

**2013 Allegheny County DHS
Local Government Case Competition:
Building a Human Services Workforce for the 21st Century**



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The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) is dedicated to meeting the human services needs of county residents, particularly the county's most vulnerable populations, through an extensive range of prevention, intervention, crisis management and after-care services.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2013 Local Government Case Competition is the seventh annual competition sponsored by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) and supported by the Human Services Integration Fund.¹ Designed to engage graduate students from local universities in identifying creative solutions to difficult social problems, previous years' competitions have addressed a variety of issues, including how to position Allegheny County as a leader in the environmental sustainability movement; assisting the Homewood Children's Village in designing its five-year strategic plan; addressing academic performance for students attending the Pittsburgh Public Schools who also receive services from DHS; designing ways to address stigma and improve the experiences of individuals living with serious mental illness; and addressing the issue of suburban poverty and those affected by it.

¹ The Human Services Integration Fund was created by a group of local foundations in 1997, to support innovation and integration within the Department of Human Services. What began as a way to support Department creation and integration has grown into a fund that provides DHS with the flexibility to address innovative strategies and opportunities to improve department operations and the quality of services it provides. From the original group of eight foundations, HSIF has more than doubled in size; its member foundations have contributed more than \$12 million since the fund was established.

This year's challenge, Building a Human Services Workforce for the 21st Century, addressed the challenges of staffing a human services system that is increasingly data-driven, integrated and community-based. Participants were instructed to design a three-year recruitment and retention plan, identifying one strategy to measurably improve on one of three key workforce characteristics (talent, diversity, commitment) for one of three target workforce segments (front line, support, leadership).

Forty-seven graduate students from three local universities and nine programs of study participated, creating 12 teams that presented their proposals to four panels of judges composed of civic leaders and individuals from the Department of Human Services, local foundations and universities, and community organizations.

The Case Competition began with a catered evening reception on Wednesday, November 6, 2013, at which time students were given their team assignments, were presented with the case challenge, and received information about DHS and the issues of workforce development and retention. The teams worked on their proposals over the next two days, and on Saturday morning, November 9, 2013, each team presented to one of the four panels of judges. Each panel selected a winning team; after lunch, those four teams presented to the entire group of judges. Following the final presentations, the judges selected the first-, second-, third- and fourth-place winners. The first-place team won a cash prize of \$3,000; the second-place team won \$1,500; the third-place team won \$500; and the fourth-place team members each received a \$25 gift card.

The winning team presented a three-part retention and recruitment plan designed to support recruitment and retention of individuals motivated by opportunities for growth and advancement and to provide those opportunities in a planned and consistent way. The core of the plan was the Leadership Ladder Program, in which employees and their supervisor would design an individual plan focused on personal impact, academic advancement and relationship-building throughout DHS and with its contractors. Through a flexible variety of activities (e.g., training, academic coursework, mentoring, research, leadership activities), employees would earn points with which they would be eligible for progressive incentives, determined in advance by the employee and his/her supervisor.

The second-place team proposed the Pittsburgh Promise Pipeline (PPP), designed to forge an alliance between DHS and the Pittsburgh Promise that would foster integration, emphasize the importance of data, and encourage community-based interventions. The plan involved internships for college juniors and seniors, culminating in job opportunities upon graduation. The plan capitalized on the fact that these incoming staff would already be engaged and familiar with DHS; mentoring and enrichment opportunities would strengthen retention.

The third-place team presented a two-part strategy designed to increase engagement among frontline staff through shared human resources and a shared culture of learning throughout the system.

The fourth-place winner targeted a diverse group of young graduates for front-line staff positions by pairing a three-part recruitment strategy with a two-part retention program utilizing mentoring and opportunities for short sabbaticals spent in other human services settings.

Although only four teams made it to the final round, every team identified interesting and thought-provoking strategies to address the issues of workforce recruitment and retention. Common strategies were identified by several teams and included partnerships with local universities, mentoring and rotation, social media and marketing, and technology.

Feedback was solicited from students and judges through a survey that was completed at the end of the day. While the feedback received was primarily positive, participants provided some valuable suggestions about ways to improve the logistics and team composition. This feedback will be useful in planning for future competitions.

BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) celebrated its tenth anniversary. As part of that anniversary celebration, DHS instituted the Local Government Case Competition, which has become an annual event designed to engage graduate students from local universities in identifying creative solutions to difficult social problems. The Case Competition has been an ideal way to engage graduate students in community issues, make them aware of DHS's reach in the region, and encourage them to consider future employment opportunities with DHS. The Case Competition has been made possible by the continuing support of the Human Services Integration Fund, a flexible pool of funds, provided by local foundations, which allows DHS to pursue opportunities that foster integration and support innovations in technology, research and programming. Since its inception in 1997, the Human Services Integration Fund has more than doubled in size and has contributed more than \$12 million to support a wide variety of innovative strategies designed to improve department operations and quality.

