

**Human Services Integration Fund
& Other Foundation-Funded Projects
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The Human Services Integration Fund – Overview

On January 1, 1997, five formerly separate departments were combined to create the new Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS). Today, DHS is composed of the Area Agency on Aging and the Offices of Behavioral Health; Children, Youth & Families; Community Services; and Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities. These offices are supported by the Offices of Administration; Community Relations; Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation; and Information Management.

Since 2002, DHS has been repeatedly recognized for its innovative work in the human services field. First, a CNN profile referred to DHS as a “national model.” Then in 2003, DHS was recognized on CNN’s Paula Zahn NOW for focusing on families and producing “better safety outcomes” in child welfare by “emphasizing family preservation.” In 2005, DHS was touted by ABC World News Tonight for having found a way to combat many problems associated with keeping children safe with their birth families. Also in 2005, the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government honored DHS with the Innovations in American Government Award—the Government “Oscar”—for a program that assists inmates with mental health diagnoses upon their release from incarceration. A year earlier, in 2004, the same program was featured in a *New York Times* article.

One of the keys to the success of DHS has been the foundation community. When the department was first formed in 1997, it had no information systems strategy, no consistent pay scales or career path models, no centralized administrative function, and a dated financial software package. The Department was scattered haphazardly across numerous locations downtown and suffered from low morale because of all the changes that were taking place.

Local foundation leaders were convened in 1997 by the R.K. Mellon Foundation to consider how the private sector could be helpful in addressing the changes and challenges that faced the Department in its integration of both disparate provider units and funding sources to make possible the delivery of comprehensive human services. Before year’s end, the foundation community stepped in to help deal with all of these problems and more.

Funders created the Human Services Integration Fund (HSIF) within The Pittsburgh Foundation as a flexible funding pool to support projects and activities that foster departmental integration/restructuring and are more difficult or impossible to accomplish with public sector dollars. By funding critical projects that would not have happened with public dollars during the project’s background research, its inaugural year or for an extended period of time, the HSIF and individual foundations have helped to build DHS into what it is today. DHS and thereby the residents of Allegheny County, have been the benefactors of nearly \$6 million in HSIF and other foundation support since 1997.

Funders have generously contributed to HSIF, many awarding multiple grants to HSIF since its inception. By 2006, \$2,582,180 had passed through the HSIF and 35 different projects/activities had been supported. In addition, separate funding totaling \$3,354,229 was contributed through HSIF to support HumanServices.net and the Data Warehouse Project. Some funders elected to support specific projects of interest to their foundations through HSIF, such as the Disabilities Connection supported solely by FISA Foundation; the Children’s Cabinet supported solely by Jewish Healthcare Foundation; Allegheny County

Community Re-integration Women's project supported solely by Eden Hall Foundation; and Funders for Criminal Justice projects supported by Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation and others. Many funders also support DHS with direct grants for specific projects.

Process

Projects are brought to HSIF by Marc Cherna, Director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) and/or funders.

The Pittsburgh Foundation manages the Fund and its activities, and convenes the funders with the DHS Director. Mr. Cherna, in collaboration with The Pittsburgh Foundation, develops the meeting agenda which typically includes departmental and HSIF project updates (including follow-up reports) as well as new funding requests (to support the restructuring process) which are acted on during the meetings. Funders may also request specific issues be placed on the meeting agenda.

DHS is responsible for full programmatic and financial reporting on all grants and contracts. The Pittsburgh Foundation is responsible for reporting on contributions to and commitments and expenditures from the Fund.

Project activities, among others, supported by HSIF include: policy and planning; staffing – searches, staff development, professional review study, caseload assignment study; physical relocation; fiscal restructuring; Allegheny County Jail Collaborative.

HSIF-supported projects and activities support the following principles:

- Assist DHS to establish consistent service priorities;
- Assist DHS to assess and organize staff and operations to consolidate administration and services; and
- Assist DHS to maximize use of state and federal funds.

Members of the Human Services Integration Fund

- Alcoa Foundation
- Anonymous
- Birmingham Foundation
- Buhl Foundation
- Eden Hall Foundation
- FISA Foundation
- The Forbes Fund
- The Grable Foundation
- Heinz Endowments
- Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Hillman Foundation
- Jewish Healthcare Foundation
- Maurice Falk Medical Fund
- Pittsburgh Child Guidance Foundation
- Pittsburgh Foundation
- R. K. Mellon Foundation
- Staunton Farm Foundation
- United Way of Allegheny County

Data Warehouse Project

Project Overview

When DHS was first created, the organization faced an overwhelming challenge to wrap its hands around its slew of separate information systems. Each of the major program areas of DHS (Aging; Children, Youth & Families; Community Services; Behavioral Health; Mental Retardation) had its own legacy data system and many other disparate databases. Not one of these systems could speak to the other. As a result, DHS had no way to develop a complete view of its consumers across program offices.

