



DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County
Department of Human Services



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Workforce excellence initiative continues

Since last summer, DHS has been participating in a [five-year workforce excellence initiative](#) through the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) designed to improve staff recruitment and retention in the Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF).

The first step of the process was conducting a Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment (COHA), a process where staff could share their thoughts around ways working in CYF could be changed or improved. Nearly 500 staff members – including client- and non-client-facing staff, caseworkers, supervisors, managers, Regional Office Directors (RODs), and administrators – provided feedback either through a survey, focus groups, and/or individual interviews. Supervision, workload, and racial equity & inclusivity were ranked among the top concerns.

Now, with a better understanding of the topics that are most important to staff, several members of DHS leadership are participating in a Leadership Academy designed to help them facilitate change at the agency. The first cohort began in October and consists of 11 participants including RODs, clinical managers, HR personnel and agency leadership.

Prior to starting coursework, participants completed a 360° leadership feedback process that included a self-assessment and aggregated feedback from several of the participant's supervisors, peers and direct reports. This feedback has allowed participants to experience more targeted leadership development as they move through the Academy's five modules: Fundamentals of Leadership, Leading Change, Leading for Results, Leading in Context and Leading People. Each module involves an online session and an in-person (virtual during the pandemic) classroom training. Participants also have monthly meetings with a Leadership Development Coach where they work on a personal learning plan and complete a change project that applies what they have learned.

The first cohort of the Leadership Academy will wrap up in March 2021; however, plans are in place to offer the Academy to more CYF supervisors and managers in the future.