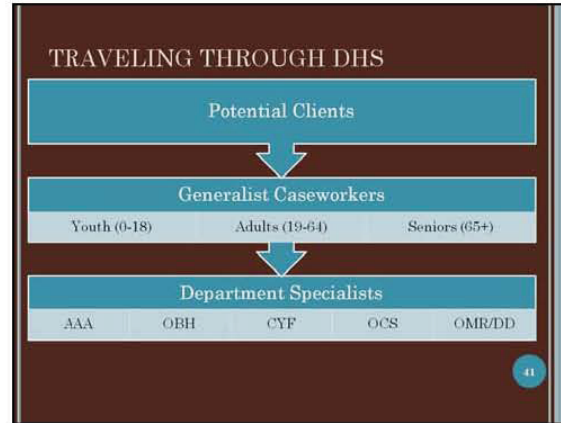


- DHS institutes competency areas (to replace program offices) and service integration areas (to replace support offices). See example below.



Case Findings

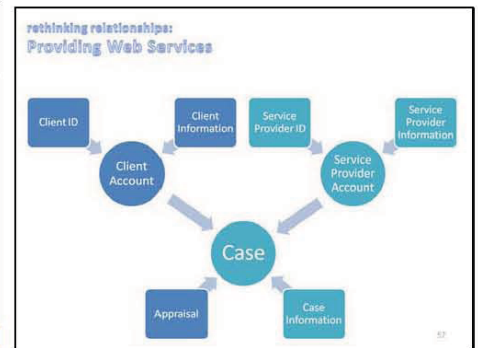
- Service delivery shifts to one built around youth, adults, and seniors. See team example below.



The student presentations also reflected changes for DHS contracted providers and our relationships with these agencies. The students predicted:

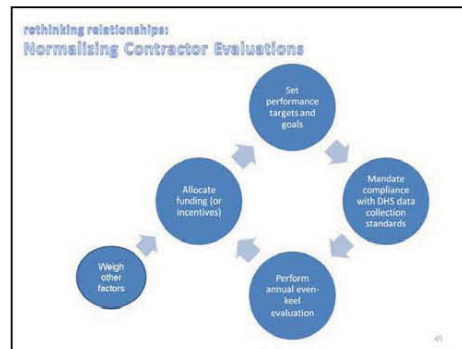
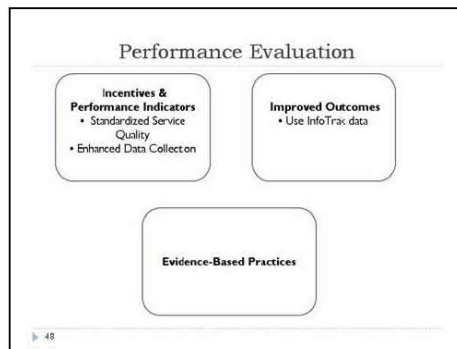
- An increase in faith-based and for-profit providers
- A decrease in the number of providers due to mergers
- More collaboration, including social networking, amongst providers. Team specific examples included below:

 Improvement in Operations: Human Services Knowledge Share	
What:	Human Service Knowledge Share: A Platform that allows Human Service providers to share best practices
Why:	Recognized as a leader and innovator in Human Services, Allegheny County DHS implemented program to help foster culture of innovation in the industry
How:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Human Services Knowledge Share online community for Human Service providers to share best practices • Organizing annual conference for strategic planning and platform for sharing best practices
Results:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allegheny County DHS continues to receive recognition of outstanding contributions in Human Services • Improved dissemination of tried and true practices in Human Services • Implementation of programs proven successful in departments throughout the region and county



- DHS-sponsored capacity-building fund for agencies – a seed initiative employing local foundations and private fundraising
- Provider evaluations instituted: many groups pointed out the importance of monitoring and evaluating the contracted providers. Some of that evaluation is achieved through new technology. Team specific examples follow:

