

DHS News

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Department of Human Services



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Using SMS to engage potential employees

As part of DHS's efforts to use [SMS technology](#) to increase engagement, plans are in place to begin using automated text messages to interact with job applicants in real-time.

Currently, Kelly Dillard, employment specialist in the Office of Community Relations (OCR), uses manual text messaging to follow up on an applicant's status and communicate important information. As texts are being generated directly from a phone, it is difficult to send messages to large groups of individuals who may have slightly differing needs; each message must be sent one-by-one. Additionally, as Kelly is interacting with dozens of applicants, there are challenges with tracking where an individual may be in the hiring process or what his or her individual needs may be over time.

With the new system, applicants interested in learning more about employment at DHS can text JOBS to 412-455-5688 and receive auto responses on frequently asked questions ranging from "What types of positions are available at DHS?" to "What are the next steps after completing the Civil Service exam?" If the system is unable to answer the applicant's question, an email will be sent to Kelly so she can follow up with a personalized response. The system will also allow Kelly to import contacts from job fairs and online inquiries to initiate conversations about the hiring process.

"Overall, the new system will streamline recruitment: Applicants will have immediate, around-the-clock access to information through the auto responses, and, on the backend, we will be able to better track the conversations we are having. Improved communications will go a long way in helping to bring qualified applicants into DHS," Kelly said.

To learn more about DHS recruitment efforts, contact Kelly at Kelly.Dillard@alleghenycounty.us.