Through the generosity of the foundation community, DHS created a new computing architecture that could support the integrated vision for the department. First, DHS implemented a new operating system referred to as eCAPS (electronic Consumer and Provider System). The initial program areas included in eCAPS were Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol, and Mental Retardation. During 2001, employment and training information was brought into production. In 2003, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) was added. HMIS tracks data, at the case management level, on all homeless programs funded by DHS. Special programs such as Community Connections for Families (CCF) and the Forensic Unit at the Jail also now use the application.

With the rollout of eCAPS, DHS could now move to integrate all of its programmatic and financial data into a common data warehouse. DHS soon recognized that the data stored in the DW would be valuable as a resource tool for research, strategic planning, needs assessment and program evaluation not only to DHS but to the broader community as well. An advisory committee, consisting of community leaders, conducted focus groups of all likely stakeholders and identified potential users as university-based researchers; health and human service agencies; policy and planning organizations including foundations and civic agencies; and consumers of human services, their family members and advocates. Their research also determined categories of business questions important to community stakeholders as being: tracking consumers and aggregate demand for services; monitoring quality, cost and aggregate outcomes; agency management and planning; tracking linkages within and between service delivery systems; and consumer choice and advocacy. The advisory committee also explored data integrity and confidentiality; marketing, education and technical support for users; and oversight and governance of the DW.

By 2007, the Data Warehouse included case management type data from all program offices. In addition, DHS formalized information sharing agreements with the county and state corrections agencies, city and county housing authorities and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (including TANF, general assistance, food stamps, Medical Assistance, energy assistance, employment and training and child care support through DPW). With all of this information in a central repository, DHS has the ability to look across federal, state and county human service programs and properly analyze and react to emerging trends.

Project Results

- The eCAPS operating system was moved into production in October of 2000 and the Data Warehouse was moved into production in May of 2001.
- Building on the data warehouse technology, DHS can now use Global Information Systems (GIS) mapping to evaluate consumer data and make better decisions.
- Using its Geographical Information System (GIS), DHS can examine the spatial relationships between clients, contracted service providers and the demographics of the geographic region in question.
 - Example: Based on a GIS mapping of the locations of mental health consumers, DHS was able to better locate its Mental Health Drop-In Clinics within the County
- The data warehouse and GIS mapping technology has proved to be a valuable community resource.
 - Example: When a school district wanted to get an idea of how many of their students were in the child welfare system, DHS was able to produce a GIS mapping to help answer the question.
- The analytic tools used by DHS retrieve and display the DW data in several formats.
 - The user can request aggregate unduplicated counts; client-specific, provider-specific or program specific reports and displays; and data by geographic location.
 - Internally, staff can request a report indicating the number of DHS clients who are concurrently receiving services through a specific combination of program offices. This request can then be fine-tuned to reflect the specific records for the individuals identified in the broad search.
 - DataVue went into production in 2006. This application enables staff to enter an individual's name and retrieve all data about that person that is stored in the DW.
- The DW has become a significant community resource as well, encouraging partnerships and research projects with RAND, the Center for Disease Control, Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Pittsburgh, the Funders in Criminal Justice and the U.S. Department of Justice.
- In June of 2007, The DHS Office of Information Management (OIM) was honored on at the Computerworld Honors Award night for their design and implementation of the DHS Data Warehouse. The title of Laureate is awarded to “individuals, organizations and institutions around the world, whose visionary applications of information technology promote positive social, economic and educational change.”
- By December 2007, the Data Warehouse contained more than 15 million client records, received data from 24 independent operating applications, was supplemented with the US Census bureau data and was made capable of reporting data in “real time”— meaning, if required, the system could be refreshed on an as-needed basis.
- The Data Warehouse serves as a community resource for a growing number of research projects initiated by the academic community, local government and local foundations.

Random Moment Sample (RMS) Revision

Project Overview

With the creation of DHS, administrative and support staff began to work across program areas to increase efficiency and improve service to consumers. For this to happen, DHS first had to develop an appropriate cost allocation system for employees that met with extensive federal and state reporting guidelines.

With funding from HSIF, DHS contracted with consulting firm DMG Maximus to review the department's organizational structure, interview staff to identify responsibilities, and finally, to develop a random sampling technique that would reduce paperwork and time spent filling out bureaucratic timesheets.