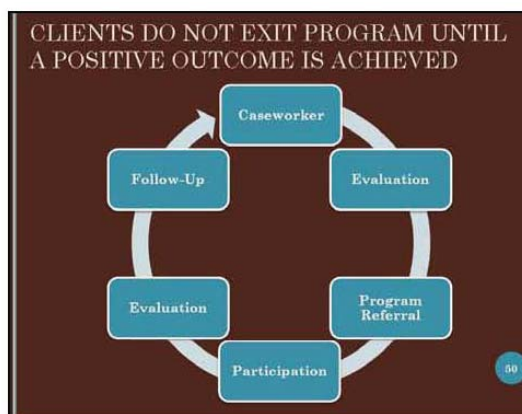
Case Findings



- DHS provider branding and certification: DHS will create a “DHS brand” that will function as a visible, public seal of approval. Contractors that exhibit positive outcomes would be granted this DHS seal of approval. One team’s example is below.



- Service provider awards: one group proposed a “Service Provider Awards” ceremony. The awards would be based upon the outcomes and client-appraisals through an online system. Allocation of funding would be on-par with outcomes (i.e. performance-based contracting)
- Agency philosophy becomes “clients do not exit program until a positive outcome is achieved.” To accomplish this, there is frequent evaluation.

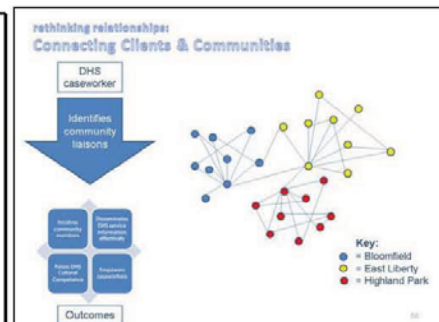
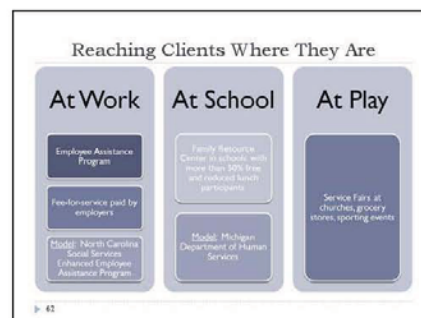


Case Findings

Student presentations also suggested ways DHS can reach its clients, including:

- Introducing awareness/prevention in places where clients are: at work, ideas for expanding employee assistance programs; at school, establishing family resource centers with children receiving free or reduced lunches. Also, the students suggested setting up service fairs at churches, stores, and sporting events.
- Increasing community outreach by advertising on public transit and partnering with utility companies, grocery stores, and a range of other entities that interact with the community.
- Using gatekeepers as a nontraditional community referral source. Gatekeepers are people who interact with communities, such as appraisers, postal carriers, apartment managers. These individuals would target and identify isolated, at-risk residents. Gatekeepers would receive training so as to recognize concerning signs and symptoms.
- DHS will increase utilization of existing online communities – Facebook, MySpace.

Team specific examples are included below.



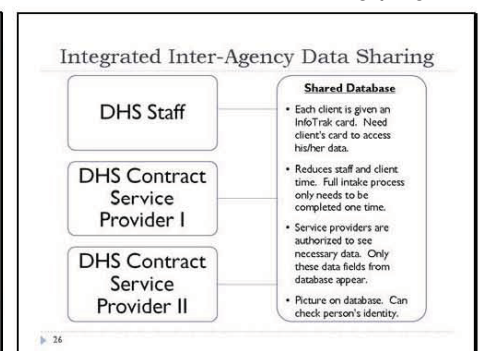
Case Findings

Technological Changes

Computers and technology could immeasurably impact Human Services in 2017. Frequently, students suggested computer and technology-based solutions for further integration. Specific suggestions are included below.