The first Case Competition charged students with envisioning how DHS might look on its 20th anniversary. Since then, students have been asked to consider how to position Allegheny County as a leader in the environmental sustainability movement, assist the Homewood Children's Village in designing its five-year strategic plan, address academic performance for students attending the Pittsburgh Public Schools who were also receiving services from DHS, address the issue of suburban poverty, and design ways to address stigma and improve the experiences of individuals living with serious mental illness.

2013 CASE COMPETITION

Participants in the 2013 Case Competition were given the assignment to function as a group of consultants hired by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a three-year recruitment and retention plan to ensure that the Department's workforce is ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Each team was instructed to identify one strategy designed to measurably improve one of three key workforce characteristics (talent, diversity, engagement) for one target workforce segment (front line, support, leadership). Each strategy had to include both a recruitment and a retention component and address one or more of the following challenges:

- Limited Resources
- Emotional Intensity
- Progress Hard to Define

- Skills Gaps
- Lack of Awareness
- Fragmented System
- Rules and Regulations
- Stigma of Government
- High Stakes and Pressure

Presentations were to include a timeline for implementation over the three-year period and a description of how the strategy would be measured for results/effectiveness, and make a strong argument for its prioritization in a world with limited resources.

Participants were assigned to teams of three or four, and given instructions on how to prepare to present their projects to one of the four panels of judges.

Participants

Students

Forty-seven graduate students from three local universities and nine programs of study participated. These included:

- Carnegie Mellon University
 - Heinz College
- Duquesne University
 - School of Law
 - School of Business
 - Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy
- University of Pittsburgh
 - Graduate School of Education
 - School of Law
 - Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
 - Graduate School of Public Health
 - School of Social Work

Students were divided into interdisciplinary teams, based on academic program and demographic factors such as gender, race and age. A demographic profile of the participants follows:

- Age
 - Students ranged in age from 22 through 54
 - The average age was 27
- Gender
 - 31 of the students were female
 - 15 students were male
 - 1 student chose not to specify gender
- Race
 - 31 students identified as white
 - 7 students identified as Asian or Pacific Islander
 - 7 students chose not to identify race
 - 2 student identified as Hispanic

Judges

The competition was judged by 16 individuals on four panels, representing community organizations, local universities, DHS, foundations and civic leaders. At least one DHS staff person sat on each panel. In addition to the five DHS staff members, judges represented the following:

- Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management
- Community Human Services
- Coro Pittsburgh
- Family Services of Western Pennsylvania
- Focus on Renewal
- Jewish Healthcare Foundation
- Mayor-Elect Bill Peduto's Office
- Mental Health America of Allegheny County
- The Pittsburgh Foundation
- Staunton Farm Foundation
- University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work

Logistics

Sixteen DHS staff members handled logistics and planning, ensuring that the event went smoothly. For the first time, this year's competition had a video component. DHS's videographer taped the opening reception on Wednesday, followed one team as they prepared their presentation, taped four presentations on Saturday morning, and recorded the finalists and the award presentation on Saturday afternoon. A short video will be prepared from this footage and will be used to publicize the Case Competition and to support recruitment activities for subsequent competitions.

Opening Reception — Wednesday, November 6, 2013

The 2013 Case Competition began with a catered evening reception held at the Human Services Building in downtown Pittsburgh. Team assignments were given to the students when they arrived so that they had the opportunity to meet their teammates prior to hearing about the case challenge. During the reception, the case was introduced by Erin Dalton, DHS Deputy Director, Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation. Each student received a flash drive loaded with case materials, including background information about DHS and its workforce, changes in the field of human services, and information relevant to recruitment and retention.

Case Preparation — Wednesday, November 6, until Saturday, November 9, 2013

Teams had all day Thursday and Friday to conduct their research and prepare their presentations. Presentations were due, via email, by 7 a.m. Saturday; team members were required to check in by 8 a.m. on Saturday.

Case Presentations — Saturday, November 9, 2013

- The 47 students, divided into 12 teams, presented to one of the four judging panels throughout the morning; following their presentation, each team was given preliminary feedback based upon the judges' deliberations. Teams were judged on the following criteria:
 - Verbal Presentation
 - Technical Presentation
 - Scope of Presentation
 - Content of Presentation
 - Q&A
 - Team Demeanor
 - Overall Impression of Presentation

The four winning teams (one from each panel) were announced after lunch, after which they repeated their presentations to the judges, who then deliberated and announced the winning team. The first-place team won a cash prize of \$3,000; the second-place team won \$1,500; the third-place team won \$500; and each fourth-place team member received a \$25 gift card.

