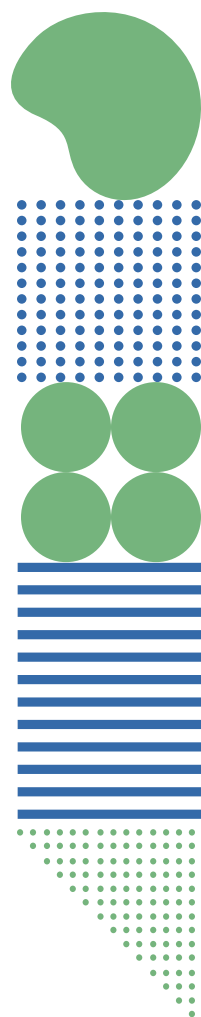


Team Excellence



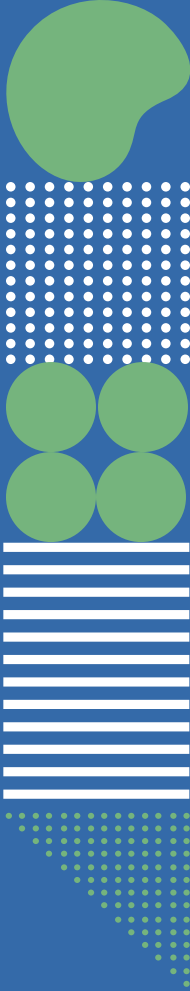
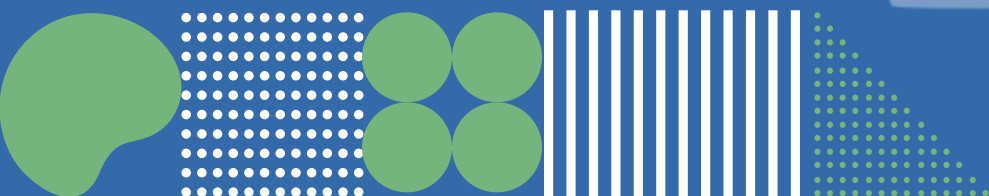
Susan Burton Awards



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About the Susan Burton Team Excellence Awards



Susan Burton worked for the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) for 27 years and retired from the Division of County Operations in 2019, just a few months before her death. In one of her last emails to her team, Susan wrote,

"There are almost a million Arkansans who can access health care because of the work WE do ... They don't know us. They don't know our names. They don't even know we exist. But they are depending on us. We have a great responsibility. We are a great TEAM ... and for that, I am GRATEFUL."

Last year presented great challenges, but it also proved again and again that strong teams can do amazing things no matter the obstacles they face. We continue to honor Susan's commitment to and legacy of teamwork, through these awards, which launched in 2019. Each quarter a winner is selected in four categories: customer service, innovation, program improvement, and operational improvement. Overall winners are selected for the year from the quarterly winners.



2020 Overall Winner

Being a Good Neighbor: COVID Client Support Command Center

As the pandemic began, people were encouraged to stay home and limit contact with others. Those with compromised immune systems and certain medical conditions were at a higher risk of serious complications, and many were concerned about going out in public. Thousands of DHS clients fit in this category, and the Department wanted to make sure they were being taken care of, to make sure they had food and medicine and essential services. More than 200 staff from six DHS divisions and offices worked quickly to stand up a call center to check in on vulnerable clients to ensure their needs were being met, their service providers were showing up, and that they could get connected to resources when needs arose. The command center also included a social media outreach campaign and new client-focused web pages to connect clients to resources during the pandemic. The command center staff personally made more than 30,000 calls per week, often troubleshooting issues, resolving problems, getting supplies delivered, and creating new connections to resources to help clients. This is an incredible accomplishment and it shows that DHS employees truly live the mission of protecting the vulnerable.