- Customer Coaches – using technology to serve as a liaison between consumers and providers
- MyDHS.com would allow for the scheduling of service and “Life Coach” appointments.
- Front-end added to Data Warehouse with case management suite, needs assessments and treatment plans. Such software utilization will allow for predictive, data-driven decisions.
- Social networking as an expansion of www.humanservices.net. Such a web site will feature security (only for authorized users), a calendar of training and seminars. The site will include capability to send messages, post questions on a digital bulletin board, and access contact information.
- Integrated online network as virtual forum for service integration.
- Technology access points at libraries, schools, churches, and community spaces.
- Cell phone, text, video and GIS communications.
- High-tech accommodations for the people with disabilities.
- InfoTrak: Some groups proposed the use of technology in order to streamline intake. For example, the “InfoTrak” card would allow clients to present a card at service locations to access data. Contracted providers would also benefit from this card in order to reduce staff time, as a full intake will only have to occur at the initial visit to any DHS provider. Clients would not have to carry around documentation papers. Service providers would be authorized to see necessary data for their work; level of access could be based upon level of training. Also, a picture could be included in the database to confirm the client’s identity. The Single Intake System would allow caseworkers to know what programs and services the client is receiving and for which the client qualifies.
- An elaborate web interface that allows clients to interact with service providers and the providers to interact with clients. The web would also allow clients to “appraise” the services they receive.

Several team-specific solutions are included below and on the following page.



Case Findings



Creative Use of Technology

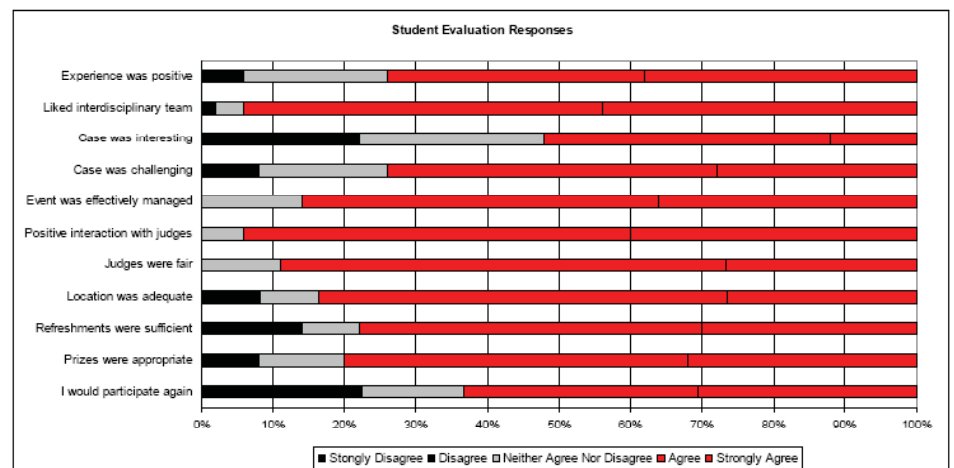
- ☐ Using new tools to augment services
 - Cell phones
 - E-mail
 - Text messaging
 - Online chat
- ☐ Using GIS to target services and refine consumer base
- ☐ Integrating consumers' evaluative data into DHS decision making process
 - Possible barrier to success would be a lack of valuable consumer feedback

Competition Evaluation

We asked both participants and judges about their experience with the case competition. In addition to responses to a short survey, we also received numerous emails providing feedback on the competition. Both sources are synthesized below.

STUDENTS' FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION OF THE COMPETITION

Three-quarters of the students felt the case competition experience was positive. On the whole, the comments suggest that participants were left with a positive image of DHS. Like the judges, the students felt the interaction with judges was positive. Over 90 percent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they liked being part of an interdisciplinary team. Many felt that the case was too broad. Some were also inconvenienced by the location of the events and the lack of vegetarian options.



Competition Evaluation

The students indicated a positive experience with the case competition.

- Nearly three-quarters agreed that the experience was positive.
- Nearly 95 percent liked being assigned to an interdisciplinary team.
- Over 90 percent thought the interaction with the judges was positive
- Over 60 percent agreed that they would participate in another case competition.