The Case: Building a Human Services Workforce for the 21st Century

The field of human services is changing. Human services are becoming more integrated and person/family-driven, more data-driven, and more community-based. A successful workforce will both shape this new environment and function effectively within it. Creating this workforce is dependent upon two equally important pillars: recruitment and retention.

An ideal workforce must be talented, diverse and engaged. It is composed of individuals with a broad range of skills and **talents**, who are adaptive and innovative and take pride in their work and their career. **Diversity** does not just refer to race, gender and age; it also requires that individuals present a diverse combination of training, education and skills. Preferably, individuals have a variety of backgrounds and lived experiences, and are recruited locally, regionally and nationally. **Engagement** refers to individuals who are motivated by the organization's mission and values, are growth-oriented and reform-minded, and bring the ability to question the status quo in a productive way.

The human services system is dependent upon staff at a variety of levels, ranging from direct, front-line work with consumers to providing the leadership necessary to manage the bigger picture. At DHS, **front-line** staff include caseworkers, support coordinators and supervisors. **Support** personnel, as defined by DHS, include technology professionals, budget and fiscal experts, individuals with expertise in communications and data analysis, and quality improvement and training professionals. The Director and Deputies, Regional Office Directors, and Senior Managers comprise the **leadership** level of staff.

In order to identify the most effective recruitment and retention strategies, it is necessary to acknowledge the challenges that confront the human services workforce. It can be difficult to provide services in an environment of limited resources, fragmentation, and rules and regulations imposed by a number of regulatory systems. The stakes are high, and the work can be high-pressured and emotionally intense. The workforce may not have the skills necessary to address the changing environment and often functions in a system that is not well understood and in which progress is difficult to define. In addition, the perceived or real stigma associated with government work must be acknowledged and addressed.

On the other hand, there are very real, positive elements to building a career in human services. Opportunities are many and varied, particularly in a system as large as DHS. The work is mission-driven and high-impact, and thus is rewarding and a source of great personal satisfaction to many. In addition, the work is intellectually challenging and stimulating; working for a national leader such as DHS provides many opportunities to be involved in cutting-edge initiatives and important social issues.

The Challenge

At the opening reception, Erin Dalton presented the following scenario:

DHS has prioritized building a human services workforce that is ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. You are a team of consultants hired by DHS to develop a three-year recruitment and retention plan to get us measurably closer to our ideal workforce.

Each plan should have clearly stated goals and objectives that the strategy is designed to achieve. The strategy is to focus on one of three key workforce characteristics (talent, diversity and commitment) and on one segment of the human services workforce (front-line staff, support staff and leadership). The strategy must address specific challenges as presented in the background and include both recruitment and retention components, a timeline for implementation over the three-year period, and an evaluation strategy. Finally, you should be able to argue why, in an environment with limited time, money and staff, your strategy should be prioritized.

Because the human services system is more than just DHS, strategies that can be incorporated and applicable outside of DHS (e.g., by providers or universities) will be more successful. And finally, teams should be realistic. For example, it is not realistic to propose doubling salaries or turning DHS into a Google-like environment. Elements of each may be appropriate, but they should be carefully thought out in the context of fiscal and cultural realities.

Case Presentations

The first-place winner presented a three-part retention and recruitment plan to address the needs of the 21st-century workforce. The three-person team included the following students:

- Ashton Armstrong — Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh
- Andrea Thureau — School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh
- Maureen Washburn — Heinz College, Carnegie Mellon University

Through a survey of 100 Pitt and CMU graduate students, the team learned that the overwhelming majority of individuals about to enter the job market are interested in government or nonprofit work, and that they are motivated primarily by the ability to make an impact (65 percent), followed by intellectual challenge (49 percent) and opportunities for advancement (33 percent). In response to these findings, as well as additional research into best practices, the team chose to focus on attracting talented individuals for leadership opportunities. The key strategy of the team's plan was the "Leadership Ladder," designed to provide incentives for employees to invest in their own professional growth.

FIGURE 1: Leadership Ladder Program

LEADERSHIP LADDER PROGRAM

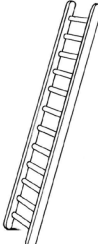
Purpose: To provide incentives to new employees for investing in their own professional growth and increase talent retention

Earning Points:

- Participating in training on-site or at local universities
- Conducting research or spearheading a project
- Tracking time spent with their mentor

Incentives:

- Greater flexibility in work hours
- Recognition and awards
- Opportunities for promotion into leadership



The Leadership Ladder Program would be available to newly-recruited and existing staff; the employee and his/her supervisor would design an individual plan focused on personal impact, academic advancement and relationship-building throughout DHS and its network of providers. Through a flexible variety of activities (e.g., training, academic coursework, mentoring, research, leadership activities), employees would earn points with which they would be eligible for progressive incentives, determined in advance by the employee and his/her supervisor.

