

DHS staff collaborates with courts, schools to decrease juvenile justice risk

Two DHS staff members are serving as part of a multisystem team that was selected to participate in the 2016 Georgetown University School-Justice Partnerships Certificate Program. Sanjeev Baidyaroy, data analyst in the Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation (DARE), and Sarah Marker, business operations specialist in the Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF), joined staff from Allegheny County Juvenile Probation, Allegheny County Juvenile Court, Carlynton School District and the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas to attend the four-day program held in Washington, D.C., last September.

“Our group was assembled by Judge Dwayne Woodruff, who has a focus on education and leads the Children’s Roundtable Education Success and Truancy Prevention Workgroup,” said Sarah. “The School-Justice Partnerships program was an opportunity for us to take the work of the roundtable even further.”

During the program, Allegheny County team members participated in panel discussions and training sessions led by resource officers, government officials and teachers from around the country. Once back in Allegheny County, the team devised a concept for a capstone project designed to revamp school-based discipline and decrease system involvement. Georgetown approved the concept in March, allowing the team members to be inducted into the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) Fellows Network.

“At DHS we are aware that many of the youth we serve also have some interaction with the juvenile justice system,” Sanjeev said. “To that end, we are in a unique position to increase collaboration and understanding with outside stakeholders. Our capstone project will allow us to be proactive versus reactive, and support communities to create better outcomes for local youth.”

The Allegheny County team’s capstone project will involve creating partnerships with local school districts to find ways to increase collaboration, address underlying issues that youth may be facing, and provide long-term help. The team’s capstone aims to improve school, human service, and court-related outcomes for youth at risk of being involved with the juvenile justice system. This project will be completed with technical assistance provided by Georgetown University.