Students indicated that the event was well managed.

- Over 85 percent agreed that the DHS staff was effective in managing the event.
- Nearly 85 percent agreed the meeting location was adequate.
- Over 75 percent agreed that the refreshments were sufficient.
- Eight in ten felt the prizes were appropriate.

Students had mixed feelings about the case itself.

- Over half agreed that the case was interesting and nearly 75 percent felt it was challenging. However, 20 percent strongly disagreed that the case was interesting. Comments indicate that it was the broadness of the assignment that was off-putting.

Positive feedback from students:

- I hope I could contribute to DHS's greater success and prosperity by bringing new ideas and the readiness of implementation. I believe working in this great organization will be an unprecedented experience for me.
- The case competition was very fun. I enjoyed meeting other college graduates from other colleges in the area. I hope you have this next year, and hope to be one of the competitors next year. We knew our presentation was "outside the box," but it sounds like we were a little too far removed for the judges thinking. We were very happy with the entire experience.
- Thanks for putting this event together--it was definitely a worthwhile learning experience.
- Thanks for the feedback. This was a great experience. I agree that our group lacked synergy overall and I was skeptical at the end of the first night (the sparks didn't fly right away) but in spite of that it was a really good experience. I have a great deal of respect for each one of them and we spent some very productive time together.
- One of the most interesting observations I had was how much of a difference the presentation made with generally similar ideas. I'm really glad I stayed to watch the three finalists and made a list of notes on ways they approached and presented their case, especially the clarity of ideas and the examples which demonstrated how their strategy affected the consumer. Thanks for organizing this. I'm planning on applying to the DHS Scholars program and hope we cross paths again.

Competition Evaluation

- I learned a tremendous amount of information from this experience and thank you for the wonderful feedback. The experience itself was rewarding and challenging and I would participate again. I also received the cash prize, which was enthusiastically welcomed but unnecessary. We were extremely honored to have served as third place, much less to receive any reward from it. We never had the intention of being a finalist, and so breaking our expectations was award enough. If there is anything that I can do for DHS in the future, I would love to be a part of it! Thank you again for a job well done and a great event.
- Thanks very much for your feedback which helped our team to understand where we stood! Honestly, I was very impressed by the efforts DHS put in this case competition and would like to say "thank you" to every judge and all the staff who worked so hard to create a unique experience for us participants.
- Particularly for me, an international student who came to the US. two months ago, this case competition really meant a lot. I tried to understand the work flow process in DHS given a social and cultural context totally different from my country. Having gone through the preparation process, I finally arrived at obtaining a whole picture of DHS from knowing nothing. Now I become clear of its services, programs under running, customers, how it functions, and the potential opportunities it faces. The case competition is in itself a very precious learning experience as for me. I enjoyed much working with my team, brainstorming, and discussing from either perspective of policy or social work. We were inspired by each other. I've had such a great experience throughout our teamwork though we were unable to enter the second round eventually. Till now comparing to what I've learnt, to win or not is no longer the first priority, but I believe I'll do better next time! All in all, I appreciate DHS provide me this chance to know about both myself and DHS! Thanks you so much!
- I enjoyed participating in the case competition. This was definitely something that I have never done before, so it was a learning experience for me. It has given me the opportunity to meet new and exciting people.
- I would recommend the challenge to others. I enjoyed the experience and I'm happy I participated in the event. Thanks.
- I truly enjoyed working with my team and hope we were able to give ACDHS valuable ideas as you move forward into the next decade.
- I liked this case competition and thinking outside the box on real life concept. I am always excited to meet peers from other schools as a possible future contact.
- I really enjoyed the experience and appreciate the opportunity and effort by our home county DHS. I'm impressed with what you are doing and hope to be a part of it in the future.
- This was a good idea to get students in Pittsburgh more involved in the community. Good idea to form interdisciplinary teams too.
- I really thank you for your effort. It is an interesting new experience.