FIGURE 2: Leadership Ladder Program / Impact

IMPACT

Positive Impact Review

- Supervisors will conduct a semi-annual review of an employee’s contributions and impact
- Employees and supervisors will chart progress an employee’s progress along the Leadership Ladder
- Employees will set measurable, quantitative impact targets for the next six months



The strategy is designed to support recruitment and retention of individuals motivated by opportunities for growth and advancement and to provide those opportunities in a planned and consistent way.

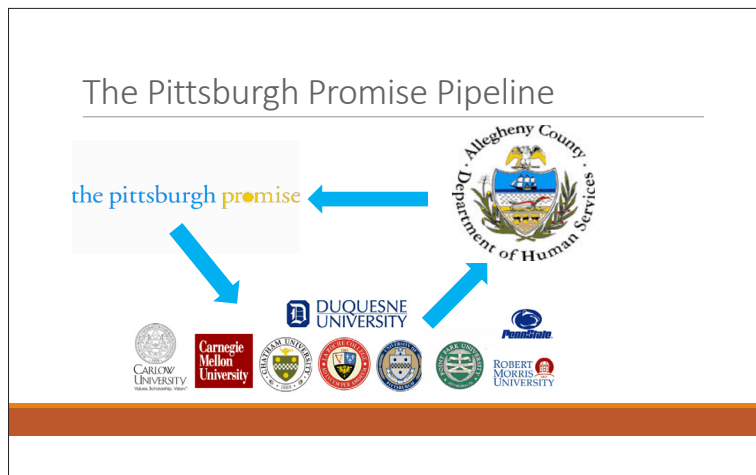
FIGURE 3: Leadership Ladder Program / Recruitment and Retention



The winning presentation can be found in its entirety at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/casecompetition.aspx>

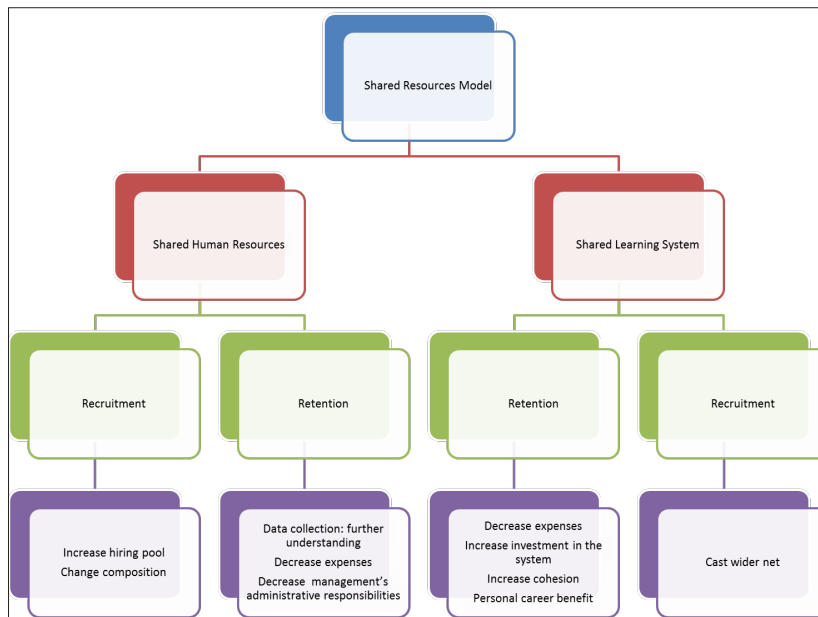
The second-place team proposed the Pittsburgh Promise Pipeline (PPP), designed to forge an alliance with the Pittsburgh Promise that would foster integration, emphasize the importance of data, and encourage community-based interventions. Beginning in the junior year of college, PPP participants would complete three to four internship rotations and, upon graduation, would be hired as PPP Human Service Scholars. These newly-hired and already-engaged front-line staff would bring a broad understanding of DHS's various offices as well as a commitment to the community; retention would be further strengthened through mentoring as well as certification and enrichment opportunities.