Participating Divisions/Offices

- DAABHS
- DDS
- DMS
- DPSQA
- OCCE
- Secretary's Office

Lessons Learned

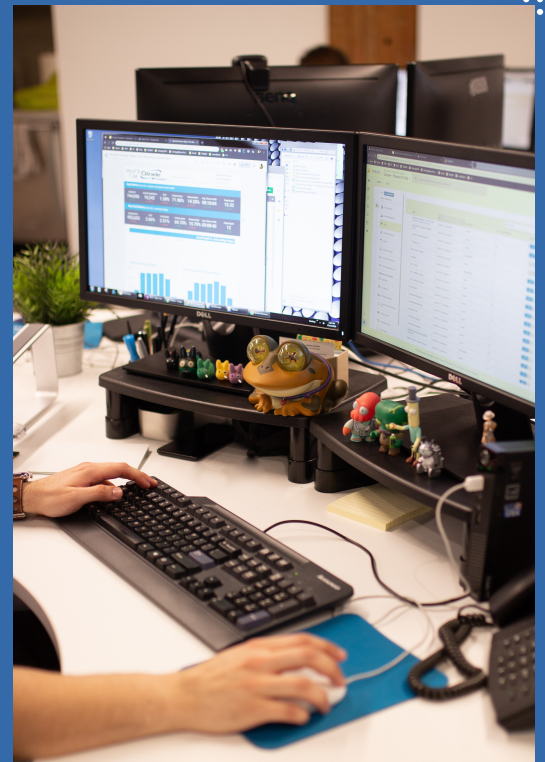
- * Breaking down silos between divisions/units is important because you can quickly come together in an emergency.
- * Make sure you have adequate staff and escalation plans for the task at hand.

- * Prepare now for remote work, including ensuring staff have the right technology.
- * The most important lesson: consistently reach out to clients. Most needs were not COVID-related. They existed before the pandemic and could very well exist after if we aren't communicating.

Customer Service Winner

Special Needs Case Management

With the establishment of the PASSEs, the divisions were having trouble tracking handoffs of issues and assignments between divisions. The Special Needs Case Management System was developed using the department's new rapid application development framework, QuickBase, to make sure a system of record existed to track these issues and handoffs between divisions. This also would ensure issues and questions were addressed timely. The PASSE call center receives issues, questions, and concerns and then uses the case management system to create assignments to the appropriate division for resolution. Such a system should eliminate the gaps in the system that could have led to people falling through the cracks and not getting needed help. The application is available on the internet and via an app on a user's phone, allowing the business unit to continue to function should any shift to remote work be required in pandemic times. The app and associated data also provide insight that can help inform staffing levels, process changes, and operational alerts. The project was delivered for a cost of less than \$20,000, and prototypes were available in a matter of weeks. Now when people call, they are not passed around from division to division. To date, nearly 1,800 cases have been tracked, monitored, and resolved using the system.



Runner-Up: PPE Distribution to Facilities

When the Arkansas Department of Health asked the Division of Provider Services and Quality Assurance (DPSQA) to take lead on distributing PPE to nursing homes, staff did not hesitate to step up even though that was not part of their jobs. The work was tedious with staff hand-counting over 83,000 individual pieces of PPE, creating invoices and logs for each facility, and driving the PPE to over 160 facilities. While there, they used the opportunity to observe infection control practices and used it as an opportunity to offer assistance. They did all of this quickly as some of the facilities were very low on PPE supplies. Thanks to their efforts, nursing homes had the PPE they needed to keep employees and residents safe.



Innovation Winner

Foster Parent of the Year Virtual Ceremony

As the realities of the pandemic set in, it became clear it would be unsafe for DHS to host an in-person Foster Parent of the Year gala. The DHS Office of Communications & Community Engagement (OCCE), which organizes the annual event with the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), moved it online – the first time an event of this scope had been attempted virtually at DHS. Though challenging, it created new opportunities to promote fostering to a much larger audience. OCCE filmed a video for all 10 winning families, as well as speakers, legislators, and others, but there was something missing. The most impactful element of the in-person ceremony is always the reveal of the overall Foster Parent of the Year. So OCCE and DCFS did a live, in-person, surprise reveal at the winner's home, which made technical complexities but a powerful story. All the stories also were shared on social media channels. The social media data tell an impressive story. For example, the Area 4 Foster Parents of the Year video shared on Facebook reached 15,259 people. It has received 729 comments and been shared 59 times, with each of those shares being further shared dozens of times. Multiply numbers like that by 10, and you'll get a better idea of the impact of moving what is normally a limited-seating, closed event online.



The Green family reacts after being surprised at their home with the 2020 State Foster Parent of the Year award live on Facebook.

