

West End Consulting Group
November 21, 2015



**9TH ANNUAL
DHS LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CASE COMPETITION**

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“MAKING TRANSPORTATION WORK: CREATING ACCESS AND ENSURING EQUITY FOR ALL”

Creating Solutions for Children Experiencing Unstable Housing Situations

- Children in out-of-home placements and children experiencing housing instability need effective transportation for numerous trips throughout the week
- Trips include: school, school activities, medical appointments, home and family visits

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

GOAL:

Improve communication between all of those involved in transporting youth experiencing unstable housing situations to make coordinating transportation more efficient, effective, safe, and reliable

Who is involved?

- Case Workers
- Case Aide Supervisor
- Case Aide
- Guardians
- Local Education Agency Liaisons
- Youth experiencing an unstable housing situation (Client)

Where are clients going?

- School and School activities
- Medical Appointments
- Court and Family visits

Transportation Available?

- School buses
- Port Authority Buses
- DHS-Case Aides

STREAMLINING COMMUNICATION AND INCREASING COORDINATION

- ◆ To increase efficiency and cost effectiveness of current transportation methods and encourage inter-agency coordination

The task is two-fold regarding transporting youth experiencing unstable housing situations:

Coordinating transportation to and from school for homeless youth

Centralizing coordination and communication for transportation of youth in a child welfare placement outside of the home

TRANSPORTATION FOR YOUTH PLACED OUTSIDE OF THE HOME

Current inefficiencies:

- Paper based
 - No easily accessed data
 - No feedback
- No central organization
- Delayed communication throughout CYF
- Case Aides must return to office to access transportation assignments
- Inefficient communication with guardian/students

Recommended improvements:

- Centralized organization of needs and providers
- Electronic Calendars
 - Can be accessed anywhere
- Communication with guardian/student
- Data storage
 - discoverable patterns
 - Feedback