FIGURE 4: The Pittsburgh Promise Pipeline



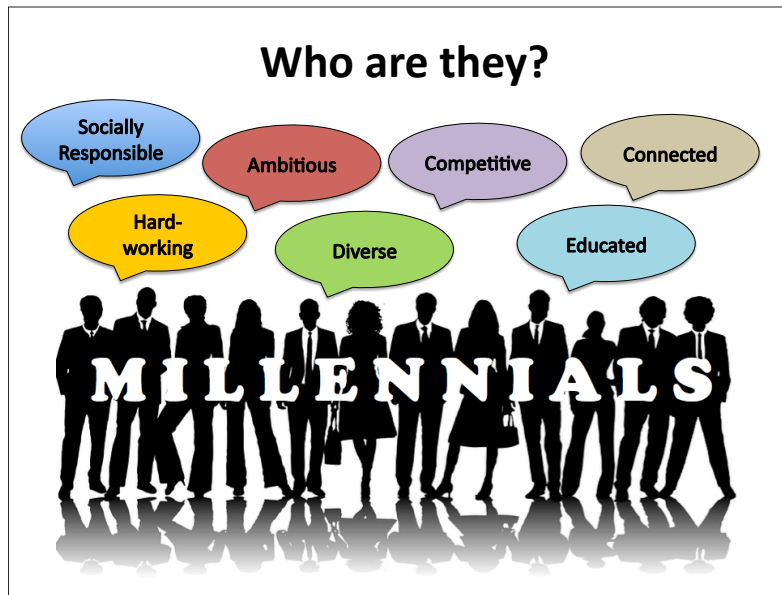
Third place was awarded to the team that presented a two-part strategy designed to increase engagement among front-line staff through shared human resources and a shared culture of learning throughout the system.

FIGURE 5: Shared Resources Model



The fourth-place winner paired a three-part recruitment strategy (partnerships with local universities, social media and traditional recruitment techniques) with a two-part retention program utilizing mentoring and opportunities for month-long sabbaticals spent in other human services settings, to target a diverse group of “millennials” for front-line staff positions.

FIGURE 6: Bridging DHS from Past to Future



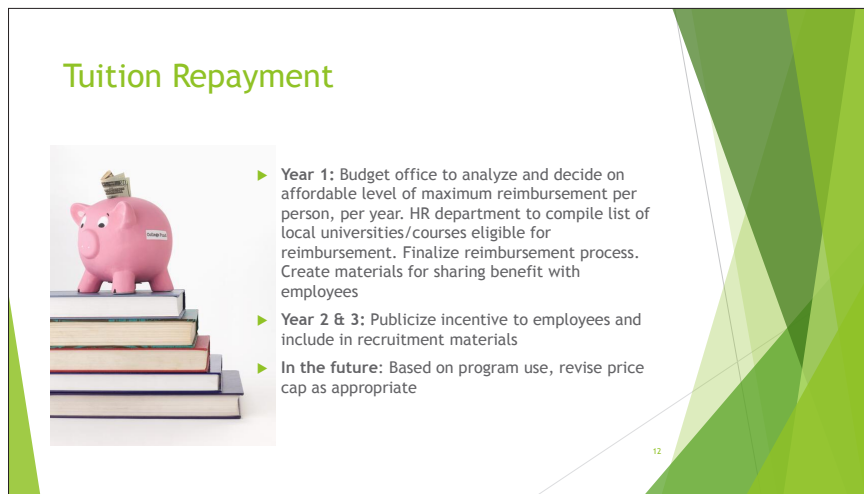
Summary of Recommendations

The other teams proposed a variety of strategies to address the issues of recruitment and retention. While strategies varied from team to team, it was possible to identify a number of common elements. These included partnerships with local universities, mentoring and rotation, social media and marketing, and technology.

Partnerships with Local Universities

Developing and depending upon partnerships with local universities was a common strategy, although the focus of this strategy varied among teams. Several teams utilized these partnerships to provide skill development opportunities for current staff, ranging from one-day workshops to degree tuition reimbursement.

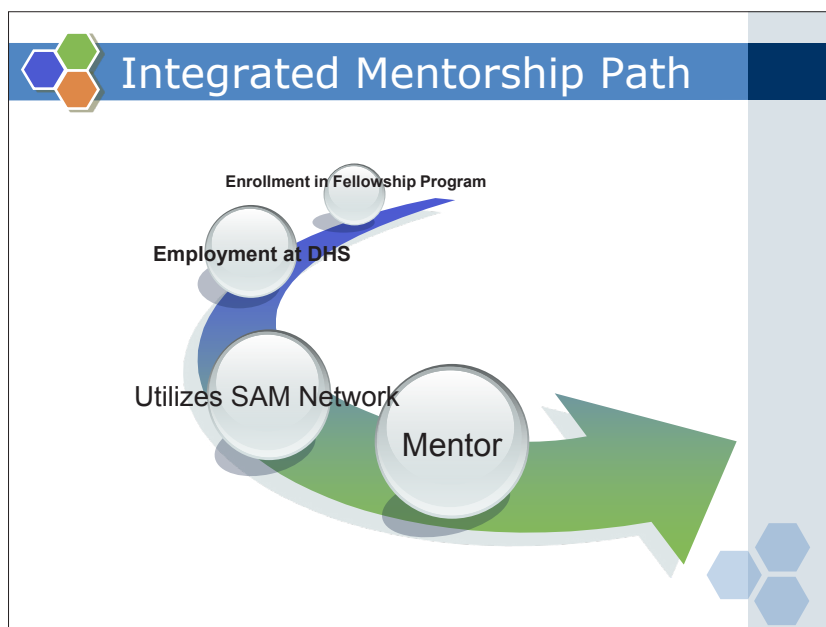
FIGURE 7: The Power Plan



Others utilized local institutions of higher education as partners in recruitment.

One innovative partnership opportunity included fellowships, beginning two years before graduation, to familiarize students with DHS (and vice versa) and leading to career opportunities upon graduation. This strategy included a mentoring component during the internship phase as well as upon hiring.

FIGURE 8: Support and Mentorship Network



Mentoring and Rotation

Almost every team included a mentoring component in its strategy, although the type and purpose of mentoring varied among teams. Mentoring was recommended as a recruitment strategy, as well as a way to promote professional and career development, teach new skills, demystify DHS, and share information about other job opportunities at DHS.

FIGURE 9: Public Service Human Capital Development for the 21st Century

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY	BENEFITS
MENTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend Mentor training session Attend New Employee Orientation Session with the Mentee Available for no more than 2 meetings per month. Minimum of 1 year commitment 	<p>Intangible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shape the next generation of DHS leadership Improve professional reputation Cultivates connections across silos to those who are the face of the organization Learn from Mentees about areas for process and policy improvement <p>Tangible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities fund Excused office absences for relationship development
MENTEE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend New Employee Orientation They are the drivers of the relationship 	<p>Intangible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking Gains organizational knowledge Internal career mobility Learn from Mentors about leadership Share opportunities for improvement <p>Tangible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility for Educational Award


In some proposals, the rotation among DHS offices did not focus so much on mentoring as it did on providing a broader view of DHS for purposes ranging from service integration to informing staff about the wide variety of available job opportunities.

FIGURE 10: Frontline Talent for a National Leader

ADAPTABILITY - RECRUITMENT

Develop a rotational training program for talented new hires

- Participants rotate through three DHS (and, if feasible, contracted provider) positions in their first year.
- Recruitment: Attracts talented young people.
- Retention: Helps retain workers who have found their best fit.



Social Media and Marketing

Social media was frequently recommended for the purpose of engaging new staff as well as maintaining communication with existing staff and the community. More than one team recommended a strategic marketing campaign aimed at improving public understanding, awareness and perception of DHS and public service careers in general, and designed to attract prospective employees to the human services sector from the region's institutions of higher education.

FIGURE 11: DHS Employment Brand



Technology

In addition to the use of social media, one team focused on the use of technology to create a paperless workforce and to providing electronic communication opportunities for DHS employees.

FIGURE 12: The Power Plan

Utilize Technology

Objective 3: Minimize interagency fragmentation to increase productivity and reduce workload

- ▶ Create and encourage use of electronic forms; reduce paperwork
- ▶ Develop web-based open forum for employees to share ideas, events, and ask for support

A graphic showing a tablet displaying a globe and various icons, symbolizing technology and communication.

15

SURVEY RESULTS

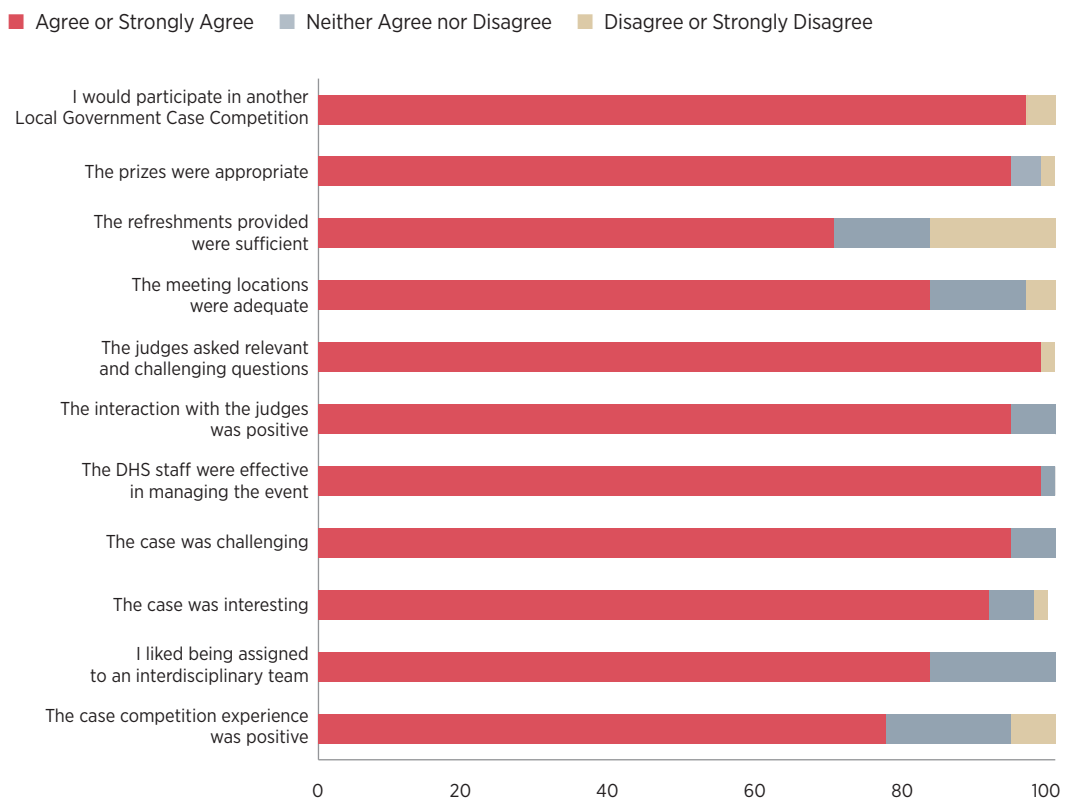
In order to continually improve the Case Competition experience for all participants, feedback is solicited from students and judges through a survey they are asked to complete at the end of the day. This feedback, in the form of responses to specific questions as well as open-ended comments, is used to inform possible modifications to the design of the next Case Competition.

Student Feedback

Surveys completed by this year’s student participants indicate that most (96 percent) had a positive experience and appreciated the opportunity to be a part of the Case Competition.

Table 1, below, provides details about students’ responses to the survey questions.

TABLE 1: Survey Responses — Students



In addition to the survey results, above, student comments were reviewed. The most positive comments related to the opportunity to work within a multidisciplinary team. Students were complimentary about the planning, logistics and staffing of the event, and several students suggested that the Case Competition be held more often.

Logistically, many students continue to struggle to find sufficient time to meet, and while we deliberately create a scenario that is intensive and time-limited, we acknowledge the difficulty

of accomplishing the task in such a concentrated period of time. However, the quality of the presentations indicates that motivated and passionate students can accomplish a lot in a short time.

As has been the case in previous years, what was positive for some students was negative for others (e.g., group dynamics, case topic). Student comments are taken seriously and considered during planning for subsequent competitions.

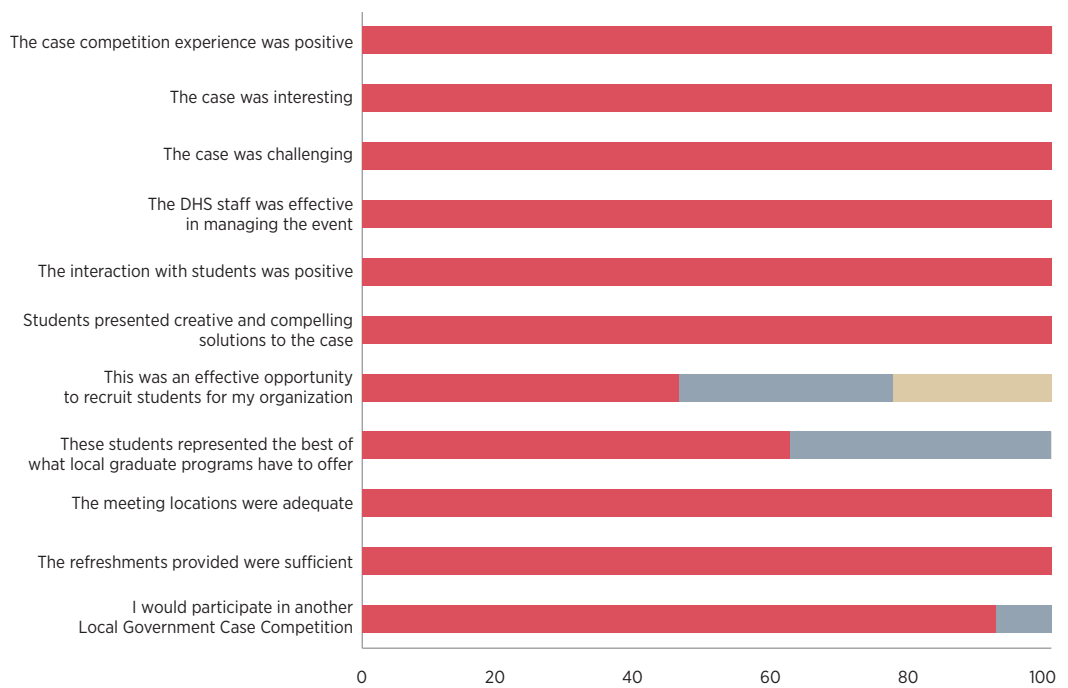
For a complete list of student comments, see the Appendix, page 20.