Competition Evaluation

Many students felt the case was too broad and wasn't really a case at all. Some of the 10 comments illustrating this are included below:

- I thought the case was too general. I think a specific problem would have been better.
- This was not a case challenge. A case challenge presents a specific problem that needs to be analyzed and solved. For example, the Deloitte case challenge deals with a specific client and problem, as well as a time period to solve the problem. The DHS Challenge is too general, which leads general solutions and implementation strategies. Given the short time period, DHS would benefit from a narrow topic problem in a single area/client. This will result in better, research-based solutions to discrete problems that are more likely and feasible to implement.
- The case wasn't a case.
- I expected the case to be more of a problem needing solved, not projecting the structure and goals of DHS in 10 years. I don't feel that I necessarily have the background or knowledge to appropriately address this case.
- Case was challenging but perhaps for wrong reasons. A more specific problem may have been challenging in a different and more manageable ways.

Competition Evaluation

There were also a number of comments about the logistics of the event:

- Several participants thought part of all of the competition should have been held in Oakland or another more centrally located space with wireless Internet access. For example:
 - Also, holding the competition in Oakland would be better (Pitt) because everyone lives in Oakland. I do think that the competition was well organized.
 - Holding the event in Oakland or in a building that has a more private space and internet access would be helpful. I really like the shirts.
 - We lost time needing to relocate to find space and internet access (wireless) that is food permissible and group collaboration access.
- There were also comments about the food. In particular, there should have been more water and more vegetarian options.
 - More information about the event and expectations should be clearer. I was under the impression that dinner would have been provided on Thursday instead of a light food.
 - Lack of vegetarian choices.
 - The food was not good (breakfast fruit salad particularly).
 - Refreshments were not allergy or vegetarian sensitive. Otherwise it was an incredible opportunity that I am so lucky to have been able to participate in.
- Other logistical concerns:
 - I would like to see more information provided initially. It was very difficult to arrange my schedule with bits and pieces of information. It was not clear at the beginning that groups meet on Friday for as long as it takes to prepare materials. The experience was wonderful. I really enjoyed working with my group and learned a lot. Thank you for the opportunity.
 - I would have preferred one question at a time instead of all questions right off the bat. I think that would have yielded better discussion and interaction with the judges.
 - Prize could have been donation to favorite charity.
 - Give our presentation schedule beforehand and call or email us if the schedule changes. Why 8 am mandatory registration? Especially since we cannot watch each others. How about just registering 30 minutes before our scheduled presentation with stuff to be emailed in by 8 am.
 - Something should be done to ensure commitment for participants.

Competition Evaluation

...

- o I would suggest a better time during the semester possibly in October or beginning of spring semester the timing was inconvenient this is a crunch time during the semester. I would also recommend giving a more specific case challenge such a broad topic in a short time frame can result in broad results that DHS may not benefit a great deal from. It also appears that the prizes can be more evenly distributed especially given the categories were not (flowers had 5 groups instead of four). Additionally, if the time lags could be minimized thus can reduce anxiety. Considering all above recommendations I think this was a great experience (better than the Deloitte challenge) and would recommend to others.
- o Supplemental information was appreciated but overwhelming. The food was great and much appreciated as we didn't have time to sleep much less eat.

JUDGES' FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

The judges overwhelmingly indicated a positive experience with the case competition.

- Nearly 80 percent strongly agreed that the experience was positive;
- Over 85 percent strongly agreed that the interaction with students was positive; and,
- Nearly 80 percent strongly agreed that they would participate in the event again.