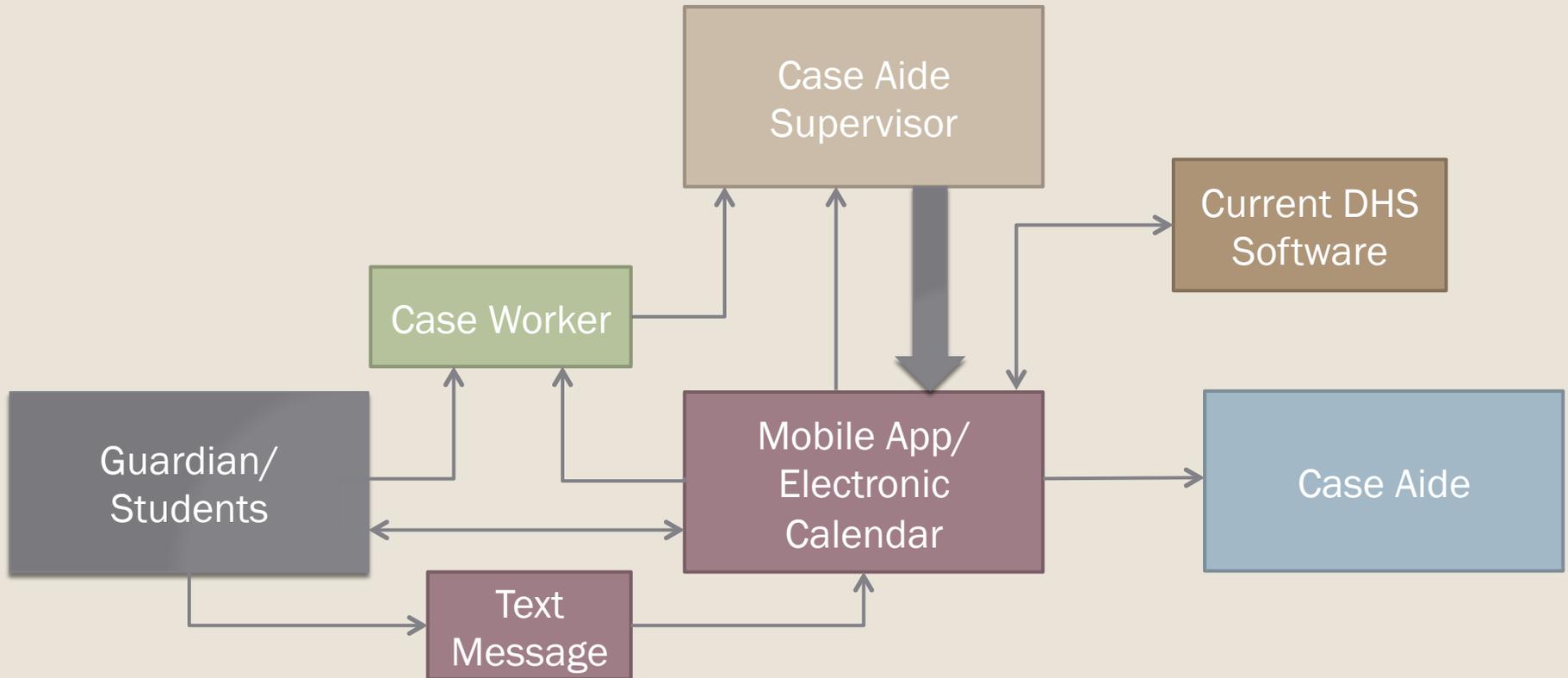
METHOD TO CENTRALIZE COMMUNICATION

- App for mobile phones
 - Guardians can schedule transportation needs
 - Calendars are available to case aides
 - Case aide supervisors approve requests
- Text messaging: for those who do not have the ability to download and use the app
- Integration with new software to track transportation

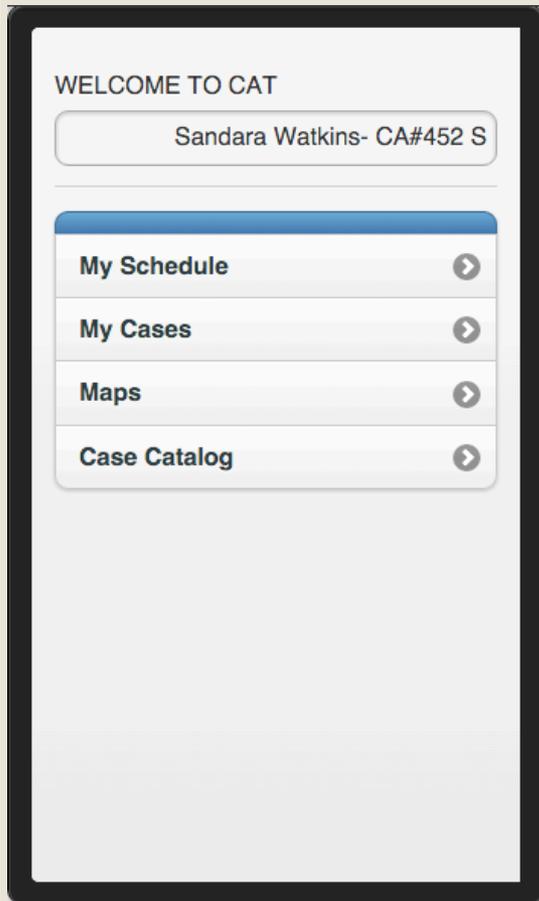
CURRENT COMMUNICATION PATTERNS:



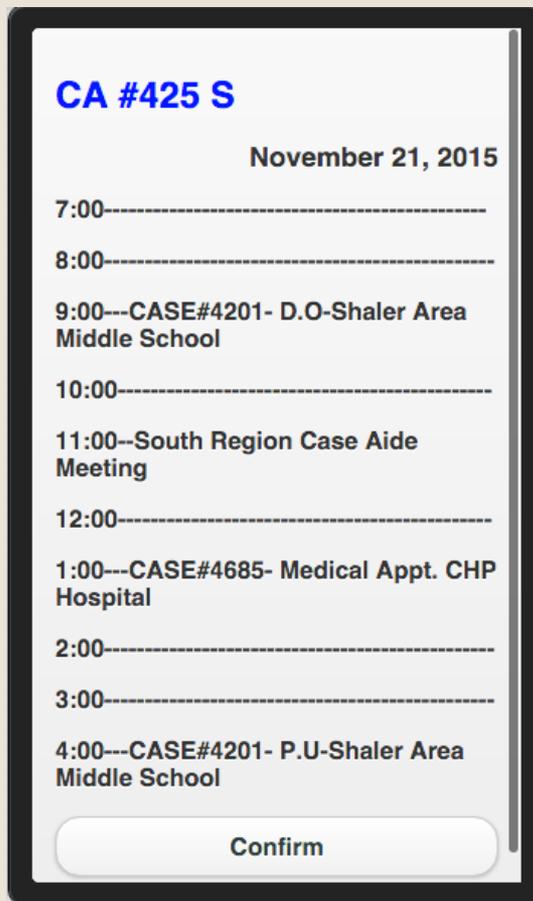
RECOMMENDED COMMUNICATION PATTERN:



