

## **DHS ramps up recruitment efforts**

DHS underwent a renewed focus on caseworker recruitment a couple of years ago, starting with the roll out of its [realistic job preview video](#) and the development of a careers brochure. The department's efforts to recruit qualified staff have been expanded over the last year due to the hard work of Kelly Dillard, employment specialist in the Office of Community Relations (OCR).

Hired in May 2016, Kelly's first assignment was to do a "deep-dive" into DHS's recruitment, retention, onboarding, training and marketing strategies. She worked with more than a dozen supervisors and administrators across DHS to complete a recruitment analysis and create a list of recommendations for streamlining and improving recruitment processes throughout DHS.

Since creating the plan, Kelly has been working with DHS staff and stakeholders to implement practical and creative strategies to reach qualified candidates, including visiting appropriate classrooms in colleges and universities and attending their employment networking events. With assistance from OCR's communications team, these efforts have included articles in local media discussing casework practice and spotlighting individual caseworkers, an increased social media presence, three DHS-hosted job fairs, participation in community employment events, and enhanced recruitment materials. The DHS web team helped develop a more user-friendly careers page on the DHS website. Kelly has also spearheaded a referral drive, offering prizes to DHS staff members who recommend a qualified job seeker for consideration as a CYF caseworker. This drive has yielded 20 referrals that led to 11 hires, which represents 12.9% of all caseworker new hires.

Kelly said, "Our efforts to show the community that DHS is a great place to work are paying off in a big way. In the last year, we have specifically recruited 43.5% of the overall Caseworker 1 and 2 hires in the Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF). In the last three months, almost 10,000 people have visited our career page, and 1,000 have visited our CYF employment page. We are seeing great results."

While Kelly has been heavily focused on recruitment, she is also working to ensure that, once hired, staff members remain at DHS and have opportunities to grow. She plays an active role in workgroups that are examining the topics of retention, exit interviews and usage of the Predictive Index in CYF.

A result of one of the workgroups has been updates to the HR dashboard, which now provides a clearer picture of candidates in the pipeline as well as promotions and turnover across each of the regional offices. Additionally, the workgroups have enhanced the exit interview process to include an online survey as well as an in-person interview. This information is periodically analyzed, presented to senior leadership and used to enhance retention efforts.

Although there have been many successes over the last year, Kelly's focus is on growth and expansion in 2018.

"We are noticing that our staff demographics do not necessarily reflect the demographics of our community, and we plan to expand our relationships with diversity groups and university diversity offices over the next year. We will also be enhancing our intern recruitment efforts and our use of the Predictive Index in interview strategies. We have big things planned for 2018, and look forward to not only recruiting qualified new staff members, but also keeping our current staff members informed and supported," Kelly concluded.