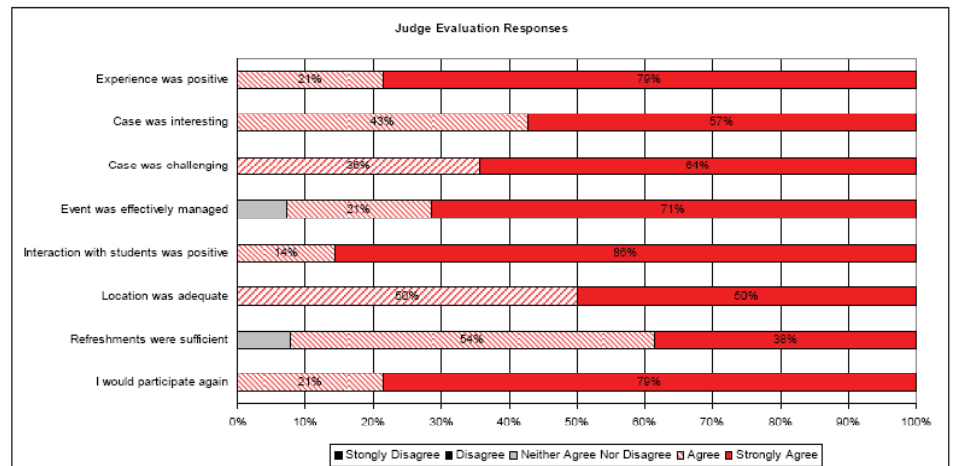
Judges also seemed to indicate that the case itself was effective.

- All either agreed or strongly agreed that the case was interesting and challenging.

Judges indicated that the event was well managed.

- Over 70 percent strongly agreed that DHS staff was effective in managing the event;
- All either agreed or strongly agreed that the meeting location was adequate; and
- Most agreed that the refreshments were sufficient.

Competition Evaluation



Judges' narrative comments and other feedback:

- The competition generated strong interest in young people and could potentially be a great asset to the county in the form of employees and usable ideas. Hopefully, the best ideas will be taken from each presentation winner. Thank you for this opportunity.
- Fantastic Competition. You should do this annually. Pick an issue or departmental challenge each year as case competition.
- Thank you so much for the opportunity to participate as a judge for the DHS Case Competition. It was a great experience. The students were fabulous and really put their "all" into the projects and presentations. To be able to witness their full engagement and participation in thinking about Allegheny County and what DHS might look like in the future was a privilege. And a special thanks to all of you for managing such a professional and efficient process.
- Really excellent experience for students and judges. "The world is in good hands."
- It was a pleasure and honor for me to be a judge for the Case Competition. A new and enriching experience so thank you again. I am thrilled that you decided to extend a small cash prize to Team Purple for advancing as a finalist. That was the right thing to do.
- I was pleased to spend the day with such an inspiring group of students and professionals. The one item that seemed most surprising to me was the teams' selection of initiatives. It seemed interesting that more teams explicitly addressed how to make DHS environmentally conscious than how to get more homeless people off the street or keep more youths out of gangs. I'm not sure whether that tendency reflects the fact that the students envision administrative rather than casework careers, or how difficult it is to do actual casework better than DHS now does it, or a need to expose our graduate students to the trenches more, or all of the above. But in any case, I learned a lot for my time investment and got a provocative T-shirt besides. Thanks again for the invitation.

Competition Evaluation

...

- Event Great. Especially for first year. In future, improve clarity of detail process. Define challenge (if not there Thursday evening not obvious). Not Full Saturday. Rotate area of challenge and define more narrowly. Congratulations Remarkable results.
- Very well conceived program. Suggest stipulating that the presenters include a component describing practical impact on client service. Some focused solely on internal and organizational improvement; others tried to address this area, but sometimes to their peril.
- A more defined case. Possible chance to improve presentation after Semi Finalists are announced. See if case can be about a present problem or focus in the future.
- For the first time out this was a very good experience. Know it was a lot of work for staff, but they all did a good job, and hope they want to do it again. Dana, Great Job. Maybe focus in one area each year and do overall every 5-10 years. E.g. Aging of MH and DA, in one year, another department the next.
- Bring together the strong heads of each panel and let them respond to the issue as a team.
- There should be vegetarian options and more water.

Allegheny County
Department of Human Services
One Smithfield Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Phone: 412. 350. 5701
Fax: 412.350.4004
www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs