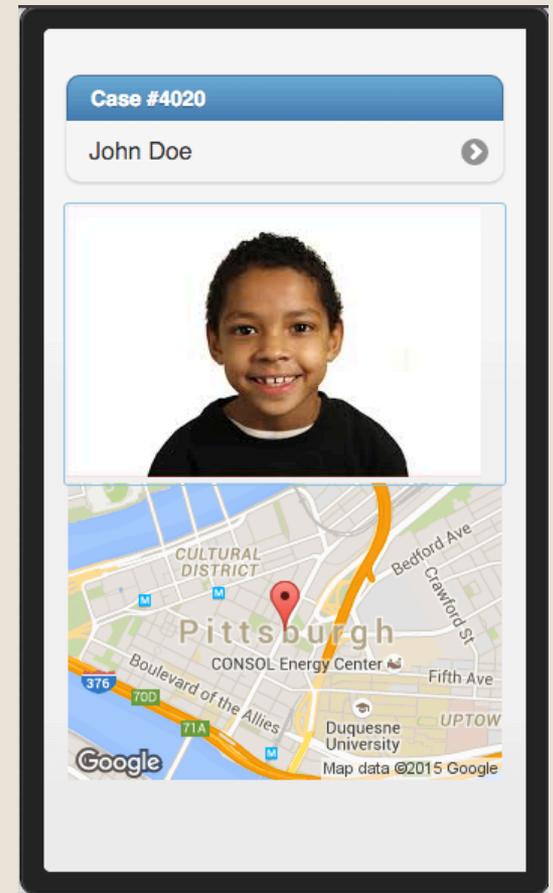
WHAT THE APP COULD PROVIDE US:



Home Screen



Daily Schedule and Calendar



Case and Transportation Details

CLIENT INTERFACE:

C.A.T.
Guardian Assistance

Request Form

Case Number: 4020 JD

When: Nov.21, 2015 8:00am

Pick Up: 1 Smithfield St, Pgh PA

Drop Off: Shaler Area Middle School

Reason: School

Additional Information:
We reside in Apartment 4B. Please ring buzzer.

Home Cases Schedule

Client Interface

Schedule

Confirmed Appointments:

8:00am JD-Shaler Area M.S

Case # 4020 John Doe

Pick Up: 1 Smithfield St, PGH PA

Drop Off: Shaler Area M.S
2224 Shaler Ave, Glenshaw, PA

Case Aide: Sandra Watkins #425 S

Vehicle: PGH PUBLIC S.D. Bus # 68

Home Cases Schedule

Confirmed

< Messages (1) 258-73 Details

Schedule

Welcome to CAT: guardian assistance text services. Please reply with Case Number and Location for the appointment you would like to a schedule.

#4020. Shaler Middle School

Thank you. Please reply with desired pick up location, date and time.

[1 Smithfield St, Pgh,PA 15203. 11/21/15 8:00am](#) Delivered

Your request has been received. Await confirmation from the case aide server.

