

County Guilford
Department of Social Services

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Project Title DHHS Inaugural Leadership Conference

Category Advancement in Staff and Leadership Development
(Please select one)

Project Description and Summary

What did you do?

Describe your program or project. What did you do? What is the history behind the program/project? What did you hope to accomplish? What was your timeline? Your budget? How did you identify your objectives? How well did you use available resources?

The Inaugural Health and Human Services Leadership Conference launched in May 2017 to unite the two newly consolidated divisions and the leadership within the divisions. The consolidation of the Social Services and Public health departments joined forces after a vote in May 2014. During this signature move, emphasis was placed on combining services and enhancing the facilities, the productivity of personnel, and the overall efforts of the agency. In 2016, the Office of Staff Development

(OSD) formed and its mission is to serve the agency's employees, clients, and the community through the development and implementation of strategies toward staff development, agency improvement, and community engagement. The two major components of OSD is training and quality assurance.

The need to further unite the efforts and to encourage leadership, educate current leaders, and to create future leaders was the purpose of hosting the first leadership conference. The leadership conference was orchestrated and implemented within six months from planning to completion. The conference was held at a local community college and the overall budget was approximately \$2,000. Objectives were identified via the agency's needs and requests made via management.

The facilitators for the leadership conference consisted of eight leaders from various professional backgrounds in the local community. The topics of discussion were cultural competency, managing conflict, understanding leadership, and a leader's attitude. Staff volunteered to serve as room attendants, planning coordinators, food/beverage setup, decorators, etc.

Project Success and Impact

What was the outcome?

Was your program/project a success? What was the impact? How did you measure the impact? How widespread is the impact of your program/project? How were you able to overcome obstacles and challenges? Did your program/project meet your established objectives?

The transfer of learning between the facilitators and Health and Human Services staff was very positive. The facilitators were engaging and provided memorable learning experiences, incorporating realistic scenarios and discussing relevant topics.

Overall, the Inaugural Health and Human Services Leadership Conference was a success. It was an "all hands-on deck" atmosphere and the conference was a collaborative, united, and pleasurable project and received many accolades and great ratings. The Director of Public Health stated "You hit a home run! The entire group seemed to be fully engaged. The crowd was pleased."

Each attendee submitted an evaluation form from each session with ranking criteria such as usefulness of information, content and material, presentation skills of presenter and overall rating. Sessions were ranked from 1–5, with “1” being the lowest rating and “5” being the highest rating. From the evaluations from the leadership conference, approximately 96% of all respondents, rated their overall satisfaction within the highest satisfactions ratings of a “4 or 5”.

Developing a leadership conference for a public service agency definitely faced some obstacles. While determining a budget and planning for the event, staff had to keep in mind that the agency must be good stewards of the taxpayer’s money. Therefore, finding community partners that would work within the constraints was challenging. Community partners proved to be helpful with negotiating costs to stay within the budget parameters. Working very closely with vendors and learning institutions enabled strengthening of professional relationships between the agency and the community.

The inaugural leadership conference was a step in the right direction for the newly consolidated agency, its newly formed Office of Staff Development and the many present and up and coming leaders within the organization. The staff, leadership and those who worked endlessly to promote staff development opportunities look forward to future activities to unite leadership within the department.