Today, the automated WinRMS 95 system uses a statistically valid random sampling technique to produce accurate labor distribution results without the burden of recording, compiling, analyzing and summarizing employee timesheet information. It replaces the former antiquated manual tracking system, which was intensive, costly and unreliable.

Project Results

- Benefits vs. the former manual tracking system:
 - \$120,000/year saved in accountant costs
 - 190 days/year saved from not filling out extra paperwork
 - Increased revenue realized from more accurate claims submitted to state and federal government.
- In October 2005, the WinRMS 95 was expanded to track the task distributions of all DHS employees.

Physical Relocation Project

Project Overview

In 1998, with funding from the Human Services Integration Fund and significant time and effort from the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, DHS devised a physical relocation strategy to co-locate staff by function. This strategy enhanced efficiency of operation and optimized interaction across program areas.

The Chamber of Commerce's Physical Relocation Project Team developed a plan for appropriate groupings of staff, assessed available space, inventoried furnishings and equipment, and prepared Computer-Aided Drafting (CAD) floor plans.

Project Results

- 250 staff relocated through four downtown facilities
 - All human resources, financial, budget and compliance, audit and facilities management staff were relocated in one facility
 - All Community Services staff were relocated in one facility
 - All Information Technology staff were relocated in one facility
- Stronger, more centralized management
- Enhanced communication and efficiency

Technical Assistance & Training

Project Overview

A key initiative for DHS early in its formation was to improve the effectiveness of its multiple advisory boards. With the creation of one department, DHS recognized that its many composite boards had varied purposes and followed disparate sets of guidelines and regulations.

To fully engage and utilize its advisory boards, DHS committed to a series of retreats and planning sessions with each of them. With the help of consultant Sheila Washington, DHS structured each retreat to handle the following issues:

- Overviews of DHS and individual program offices
- Team building activities
- Clarification of board and staff roles and responsibilities
- Discussion around effective communication methods
- Agreement on processes to identify and address issues
- Identification of processes to review board action plans

Project Results

- DHS conducted retreats for boards across multiple program areas including Aging; Children, Youth & Families; Drug & Alcohol; Mental Health; and Mental Retardation
- The retreats led to increased buy-in and support from board members and the community

Personnel Audit

Project Overview

The creation of DHS resulted in the merging of multiple personnel systems used to recruit, hire and promote employees. Initial analysis showed that the newly created department was paying employees differently for doing the same job and had no consistent process to evaluate and reward employees for good performance.

With the help of HSIF, DHS was able to contract with consultants Deloitte & Touche to tackle these problems and create a unified Human Resources strategy.

Project Results

- DHS was benchmarked against other county human service agencies nationally based on population, income and program size
- The current organizational structure was found to be efficient and cost effective
- A model job profiling system was established for use in creating, upgrading and reviewing jobs across the department in a consistent manner
- All non-union employees have had their job titles reclassified and salaries standardized according to benchmarks
- A career path model has been developed for all positions across DHS
- Draft job descriptions have been developed that are consistent with performance management and appraisal factors
- Written Salary Administration Guidelines have been developed
- A comprehensive performance management process for all employees has been rolled out
- The (former) County Director of Human Resources was involved in each stage of the project and saw value in using the results of the project for county-wide human resource improvements

JD Edwards Project

Project Overview

The creation of DHS gave the Department the opportunity to consolidate the back-office financial functions that previously existed in each of the formerly disparate departments. With funding from HSIF, DHS was able to hire a consultant to assess current financial systems procedures through a fit assessment mapping process.

Project Results

- JD Edwards (JDE) One World Xe financial software package was selected by the County as the new financial software package. The foundations' \$212,000 investment generated a decision by the County to commit \$12 million over five years to implement JDE.
- Today, JDE has created a number of benefits for DHS:
 - *Automated processing of vouchers*
Over 3,000 monthly payments to both foster parents as well as agencies are processed with little or no manual intervention
 - *Automated voucher and batch control forms*
Staff now has the ability to generate an Allegheny County "Standard Voucher for Services Form" automatically from JD Edwards. The form is ready for signature and submission to the Controller's Office and includes bar coding functionality for use by the Controller's voucher imaging system. Also, the "Batch Control Form" detailing all vouchers associated with a single A/P batch can now be automatically printed when previously they had been prepared manually by typewriter
 - *Client-level expenditures and reporting*
Client specific expenditure data entered into JD Edwards is available for on-line review or reporting of services received across all bureaus of DHS
 - *Elimination of off-line and silo systems*
The ability of the staff to review and report on the disposition of their own data has reduced the need to keep manual records of documents submitted to the Controller's Office
 - *Financial/Funder Reporting*
Staff now has access to their real-time financial data with flexibility to produce reports monthly, quarterly, or on an annual basis for submission to their grant funding sources
 - *Real-time tracking of payments and search capabilities*
Real-time on-line inquiry capability has provided staff with the ability to query the system to search for payment or contract status information previously only available from monthly reports provided from external sources. It has also given management the tools to monitor the status of payments and reduce the time necessary to process these payments.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Project Overview

