



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

Status:

Laureate

Year:

2013

Organization Name:

Allstate Insurance Company

Organization URL:

<http://www.allstate.com/>

Project Name:

Allstate Fellows Program

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

Philanthropy

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.)

The Allstate Fellows Program puts some of the company's best leaders in service to the community by offering their knowledge and expertise to Allstate's nonprofit partners, many of which are faced with limited budgets, staff and skill sets. Allstate Fellows receive fully paid leave with benefits from the company to help manage and lead short-term, high-impact projects in areas such as strategic planning, finance/cost management, information systems, marketing, communications/outreach, legal and human resources/organizational development. In 2012, two IT employees were placed with the Community Anti-violence and Restoration Effort (CARE) initiative. Spearheaded by Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle, CARE aims

to reduce violence and stabilize communities in Cook County, Illinois. What makes the Allstate Fellows program innovative is that participants use professional skills developed in the private sector to strengthen communities. Past participants have used various information technology skills, Six Sigma methodology, project management, strategic planning, and more. One participant developed a multilevel dashboard to help community leaders measure their success in fighting violence and figure out which socioeconomic factors that may contribute to a reduction in violence. "It's really an extraordinary opportunity for our employees," said Jan Epstein, a senior manager in The Allstate Foundation. "It's not only a leadership development opportunity; it is a chance to get into the community and to learn more about the customers and communities that Allstate serves. So it's a win for the nonprofit organizations, who are usually resource strapped; for the employee, who gets to work onsite at a nonprofit for three months; and for the company, which is building the skills and knowledge base of its leaders. It's been remarkable."

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.)

The Allstate Fellows Program began in 2011. "The first group of Allstate Fellows contributed more than 4,000 hours to projects that would have cost our nonprofit partners about \$800,000, but this program has always been more than just about the money," Vicky Dinges, vice president, Public Social Responsibility said. "It really started in terms of leadership and [Allstate's] employee value proposition and matching that with community need." The Allstate Foundation is currently accepting applications to fill 14 available Fellow positions in 2013 with additional projects to become available throughout the year. To date, eight employees have served as Allstate Fellows at Chicagoland organizations. Each project has unique needs and therefore new technology and innovations can be applied to each opportunity. Recent assignments included creating a project and portfolio management system for CARE, and developing a multilevel dashboard that helps community leaders measure their success in fighting violence.

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, Allstate Fellows was successfully piloted in 2011, with expanded opportunities offered in 2012 and 2013.

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.)

Craig James, an Allstate coaching and training lead, developed a multilevel dashboard that helps community leaders measure their success in fighting violence and figure out which socioeconomic factors that, when improved, may help reduce violence. Cassandra Lems, a senior enterprise program manager for Allstate, created a project and portfolio management system for CARE, reining in many projects so that CARE staff could take a more efficient approach to fighting violence. "Violence is a very complex issue and there are many facets to it, and there isn't an easy solution," Lems said. "Because of the complexity, one project can't address all of the things that cause violence. "The mayor's office and the Cook County president's office can now manage the programs in a way that will get a unified reduction in violence," she said of the project management office she created for CARE. James and Lems were matched up with CARE through Alexander Gail Sherman, a principal with Civic Consulting Alliance (CCA). CCA is a nonprofit that builds pro bono teams of business experts and government leaders to take on the things that matter most to Chicago, such as violence, work force development and public education. "The Allstate Fellows program is excellent," Sherman said. "I work with a lot of different companies in their pro bono work and the Allstate Fellows program stands out for the quality of the program and the quality of its execution, [and] the variety of skills that Allstate is able to bring to bear in the process, from project management, IT, Six Sigma, communications, and skills that are generally either lacking or inadequate in the nonprofit world."

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.)

Allstate Fellows is a best practice as it enables leadership advancement and development by exposing employees to opportunities they would otherwise not have. But most importantly, it promotes corporate responsibility by using company resources and talents to better the communities Allstate serves. "Allstate loans experienced, high-performing employees to nonprofits for up to three months," said Stacey Boeke with the Taproot Foundation in Chicago. "During that time, the Allstate Fellow works to complete a well-defined project, critical to the nonprofit's mission and aligned with the Fellow's core expertise." As more companies learn more about the benefits of pro bono, skills-based volunteerism, we anticipate The Allstate Fellows will serve as a role model. "Allstate Fellows build meaningful relationships and bring much needed



resources to nonprofits to help them succeed in pursuing their mission," said Vicky Dinges, vice president, Public Social Responsibility at Allstate. "The experience also gives Fellows valuable insight into how important it is for public and private sectors to work together to improve the health of a community."