

Strategic Plan SFY 2017-2018



**Communications and
Community Relations**

DHS STRATEGY MAP

SFY 2017-2018

OUR MISSION

We improve the quality of life of vulnerable Oklahomans by increasing people's ability to lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

OUR VISION

DHS provides help and offers hope to vulnerable Oklahomans through stronger practices, involved communities and a caring and engaged workforce.

OUR VALUES

Safety • Integrity • Professionalism • Compassion



Figure 1. SFY 2017-2018 Strategy Map

A Letter from the Director

Clear and effective communications is critical to the success of every program and service DHS offers. While responding to news media inquiries is important, our job in communications is primarily to help Oklahomans easily access information and services they need to lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives. Our office provides daily support to every program area to communicate timely and clearly with their employees and contract providers who are delivering these vital services.

Communications uses every tool in our arsenal toward these efforts including the production of print materials, public presentations, web design and support, social media campaigns, public service announcements, photos and videos.

Understanding that DHS cannot fulfill the agency's mission alone, we continue to improve relationships and communications with our key external stakeholders, legislators, advocacy groups, and contract providers by keeping them informed of new initiatives, involving them in the development of policy, and treating them with respect as equal partners.

Through our Office of Community and Faith Engagement we continue to form strong, positive relationships with community partners and faith organizations that share the same goals and desires to serve vulnerable Oklahomans. We work to find places where our missions overlap and identify gaps in services to maximize our agency's resources and effectiveness.

Service delivery to vulnerable populations is complicated and does not always go smoothly. Our Office of Information and Referral works every day to help clients, legislators, and DHS staff access information and resolve differences and complaints.

During this strategic plan cycle, Communications and Community relations will redesign the DHS website to make it more user-friendly and easier to locate information. We will also create an online resource directory to help our clients access other community resources that work alongside DHS services. Because communications involves listening, we will also engage in efforts to receive feedback from our external stakeholders which will guide us in improving our services and relationships with the people we serve and our partners.

Sheree Powell

Director, Communications and Community Relations

DIVISION OVERVIEW

Communications and Community Relations is responsible for all internal and external agency communications, engagement with community partners and contract providers, and helping clients and other constituents resolve problems with their services.

Sheree Powell, the Director of Communications and Community Relations, oversees the Offices of Communications, Community and Faith Engagement, and Information and Referral.

The **Office of Communications** conveys the DHS mission and informs the public, providers, and other groups about programs, services and accomplishments of the agency. This office coordinates all interaction with news media, oversees the DHS web presence, and ensures employees are fully informed through various internal communications and trainings. This office is responsible for provider relations, the DHS Speaker Bureau, and all agency communication resources including web design and publishing, professional writing and editing, graphic design, photography, videography, and social media.

The **Office of Community and Faith Engagement** promotes agency collaboration with private, nonprofit, government and faith groups who have similar missions—to serve Oklahomans in need. This office works with various groups to maximize the agency’s resources and effectiveness within communities statewide. This office also supports volunteerism as a means of improving outcomes for the people DHS serves.

The **Office of Information and Referral** supports the Director of Human Services by handling calls and emails from clients, foster parents, contract providers, legislators, and other external customers. The staff has general knowledge of all DHS programs and services and assists customers in obtaining information and resolving problem situations.

OUTCOME 1: We help Oklahomans who are vulnerable lead safer, healthier, more independent and productive lives.

Goal 1: We will improve the well-being of the people we serve.

Goal 2: We will improve access to services and benefits.

Objective 1: By June 2018, we will educate clients and the general public about available DHS and community services that increase well-being.

Action Plan:

Beginning January 2017, we will work with responsible programs to review the current online list of DHS publications to determine which items need to be updated, which items need removed, and what new publications need to be created.

By March 2017, we will assist with division-based reviews of available publications.

By January 2018, we will solicit internal and external customer feedback on proposed website changes.

By June 2018, we will redesign the DHS internet website, okdhs.org, with updated content and improved navigation and search functions to make it easier for customers to find information.

By June 2018, all agency publications will be catalogued by division and identified for updating, obsoleting, as well as the need for new publications.