In 2001, HSIF funded Dickerson & Mangus, Ink to conduct a thorough customer satisfaction survey that would:

- Assess the level of satisfaction of DHS consumers
- Determine the degree to which program providers have fully embraced and operationalized the guiding principles of DHS

Because DHS serves almost a quarter of Allegheny County's population every year, the department felt it was critical to see how consumers felt about DHS and the services it provides.

Project Results

- DHS was pleased to receive extremely positive feedback from its consumers about the services it provides
- DHS convened a provider summit to share results with the Executive Directors and Board Presidents of its provider partners. Over 200 providers were in attendance.

CYF Workload Standards Project

Project Overview

The Workload Standards/Caseload Study Project was an effort to assess the demands and parameters of providing high quality child welfare services within Office of Children, Youth and Families. The study examined the length of time required for workers to fulfill their responsibilities and attempted to determine an appropriate caseload size for caseworkers. The end goal was to help build a system that provides quality services and attracts and retains qualified workers.

In order to gain the most complete information regarding these issues, three parallel research methods were employed: Focus Groups, Job Shadowing, and Case Reviews. The study involved ten focus groups with 60 employees where employees had the opportunity to share specifics regarding their job responsibilities. Through Job Shadowing, 34 randomly selected workers were closely observed over 5,600 hours to gain information on the length of time it took them to complete tasks. The Case Review method included 16,000 CYF cases from the past three years. These reviews provided even more information regarding the actual service times for cases.

Funded by HSIF, the study was conducted by the Community Enhancement Research Network of the School of Social Work, University of Pittsburgh.

Project Results

- This extensive review determined that the optimum caseloads should be 16 families per Intake caseworker and 17 families per Family Services caseworker. This would enable workers to complete all of the requirements necessary to adequately serve families and children
- DHS continues to work toward reducing caseloads to this level. Currently, DHS is using the report to advocate with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, which currently allows up to 30 families per worker. DHS also has shared results with the State Association, Legislators, and the new State Administration

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Caseload Analysis

Project Overview

In 2003, HSIF funded consultant Jefferson Wells to conduct an in-depth review of AAA caseload volumes, internal and external professional processes for AAA programs, information systems capabilities, and finally, to make organizational structure recommendations.

Specific data was collected and analyzed to:

- Define proper caseload levels, utilizing statistics that may segregate caseload assignment based on geographic, consumer acuity, service type, service intensity, and/or care manager experience factors
- Understand where redundancy exists within and across existing AAA and Care Management Agency program processes, and how best to consolidate processes to eliminate the problem
- Determine where existing procedures and activities can be altered to improve both the quality and timeliness of service provided, and the potential impact on caseload assignments
- Increase the flexibility of care managers by eliminating excessive and unnecessary controls
- Create a definition of the Agency's future state for the optimal utilization of resources

The end goal of the project is to provide Care Managers and Care Givers with both the time and ability to be more pro-active in their dealings with consumers, providing appropriate service in the fastest timeframe possible.

Project Results

The study provided AAA with recommendations around:

- Case load assignment and volumes, both short term and future state
- Current state business processes and data requirements
- The future state organizational structure of AAA
- Interim changes to organizations and processes that can be implemented today that begin to move the Agency toward the future state model
- How to best to utilize the SAMS System for both interim and future state models

AAA has started to implement many of these recommendations and will continue the path forward in 2004.

Behavioral Health Cost Analysis Study

Project Overview

The Behavioral Health Cost Analysis Study was initiated in order to gather information that would assist in the design of a unified Behavioral Health system. A comprehensive review of the state of the Behavioral Health system was completed by the Technical Assistance Collaborative and the RAND Corporation. The review took place over an eight-month period with oversight from a local steering committee that included consumers, providers, the Office of Behavioral Health, Allegheny Health Choices, Inc. (ACHI) and the Community Care Behavioral Health.

Project Results

The final report from the Technical Assistance Collaborative was received in 2003. The Steering Committee reviewed the report and the information was subsequently presented to the D&A Council, MH/MR Board, and ACHI Board. The Office of Behavioral Health has begun to implement some of the report's recommendations and will continue to do so in 2004.

Children's Cabinet

Project Overview

The Children's Cabinet was originally created in November 2000 to respond to the significant barriers faced by families whose children have a mental illness. The Cabinet is charged with creating an accessible, individualized, high quality system of services for children and adolescents with social, emotional, and behavioral needs across Allegheny County.