Judges Feedback

Judges’ comments were overwhelmingly positive (see Appendix, page 21). Table 2 demonstrates that, overall, the judges found the Case Challenge to be interesting, were impressed with the students, and enjoyed the experience.

TABLE 2: Survey Responses — Judges

■ Agree or Strongly Agree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Disagree or Strongly Disagree ■ Not Applicable



One comment that appeared in both the student and the judge surveys was the lack of diversity represented by students and judges. DHS shares this concern and continues to strive to improve and expand recruitment strategies. This will continue to be a priority in future years. It is hoped that utilizing the video as a recruitment tool will improve our ability to reach a more diverse group of students.

CONCLUSION

The topic of workforce recruitment and retention is one that affects all public-sector and nonprofit organizations, impacting service consistency and quality of life for consumers and employees alike. With a highly qualified and professionally satisfied/challenged workforce as the goal, several of the recommendations made during this year's Case Competition are worth considering and implementing. In fact, DHS's Office of Community Relations has already begun to implement some of the social marketing recommendations made during the presentations, and the recommendations of the winning team are under consideration by both DHS and contract providers. Based on the relevance of the information gathered, and judging from the formal and informal feedback received, the 2013 Case Competition can be considered a success. It will continue to be our practice to consider comments and suggestions, both positive and negative, as we plan for future competitions.

APPENDIX: SURVEY FEEDBACK

Student Comments

- The background resources provided by DHS were comprehensive and extensive. Indeed the resources might be too much as there is not enough time to read them all. I like that teams are decided by DHS as it ensures that people meet others from different universities and that each team has a variety of skills.
- It was hard. I'm tired.
- I had a hard time with random group assignments. It was very difficult to decide on a strategy given our different opinions. Overall the process in its entirety was good learning experience.
- Thank you. Very well structured and interesting experience. Thank you for your effort. It's great to work with you all and other students with different backgrounds. You guys are so funny. I enjoyed this event absolutely.
- Judge profile was not very diverse. Judge ethnic diversity can improve, they were all white.
- I think I learned a lot by working with people from different fields. I think it's an organizational model that should be applied more often.
- Interesting as an international student. It is a good chance and opportunity for me to practice the English-speaking and English-thinking way with assigned teammates. Nice experience.
- I really enjoyed working with other professionals and sharing ideas, it was really learning experience for me because I often only think about social issues and concern and not the marketing and business perspectives.
- This was a great experience. I feel you did a great job assembling the team I was on.
- I have really enjoyed the event. The only suggestion I have is to have a happy hour after the event is finished. You don't need to reserve a space or buy drinks, but it would be really nice to have more time to network with the other students and judges. Plus we overall want to celebrate. It seemed like many of the judges were not aware of the background and framework of the case, and at least one judge in our group was bit ruffled about our presentation lacking a specific element that was not specified or outlined in the case presentation though he certainly seemed insistent that we missed out on some required part of the case.
- Present realistic expectations about what time commitment participants are expected to dedicate. Have a mini mixer the first. Might to meet other people on the case, good for networking. Have the judges introduce themselves at the end of presentation.
- Breakfast could be improved. I would refrain from human resources topics in the future. In many ways the case competition is an introduction to the work DHS does. I don't think this topic gave a clear picture of the type of work DHS does to serve over 200,000 people.

**Appendix:
Survey Feedback***(continued)*

- Provide more research materials and background documents. Invite judges to wine and cheese reception opening night so teams have an opportunity to network with professionals in the fields.
- This needs to be done on a weekend. This also should be done more often.
- In this case competition I meet new friends and learn a lot. It's a good experience to use our knowledge in the real world.
- The participants should be warned that they need the full 2 day period. Our team struggled initially, because only half of the team could meet on Thursday. Overall this was a great experience.
- The staff was well organized and energetic. I liked the overall program and the organization of the competition. I wish that would have been an introduction of judges and participants to the entire group to know who is there and where they are from.
- The case assignment was not very engaging and did not lend itself to creative ideas or interesting research or discussion. I enjoyed the challenge of working with an interdisciplinary team but I think it would have been much more compelling with a different case topic.
- Great experience. So glad I got to meet my teammates.
- Case challenge was very challenging in comparison to other years, this challenge is far more narrow and required [us] to take many constraints into consideration. At first this was frustrating to me, but over the time we came to appreciate the fact that these constraints reflect the complicated world of public sector.
- Thanks to the staff for the preparations.

Judge Comments

- The presentations were very well developed and the staff facilitated a smooth day that encouraged participation.
- Great case challenge.
- We need to work on recruitment of African American participants.
- Saturday especially on a long weekend may be a detriment. Most judges could do this during work time.
- I wish students understood what a strategy was.
- Always fun. Thanks.
- Well done all around.
- I applaud DHS for having this open opportunity.