Important Results:

- The increased percentage of clients, providers, and other external stakeholders who report that the DHS website is easy to navigate
- The increased percentage of clients, providers, and other external stakeholders who report being able to easily find needed publications and/or other information on the DHS website
- Increased knowledge of available, updated agency publications for use by staff, partners and clients

OUTCOME 2: Our workforce is informed, supported and engaged.

Goal 1: We will support safe, healthy work environments.

Goal 2: We will continue to improve employee engagement.

Objective 1: Beginning October 2016, we will improve communication between agency leadership and staff.

Action Plan:

Beginning October 2016, we will provide communications support and expertise to improve effectiveness of leadership communication with their staff through regular email updates/director's columns, internal newsletters, and specialized communications.

Beginning February 2017, we will review results from the most recent employee feedback survey and develop strategies to improve employee engagement and communication in divisions.

By March 2017, communications staff will have met with all division directors to provide counsel on available means of providing regular, ongoing communication to staff.

By June 30, 2017, communications staff will offer support to division directors in developing plans to improve areas of employee engagement and internal communications.

Important Results:

- The increased percentage of employees who report being engaged
- The increased percentage of employees who report having a clear understanding of the role their office plays within DHS
- The increased percentage of employees who report receiving communication from their division director at least monthly
- The increased percentage of employees who report feeling informed about what is happening within DHS at an agency level
- The increased percentage of employees who report that division management consistently provides them with the information they need to know

OUTCOME 3: We are engaged with communities to meet the needs of Oklahomans.

Goal 1: We will help Oklahomans who are vulnerable access community resources.

Objective 1: We will improve self-sufficiency and access to community resources for vulnerable Oklahomans by educating them about services available in their community by June 2018.

Action Plan:

Beginning January 2017, we will work with divisions to update their lists of community resources and create an online resource directory for okdhs.org.

By October 2017, we will demonstrate the online resource directory to the Director and Executive Team.

By December 2017, we will have a soft roll-out of the online directory on the okdhs.org website.

Important Results:

- The improved quality of partnerships at the local county level
- The improved ability of clients to access community resources in addition to DHS services
- The increased knowledge of staff about resources available in our communities
- The improved ability of staff to make appropriate community referrals

OUTCOME 4: We have a culture of continuous improvement.

Goal 1: We will continue to evaluate the impact DHS services and benefits have on Oklahomans who are vulnerable.

Objective 1: Beginning July 2016, we will communicate to the public, upon request or as needed, the benefit of DHS programs and the outcomes we achieve.

Action Plan:

In December of each year, we will update the DHS Speakers tool kit to include the latest agency annual report, statistics, information and media for use by DHS staff when speaking to community groups.

Beginning October 2016, we will communicate facts through the okdhs.org website, DHS publications, media stories, and other communication efforts to combat common misconceptions and ideologies concerning services DHS provides and Oklahomans served.

Important Results:

- The increased percentage of key external stakeholders who report feeling informed enough to challenge public misconceptions
- The increased percentage of DHS employees who report using materials and information from the DHS Speakers toolkit for public education efforts

OUTCOME 4: We have a culture of continuous improvement.

Goal 2: We will continue to improve the department's effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

Objective 1: By July 2017, we will ensure community providers and key external stakeholders receive clear and consistent communication from the agency and division staff with whom they interact.

Action Plan:

Beginning October 2016, we will provide support to division directors and program staff to strategically address communication and compliance issues with contract provider agencies.

By February 2017, we will identify key external stakeholders from each division and conduct focus groups and surveys of these groups to solicit feedback about the effectiveness of the agency's external communications.

By June 30, 2017, we will review results from the External Stakeholder Feedback Survey and identify strategies for the agency and each division to improve external communications.

Important Results:

- The increased percentage of contract provider agencies who report receiving communication and support from division directors and program-level staff in fulfilling contract requirements
- The increased percentage of key external stakeholders who report feeling informed about what is happening within DHS at the agency level
- The increased percentage of key external stakeholders who report that division management or program-level staff consistently provides them with information they need

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