The Human Service Integration Fund was critical in the launch of the Children's Cabinet. HSIF funding enabled DHS to hire a Children's Cabinet Director for the first year of the effort. Much of the work of the Cabinet was carried out through a committee structure that focused on very specific elements of service systems as well as policy.

The Children's Cabinet ended its work in 2005.

Project Results

Below are some of the accomplishments of the Children's Cabinet operating committees:

- *Supporting Children and Adolescents in Substitute Care Committee* has completed its report. Major recommendations include:
 - Increase accessibility of services
 - Address the needs of the transition age population
 - Provide increased training for staff, family members and others who are involved with CYF
- *Supporting Children and Adolescents within the School Setting Committee* has completed its report. Major recommendations include:
 - Establish a single point of contact for families and systems providers
 - Establish an intersystem training unit
 - Promote school-based services
 - Support creativity
 - Ensure staff stability use of funding
 - Study gaps in services
- *Supporting Children and Adolescents with Social, Emotional and Behavioral Issues within the Legal Setting Committee* has completed its report. Major recommendations include:
 - Specialized services should be "nested" in locations in which children and adolescents are found
 - Provide increased training
 - Ensure understanding of all child-serving systems of the role of Judges
 - Address fiscal issues
 - Family Court Reform needs to be considered in planning activities
- *New Models Committee* (joined by Supporting Children and Adolescents with Extremely Complex Needs Committee) has completed its report. This Committee outlined a care coordination model designed to:
 - Provide for services that are culturally competent, family-driven, strengths-based and community-based for children with serious emotional disturbances

- Coordinate existing prevention, crisis and treatment services across systems
- Develop and use outcome measures in all areas
- Maximize efficiency and effectiveness of fund utilization through “braiding”
- Ensure meaningful participation of families and youth on a systems level, as well as on an individual level.

Additional progress was made in the following areas:

- Family participation on the Children’s Cabinet increased
- The Birth-to-Five Committee worked to integrate efforts of multiple initiatives developed to identify and address increasing behavioral health needs of young children.
- The Children’s Cabinet Director and members worked closely with, and supported, the System of Care Initiative for youth ages six to 14 years, Community Connections for Families, to develop a support/advocacy organization specifically for families of children and adolescents.

HumanServices.net

Project Overview

In 2002, the idea of developing a dynamic, consumer-facing, readily accessible, easy-to-navigate web-based system that contains descriptive and contact information about human services providers in Allegheny County captured the imagination of the DHS Office of Information Management and the Pittsburgh foundation community. As designed, in partnership with Three Rivers Connect, MAYA Designs, and a group of approximately 20 community organizations, HumanServices.net allows providers and consumers to research the optimal service agencies, matching the needs of the consumers with the best services to meet those needs.

This information asset is targeted to be used by three broad categories of people: (1) human service professionals, including caseworkers, information and referral specialists and other in the helping professions (clergy, teachers, counselors, etc.); (2) the general public, including individuals seeking services for themselves or family members; and (3) academicians, policy analysts and policy-makers (including the foundation community).

Launched in 2006 and fully funded through HSIF, Phase One of HumanServices.net combines state-of-the-art data warehousing and geographic mapping technologies with the Internet to provide targeted, on-demand information about human services to consumers. By providing information on all local human service agencies and the populations they serve in a single location, the project is a windfall for the individual who has specific needs but little idea of the full range of resources at his or her disposal. Others will benefit as well. Staff at DHS and provider agencies will better match clients in one system (e.g., mental health) with their other needs (e.g., transportation or child care).

Since Allegheny County is composed of 130 municipalities and the City of Pittsburgh has 92 neighborhoods, Phase Two of the project emphasizes the inclusion of community profiles. These profiles will describe the demographics of each community, gleaned from census data, as well as client demographic and service data within each of the communities, secured from the DHS Data Warehouse. The census data portion of Phase Two was put into production in early 2007. The DHS data portion, and therefore the inclusion of complete community profiles, will be added by late 2007.

Ideas for expanding HumanServices.net in the future include: linking to other resource guides, including health data (location and services of clinics, hospitals, WIC sites, etc.) and developing an on-line interactive expert questions/answer functionality.

In the long run, HumanServices.net will improve the overall system of care by changing the services supply to meet community demand. Human service agencies will use the new data available to determine optimal locations for service, estimate staffing needs, and establish benchmarks for performance. Foundations can identify glaring areas of need in the community and allocate the necessary resources to meet those needs. The data from HumanServices.net could well be the vehicle to coordinate the region's approach to some of our toughest problems.