Runner-up: Procurement Pivots During Pandemic

The public health emergency created a massive shortage of hand sanitizer and PPE. By leveraging local relationships and connections, procurement implemented P-card “local sweep” protocols to shore up inventory by calling paint shops, nail salons, and construction firms to accumulate adequate supplies for our essential and frontline workers; established a supply chain of sanitizer from a local distillery; and set up a distribution plan to get critical supplies to direct care workers and offices across the state to protect our most vulnerable clients and employees.



Program Improvement Winner

Being a Good Neighbor: COVID Support Command Center

The command center won the overall 2020 Susan Burton Team Excellence Award in part because it required a level of team and cross-divisional work that had never been done at DHS. More than 200 staff from six DHS divisions and offices worked quickly to stand up a call center to check in on 15,000 vulnerable clients to ensure their needs were being met, their service providers were showing up, and that they could get connected to resources when needs arose. To accomplish this work the team's response involved a three-pronged approach:

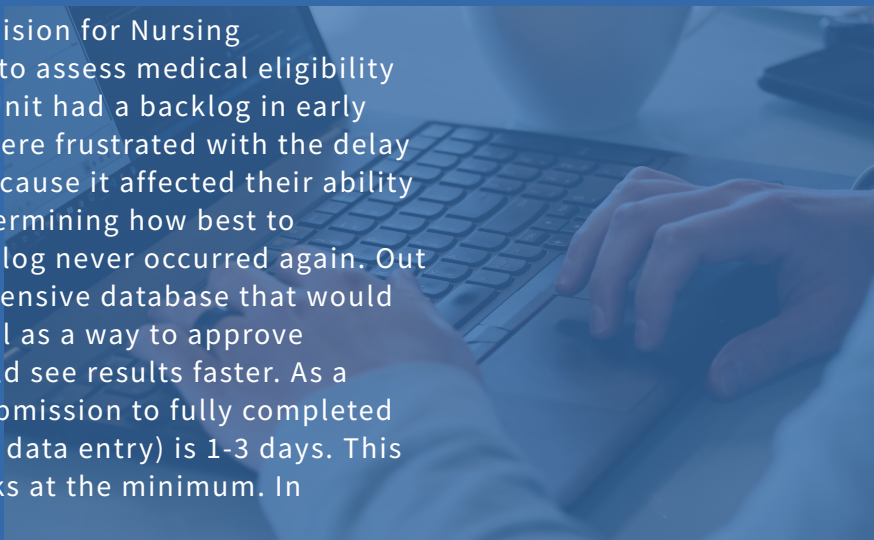
1) the creation of a call center specifically for COVID-19; 2) gathering a team of specialists to call 15,000



HCBS clients twice per week; 3) establishing multiple avenues to provide clients help, such as through press releases, a new series of web pages, and a social media campaign. All of these approaches were used to help clients when needed and to present local resources, information about services, and ways to apply for benefits without risk of exposure to the coronavirus.

Runner-up: The Race for the Database

The DPSQA Medical Needs Unit processes a Decision for Nursing Home/Waiver Placement Form (DHS Form 704) to assess medical eligibility for Arkansans in facilities. The Medical Needs Unit had a backlog in early 2020 of nearly 10,000 applications. Providers were frustrated with the delay in receiving a response to their applications because it affected their ability to bill Medicaid. DPSQA began a process of determining how best to eliminate the backlog and ensure that the backlog never occurred again. Out of those discussions was an idea for a comprehensive database that would include tracking and management tools, as well as a way to approve applications in a manner that the provider could see results faster. As a result, current processing time from date of submission to fully completed (determination made by RN and administrative data entry) is 1-3 days. This process was taking upward of 6 months; 2 weeks at the minimum. In addition, all applications are up-to-date.



Operational Improvement Winner

Direct Care Payments: Making Sure Heroes Got Paid

When Governor Asa Hutchinson announced that DHS would provide funding for payments to direct care workers, facilities across the state jumped to participate. In all, over 600 facilities (including hospitals and long-term care facilities) applied for CARES ACT funding to provided additional pay to direct care staff. In a very short amount of time, the Division of Medical Services (DMS) had to figure out a way to track, monitor, process, and pay weekly requests for all of these facilities. Over the 13-week period, DMS paid out millions of dollars. To assist, a couple of team members spent hours programing and building an Access database they nick-named “Obi-Wan,” which allowed for better tracking and reporting in real-time. It also resolved issues related to duplicate payments, which the team encountered during the first couple of weeks of the project. The team said the long hours were worth making sure employees at these facilities got their “hero pay.” Those heroes included DHS employees who worked at the state's five human development centers and the Arkansas Health Center, a state-run long-term care facility in Haskell.



