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Final Copy of Case Study

Status:

Laureate

Year:

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Organization Name:

Allegheny County Department of Human Services

Organization URL:

<http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/index.aspx>

Project Name:

Data systems to support an integrated human services model across Allegheny County

Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry:

Human Services

Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)

ACDHS is passionate about delivering high quality, seamless and holistic services to the diverse citizens of Allegheny County, in particular, the most vulnerable populations. In 2007, ACDHS began to lay the foundation for an integrated case management system to support comprehensive service delivery. The development of the following primary systems served as the initial building blocks: - KIDS (Key Information Demographic System) enterprise case management system to support child welfare business processes. - MPER (Master Provider Enterprise Repository) enterprise repository of all ACDHS providers. - DHS Assessment Tool to conduct assessments throughout ACDHS.

In 2011, true system integration began with the implementation of a strategic technology solution focused on integrated service delivery. The following initiatives to expand and integrate each of the stand-alone systems: - KIDS Courts module integrates KIDS with Allegheny County and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania court systems for real-time transfer of information. - KIDS Fiscal module allows KIDS to generate automated payments to providers based on caseworker and provider documentation. - Jail Collaborative tool built within KIDS integrating ACDHS and the jail system, which enhances service coordination for offenders. - MPER 2.0, a major upgrade with significant process improvements such as automating a previously manual reconciliation process and integrating contract artifacts in MPER with the executive action from the countywide Action Tracker system. - DHS Assessment Tool expansion and integration incorporates adult assessments into KIDS, making it a common assessment tool for children and adults across behavioral health and child welfare. These initiatives use a common technology framework built on .NET technology. They have led to streamlined business processes, improved collaboration among ACDHS and other government agencies and reduced costs, and provided innovative technology tools to the ACDHS workforce and service providers, ultimately leading to improved service delivery for the citizens of Allegheny County.

When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)

This project was rolled out in phases. Implementation dates are as follows: - KIDS Courts Module: April 2011 - KIDS Fiscal Module: July 2011 - MPER 2.0: September 2011 - Jail Collaborative: April 2012 - DHS Assessment Tool Expansion: October 2012. Each phase brought its own set of features that made work easier for the internal users as well as external stakeholders at ACDHS. Innovations and efficiencies were realized from both the business and technology sides. Examples of these business efficiencies include: - Integration of the DHS assessment tool allowed a common assessment to be used for clients served by multiple program offices within ACDHS, such as behavioral health and child welfare. - The KIDS Fiscal module changed the way service providers billed ACDHS for services by collecting and validating service data real time, allowing DHS to reimburse accurately and in a timely manner. - MPER 2.0 facilitated contract processing between the ACDHS and the Allegheny County Executive's office through the integration with Action Tracker, the County's executive action processing system. Examples of technology innovations include: - The courts module integrated two disparate systems on different platforms, allowing different government agencies to communicate with each other through a common messaging mechanism. - The project has facilitated the creation of a completely electronic client record. The file cabinet feature in KIDS lets users import documents that are not available in an electronic format, birth certificates, drivers'

licenses, etc., and this feature has been enhanced since go-live. - The solution is focused on the user, utilizing a Service-Oriented Architecture, which uses service-based concepts, including functionality such as DHS Assessment Web Service and Postal Address Verification. - Caseworkers were equipped with mobile tablets with electronic signature capture capability to expedite authorization and approval.

Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)

Yes, the implementation of the project is complete as defined per initial scope. ACDHS is now looking at making user experience enhancements and changes targeted towards further process improvement and technology innovation.

Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)

This project has greatly benefited the ACDHS program offices, service providers, and Allegheny County residents. Here are just a few examples: Courts Integration - integrated system streamlines information exchange between DHS's Office of Children Youth and Families (CYF) and the Court system, eliminating faxes and phone calls and facilitating data exchange. CYF Caseworkers benefit from real time interaction with hearing information, outcome orders and legal status for dependent and delinquent clients. CYF Caseworkers can create, approve, email and electronically file a range of court documents and no longer need to print extensive paper case files and applications for Court. Fiscal Release to date, Allegheny County has paid close to \$100 million dollars to providers using this functionality. Benefits of the Fiscal module include minimizing fraudulent records through accurate record keeping, enforcement of specific payment parameters, and ability to file state reimbursement claims timely and precisely. Furthermore, a previously manual reconciliation process that took up to 1 week per provider each month (for hundreds of providers) is now an automated, real-time process. MPER 2.0 has greatly reduced contracts processing cycle time. For example, the contracts department previously spent weeks to process a single contract from initiation through to execution. The overall processing time has now been reduced to days. Jail Collaborative has allowed increased access for clients to appropriate resources to assist them in the journey from incarceration to release. The automated business process has increased communication and decreased duplicate efforts among the provider agencies and jail staff. DHS Assessment Tool in KIDS has enabled service providers to access a common mechanism to measure strengths and needs of