Project Results

- Work on Phase One of the HumanServices.net project began in late 2003
- Phase One of HumanServices.net was launched in May of 2006.
- Phase Two of HumanServices.net is scheduled to launch in late 2007.

Hearing Officer Project

Project Overview

By 1997, the conditions inside the Allegheny County Juvenile Courthouse were considered to be among the worst in the nation. A heightened awareness of child abuse and neglect resulted in a significant rise in the number of cases reported and the number of children removed from abusive homes. This was coupled with a sky-rocketing increase in the number of children in foster care and other forms of temporary out-of-home living arrangements. With more than 17,000 dependency hearings per year and only one full-time judge and four part-time judges assigned to hear dependency matters, Allegheny County appeared last in a U.S. Department of Justice ranking of dependency court resources found in jurisdictions of similar size. Foundation support would be critical in the undoing of this chaos.

The Director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services Marc Cherna and the Honorable Max Baer, then Administrative Judge of the Family Division of the Court of Common Pleas drafted a grant proposal for the creation of the Hearing Officer Project. The local foundation community responded. Through a three-year grant totaling \$1.185 million from nine Pittsburgh-based foundations, the Hearing Officer Project was realized.

The Hearing Officer Project was launched in December 1998 with the primary goals of increasing judicial resources for dependency cases and promoting permanency for dependent children residing in foster care. Three hearing officers, a dependency coordinator, and three additional child advocates, parent advocates and county solicitors were hired. The hearing officers presided over dependency reviews leaving the critical shelter hearings, dependency petitions, termination of parent rights proceedings and adoption matters to judges, who had increased capacity to review and monitor ongoing dependency cases more thoroughly.

The grant awarded to the Hearing Officer Project through multiple local foundations had two measurable goals: 1) reduce the number of children in placement by one percent a year and 2) reduce the average length of stay of children in out of home placement by two percent a year. Accomplishing these goals would have the dual impact of reducing the total cost of care for children in placement while continuing to achieve permanency outcomes within the guidelines of the Adoption Safe Families Act.

Project Results

- After one year, the number of children in placement fell seven percent, from 2,581 children on January 1, 1999 to 2,394 children on January 1, 2000 and the average length of time children spent in placement fell 32 percent to an average of 10.5 months
- By the end of 2000, the average caseload each judge carried had fallen from 63 cases a day in 1997 to 20-25 cases a day.

- By December 2001, the end of foundation participation in the project, the number of children in out-of-home placement had decreased by 14 percent since the project began.
- In January of 1999, the average length of stay in an out-of-home placement for a child with a goal of reunification was 23 months. By December 2005, that duration had been reduced to 9.4 months.
- From January 2002 to December 2005, the Hearing Officer Division closed 2,317 cases due to permanency being achieved by successful reunification with a parent, permanent legal custodianship or adoption.
- By the end of 2005, the average daily caseload each judge carried had fallen from 63 cases to 18-20 cases.

Mental Health Court

Project Overview

On March 1, 2007 the RAND Corporation released results of its research study, Justice, Treatment, and Cost – An Evaluation of the Fiscal Impact of Allegheny County Mental Health Court. The results were encouraging. The Allegheny County Mental Health Court (MHC) was found to be a fiscally responsible alternative to traditional incarceration for persons with mental illness involved in the criminal justice system.

MHC, like Drug Court, offers offenders with behavioral health diagnosis a special docket of criminal court that diverts them to treatment rather than incarceration. MHC relies on the active and cooperative participation of local social/behavioral health service agencies, the Court, Public Defender, District Attorney, Probation and Parole, and Jail. All these stakeholders have embraced the concept, having spent decades watching the same individuals enter and re-enter the criminal justice system with little hope of eventual community reintegration.

Recidivism rates of MHC participants are kept low through close supervision, a mandatory treatment plan intended to promote recovery, and seamless support services.

MHC facilitates for each participant the opportunity for a new way of life that generates a sense of well-being, independence and pride, possibly for the first time in his or her life.

The effort has been funded through grants from the foundation community as well as the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

Allegheny County State Justice-Related Support Services

Project Overview

Established in 1999, the Allegheny County State Justice-Related Support Services is an innovative approach to working with individuals with behavioral health diagnoses who are “maxing out” from Pennsylvania’s penitentiaries. The program promotes the reintegration of participants into the community as productive and valuable members of society. The program has successfully reintegrated hundreds of individuals with behavioral health issues into the community after the completion of their sentences. The program consists of a face-to-face meeting between the Allegheny County State Justice-Related Support Specialist and the interested participant while he or she is still in prison. Assistance is provided for all or any combination of the following: post-release housing; obtaining psychiatric treatment, accessing transportation, securing basic needs such as food and clothing, as well as applying for benefit programs and employment. These case management services may be provided for a period of up to 90 days but can be provided longer if an individual requires them.