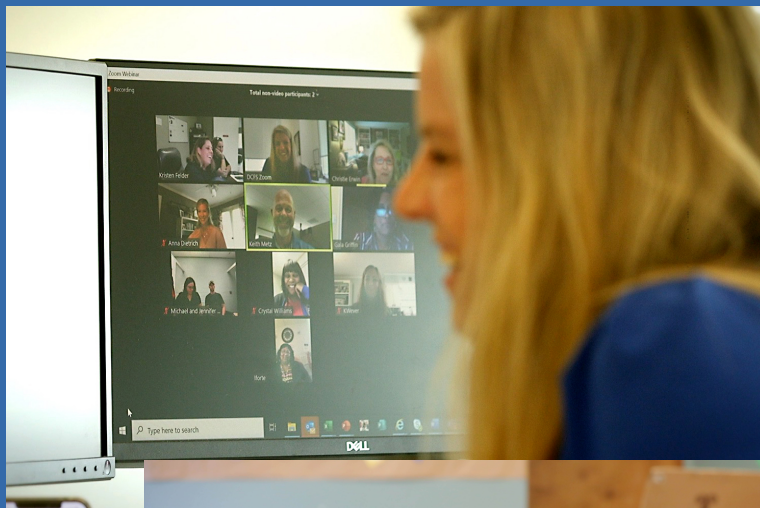
Runner-up: Policy Team Covid

When the pandemic began, DHS leadership knew it would need to implement emergency changes to policies and rules in order to carry out important work. Researching, writing, implementing, and tracking all of the emergency policies and rules that were needed was truly a Department-wide effort done in a very short amount of time. It was no easy task to move policies and rules around SNAP, Medicaid, child care, nursing homes, behavioral health, child welfare, and so many others. The work led to more than 70 individual actions taken, including expanding use of telemedicine and approval of \$340 million in additional funds to critical health care providers. The team did all this work with the speed and flexibility necessary to make everything work while maintaining the trust of providers and people all across the state.

2020 Quarterly winners

Innovation

1. PPE Task Force
2. Procurement Pivots During Pandemic
3. Zooming for Zero – DCFS + Project Zero Partnership for Permanence
4. Foster Parent of the Year Virtual Ceremony



Program Improvement

1. Trade Mitigation COVID-19 Commodity Distribution
2. Being a Good Neighbor: COVID:19 Client Support Command Center
3. Race for the Database
4. DCCECE Cares. DCCECE Acts. DCCECE Changes Lives!



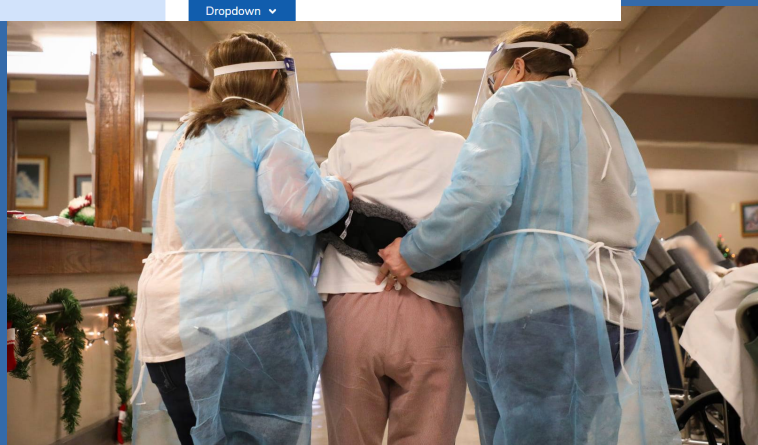
Operational Improvement

1. Policy Team COVID Response
2. AHC Strives to be COVID-Free
3. Direct Care Payments: Making Sure Heroes Got Paid
4. CARES Act Funding: Implementation with Integrity



Customer Service

1. PPE Distribution to Facilities
2. Team Determination in the Midst of a Double-Whammy
3. COVID Hits the County (1&2)
4. Special Needs Case Management





**TEAMWORK
MATTERS.
THANK YOU**