Qualtrics becomes DHS's official surveying tool

As a result of an RFP searching for technology solutions to enhance client feedback and community engagement, this year has brought many changes to the way DHS gathers responses, including the introduction of the collaborative communications website, satisfaction kiosks, and SMS surveys. Now, Qualtrics – HIPAA-compliant, web-based survey software – is being added to the mix as it becomes the Department's default surveying tool.

"DHS staff members use surveys for a variety of things, such as gathering feedback after new hire orientations, conducting satisfaction surveys, or receiving nominations for the Good Apple Award. With so many people conducting surveys, it was often challenging to know what was happening and where," said Mike Mitchell, client experience analytics manager in the Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation (DARE). "It was important for us to find survey software that would not only centralize surveying, but also allow for greater communication and collaboration."

Qualtrics was selected as DHS's official surveying tool for its ease of use and many options that support collaboration. One benefit of the program is that each survey can have multiple users, with each user assigned various roles and levels of permissions. For example, one person may have permission to edit survey questions while another may only have access to survey results for data entry.

Additionally, Qualtrics allows for the creation of a "library of questions," which saves the wording and responses of commonly asked questions and allows those phrases to be used in future surveys.

"The Qualtrics library feature will store and allow survey designers to use standardized questions and responses, or share questions and responses across programs—meaning you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time you create a survey. By using consistent language, we will also be able to begin comparing client data across any program or office that has used one of these questions," Mike added.

One of the greatest benefits of Qualtrics is its accessibility: Since it is a web-based platform, surveys can be created or completed from anywhere. Beyond the web platform, survey creators also can distribute surveys through text messages.

"Ultimately, we are moving in a direction with client experience and community engagement to make it as easy as possible for someone to give feedback. Qualtrics is a step in that direction by improving the survey experience for both the end user as well as the survey or research staff," Mike concluded.

Trainings on Qualtrics have been held for members of the DARE staff as well as frequent Survey Monkey users. Plans are in place to train remaining DHS staff over the next six to 12 months. Qualtrics licenses are available for all staff members, and can be requested after completing the training.

To learn more about Qualtrics, please contact Mike Mitchell at mike.mitchell@alleghenycounty.us or view the Qualtrics fact sheet on the How To's - Business Practices page on the DHS Intranet. For a practical example demonstrating what Qualtrics looks like, click here (before May 31) to complete a short survey.