Project results

The Allegheny County State Justice-Related Support Services Program was named as one of five winners of the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award in 2005. Often referred to as the “Oscar” of government programs, the Innovations Award is a program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and is administered in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government. As a winner, the program received a \$100,000 grand prize.

“The success of this program lies in the staff’s ability to build a trusting relationship and to work closely with participants to ease the anxiety associated with returning to their communities,” said Stephen Goldsmith, Director of the Innovations in American Government Awards Program. “When compared with the national average for recidivism, it’s easy to see how this program is not only saving tax dollars, but also changing lives.” Of the nearly 400 persons who have utilized State Justice-Related Services to date, (May 2005) ten percent have recidivated. Since its inception, there have only been two persons referred to the program who chose not to participate.

“This program is on the cutting edge in developing a truly comprehensive model for successful re-integration,” said Gowher Rizvi, Director of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. “It is hands-on and holistic, and most importantly, it is working.”

Allegheny County Jail Collaborative

Project Overview

Since 1999, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services has created a unique partnership with the County Jail and Health Department to tackle the problem of recidivism. As offenders attempt to re-enter society, they often face the challenges of addiction, unemployment, homelessness, mental illness and social isolation. The Allegheny County Jail Collaborative is a unique program which calls on the different arms of county government to pool their strengths and tackle these root causes of recidivism.

To date, the Collaborative has been successful in establishing key elements of a service system, including:

- A screening process;
- A service planning format that will be utilized by jail case workers and service providers;
- A relationship with the courts to help support the early release of inmates involved in services;
- Critical services including D&A treatment, employment and training support, education, parent support, and ¾-way housing

To continue pushing the work of the Collaborative forward, HSIF funded the position of a Jail Planner for one year. The Planner's work focused on the development of systemic planning and documentation mechanisms for the Collaborative. With the end of funding in 2004, existing staff and a Coro Fellow will continue working in this capacity.

More recently, HSIF has agreed to fund a three-year evaluation of the Jail Collaborative. Because of the uniqueness of the effort and its potential to create a national model for treating recidivism, the evaluators will conduct a two-tiered evaluation focusing on both the process itself as well as outcomes (including post-release criminal behavior and recidivism). The University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and the Center for Race and Social Problems will conduct the evaluation.

Allegheny County Jail Collaborative Evaluation Research

A leading question associated with the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative (an initiative of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Allegheny County Jail and Allegheny County Health Department— see Jail Collaborative) is its capacity to generate desirable benefits to incarcerated individuals and community residents. To examine this and related questions, the Human Services Integration Fund provided funding for researchers from University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work, Center on Race and Social Problems to design a process and outcome study to evaluate the efforts of the Jail Collaborative to successfully reintegrate former offenders back into the community.

The project consists of three major evaluative components: (1) service processes and collaboration practice; (2) intermediary achievement among former inmates and, (3) ultimate outcome assessment—post-release criminal behavior and recidivism.

The evaluation relies on data generated from observance of meetings, surveys and interviews of partners and collaborators, official data from the Allegheny County Jail, Department of Human Services and Health Department as well as a three-year survey of 300 male inmates released from Allegheny County Jail (ages 21 to 45 years with incarceration of 45 days or more). All selected inmates were tracked with a total of three measurements—30 days after release from prison and at subsequent 10- and 12-month intervals. The evaluation study period was between July 2003 and December 2006. Data was compiled in mid-2007. The report was released on January 14, 2008.

One Vision One Life - Allegheny County Violence Prevention Initiative

In 2003, Allegheny County recorded 125 homicides, our highest homicide rate in over a decade. It was at this time that community leaders came together to start the Allegheny County Violence Prevention Initiative, later named One Vision One Life.

The goal of One Vision One Life is to prevent targeted violence. This is accomplished by: (1) identifying, training, and developing a team of Community Coordinators who will be active in, and informed about, their communities; (2) systematically collecting and utilizing street-level intelligence to intervene in disputes, turf battles, gang/group incidents before they become shootings and homicides; (3) reaching out to those at risk for violence with services, jobs, and assistance – so they are no longer at risk for violence; and, (4) intensively documenting and evaluating our efforts. In so doing, One Vision One Life’s aim is to reduce violence by reaching out and providing opportunities for a better way of life.

One Vision One Life works in the Pittsburgh Northside, Hill District and Southside neighborhoods. In 2003, there were 85 shooting injuries and 34 killings in the target areas. In 2004, there were 80 shooting injuries and 18 killings, a reduction of six percent and 47 percent respectively.