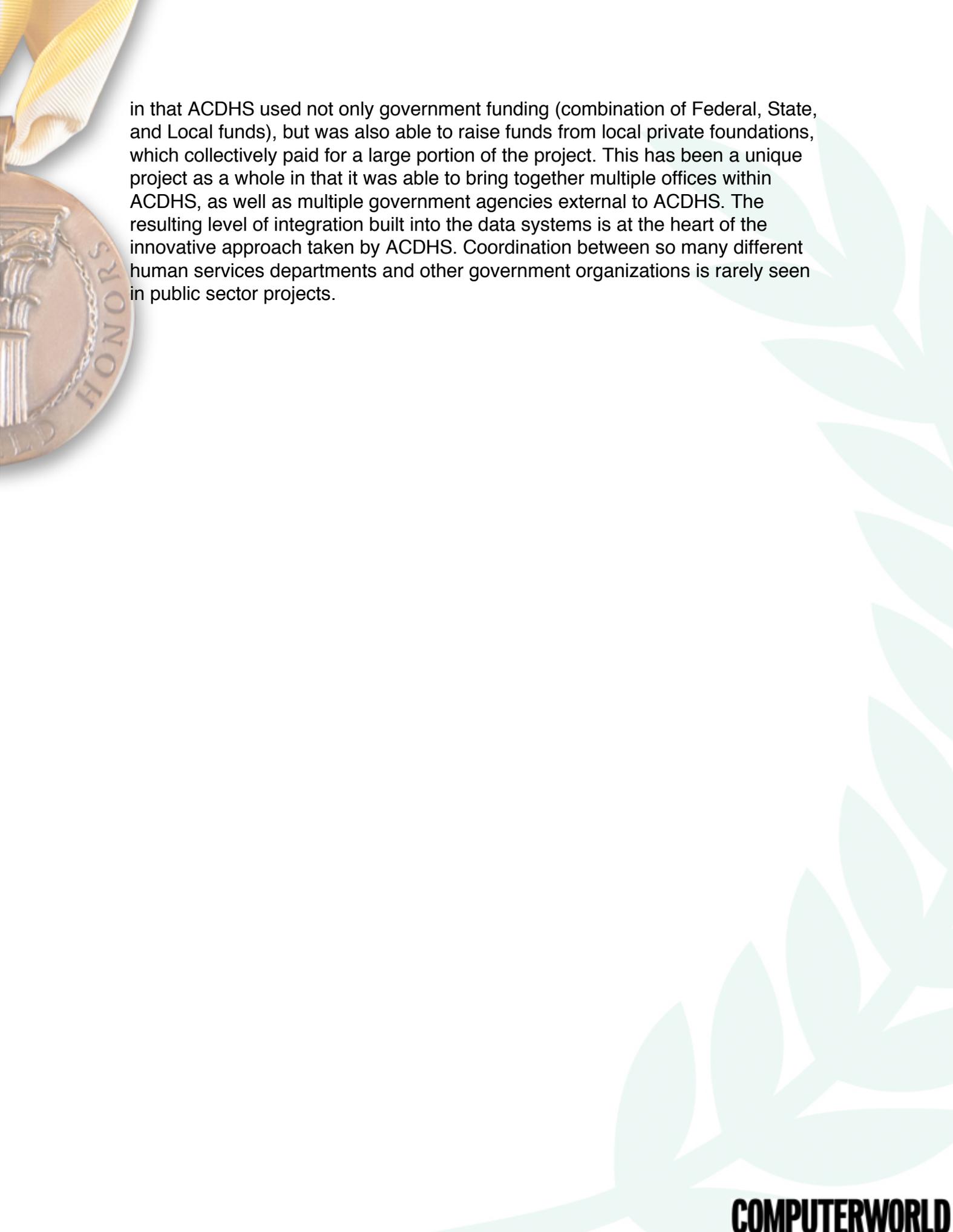
clients. Assessment details are now accessible to workers across various program areas that are involved in service planning and determining the appropriate level of care necessary for children, adults and their families.

Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)

The systems created through this initiative represent innovative advances both in the integration of human services data infrastructure (i.e., among the many services offered by an umbrella department like DHS) and in data sharing between the human service system and other local entities like the Court and Jail system. The system has enormous potential to be adopted by other local government jurisdictions. Indeed several other local governments from across Pennsylvania and the United States have visited or interviewed Allegheny County officials to learn about the system and garner "lessons learned" in implementation. In 2012, the federal Government Accountability Office visited Allegheny County as part of the development of a new report on opportunities, challenges and best practices in data management within Human Services. DHS administrative staff and front-line workers testified to the utility of the new tools and opportunities they provide for innovation in the field and efficient delivery of care on behalf of the taxpayer.

If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)

Below are two examples of economic benefits resulting from the project: 1) Technology efficiencies and cost reductions - The retirement of inefficient legacy applications (over \$500,000 in estimated annual operating costs) not only significantly improved business processes, but also allowed funding to be re-directed to support new collaboration among stakeholders. In addition, there has been a noted reduction in application development time as new initiatives are able to leverage current business process and technical functionality. 2) Improved resource allocation - The vastly improved data which became available as a result of this project has resulted in the ability to perform more accurate outcome analysis. Using real-world, integrated data, ACDHS is able to determine which programs are resulting in the best outcomes for citizens and conversely, which programs are not making the desired impact. Using fiscal data being captured, this can be cross-verified against money being spent on the programs to determine which programs provide "best value." Such outcome analysis allows ACDHS executives to accurately assess program effectiveness and allocate resources, both financial and staff, to make the biggest impact for vulnerable Allegheny County citizens. Funding for the project also represents an innovation,

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in that ACDHS used not only government funding (combination of Federal, State, and Local funds), but was also able to raise funds from local private foundations, which collectively paid for a large portion of the project. This has been a unique project as a whole in that it was able to bring together multiple offices within ACDHS, as well as multiple government agencies external to ACDHS. The resulting level of integration built into the data systems is at the heart of the innovative approach taken by ACDHS. Coordination between so many different human services departments and other government organizations is rarely seen in public sector projects.