One Vision One Life employs approximately 20 Community Coordinators and three Area Managers, in addition to the Project Director and an Analyst/Evaluation Coordinator to achieve this mission.

Major partners include:

- The Center that CARES (Hill District Community Partner and Fiscal Agent)
- The Pittsburgh Project (Northside Community Partner)
- The Brashear Association (Southside Community Partner)
- The Pittsburgh Public Schools
- The City of Pittsburgh Housing Authority
- Allegheny County Department of Human Services
- The school boards of Sto-Rox and Clairton School Districts
- Local law enforcement (including the City, County, School, and Transit Police)
- The United States Attorneys Office
- The District Attorney
- The Public Defender
- Allegheny County Health Department (and local trauma centers)
- The State Department of Corrections
- Community- and Faith-Based Organization

The Disability Connection

Project Overview

Statistics show Americans with disabilities lag their peers in some key predictors of self-sufficiency. In 2001, the National Council on Disability reported that:

- Unemployment rates for working-age adults with disabilities have hovered at the 70 percent level for at least the past 12 years;
- Home ownership rates for people with disabilities are in the single digits, while rates for people without disabilities are about 71 percent;
- National diploma graduation rates for students who receive special education and related services have stagnated at 27 percent for the past three years, while rates are 75 percent for students who do not rely on special education; and
- Computer usage and internet access for people with disabilities is half that of people without disabilities.¹

In 2001, there were approximately 200,000 people with a wide range of disabilities living in Allegheny County. Resources available to these residents were not fully coordinated. The vast majority of federal and state funding for people with disabilities came in the form of direct grants to providers with a mandate to serve specific conditions. Programs available through Allegheny County were limited to dedicated populations within the community. For example, within DHS, residents with disabilities could qualify for attendant care. Within the Department of Economic Development, residents with disabilities could qualify for home modifications. The scope of these programs was not comprehensive. Allegheny County government received numerous calls each year from residents with disabilities that the County was not equipped to handle because of “funding silos”.

To help improve the level of service to people with disabilities within Allegheny County, HSIF funded a director-level position for one year.

Project Results

- Using HSIF funding, DHS hired a Director for the Disability Connection starting January 1, 2004

¹ “Investing in Independence: Transition Recommendations for President George W. Bush.” National Council on Disability. 2001.

DHS Scholars in Local Government Program

Project Overview

The Scholars in Local Government Program (Scholars) is a highly competitive career development opportunity intended to attract recent graduates of juris doctorate programs as well as master's degree programs in public policy, public administration, social work, business, law and related fields to work in local government careers, particularly at the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, and to create local and national interest around careers in public service.

Candidates compete based on their academic and professional experience, demonstrated leadership potential, commitment to public service, communication skills, and creativity for one-year appointments. During this year of service they will apply their skills to complete high-profile projects and analyze difficult problems and use their leadership abilities to impact policy and practice. In addition to on-the-job training, Scholars are given unique opportunities to meet with high-level government officials, foundation executives, nonprofit and private sector leaders and to participate in educational and professional development opportunities. If Scholars complete their commitment, receive a favorable evaluation, and want to continue working for the County, every effort will be made to continue their employment.

Project Results

The first class of Scholars will be announced in February, 2008 and begin employment in June, 2008.

Local Government Case Competition

Project Overview

The Local Government Case Competition applies the creativity and knowledge of students in local graduate schools toward solving challenging public sector problems and increases students' knowledge of local government opportunities. The 2007 Competition made rivals of 13 interscholastic teams composed of graduate students from both Carnegie Mellon University (Heinz School of Public Policy) and the University of Pittsburgh (School of Social Work & Graduate School of Public and International Affairs). Fifty-two students were grouped into three or four-member, interdisciplinary teams. Their challenge was to play the role of human services delivery leaders in 2017. Teams had three days to develop a scenario to describe the workings of the Department of Human Services a decade from today: What services are provided to whom, in what ways, when and where? And, they were charged with envisioning the requirements of the workforce delivering human services 10 years in the future. The teams presented their ideas to judges (government leaders, human service providers, university professors and foundation executives) who decided which team would share the first place prize of \$3,000 and which would share the second place prize of \$1,500.

Project Results

The two winning teams were consistent in their assessment that in order to move successfully into the future the level of integration between public and private providers of services will necessarily be seamless. Both viewed technical innovations and the advantages they bring to providing, tracking and evaluating the quality of services as key to success in the decade to come. The first place team distinguished itself by highlighting the importance of prevention efforts in an era of reduced funding but burgeoning need.