Appointment confirmed. Sandra Watkins (CA#453S) will arrive [at 8am on 11/21/15](#) to transport JD to Shaler Middle School. If you received this message in error,

iMessage

Text Message Option

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

Current inefficiencies:

- Paper Based requests for bus changes
 - Not timely (2 weeks)
 - Delay in transportation for students with unstable housing
- Inflexible
 - Students may change locations frequently and without advanced notice

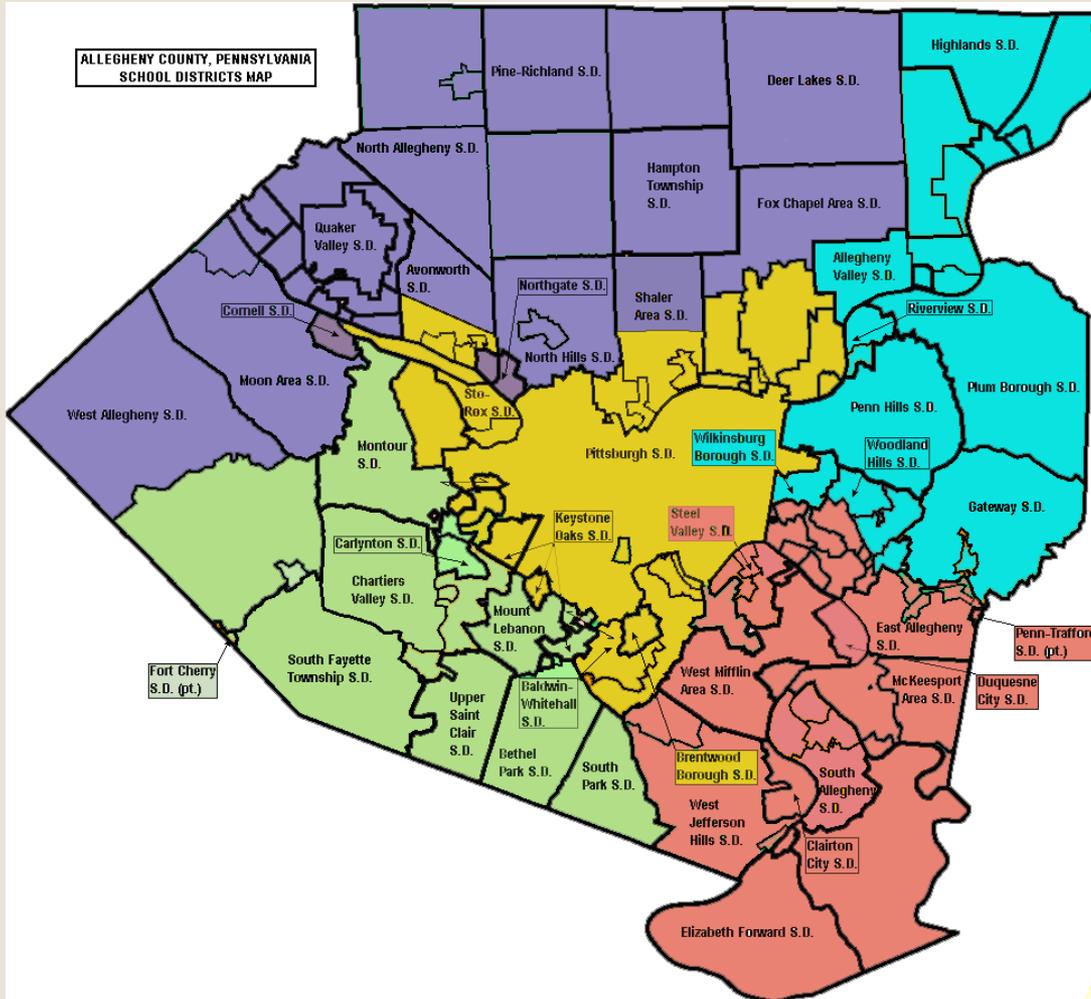
Recommended improvements:

- Cooperation across school districts
 - Regional coordination
- Flexible bus system
- Inter-agency coordination
 - DHS- Homeless Services
 - Local Education Agencies
- Additional Transportation Methods

METHOD TO STREAMLINE TRANSPORTATION

- Regional coordination of School Districts
- Pooled funding
 - In part provided through McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Title 1
 - To coordinate a limited flexible busing system
- A Regional Liaison to coordinate the flexible bus system
- Implementation of DHS and County School District outreach events
 - Annual meeting
- Additional transportation methods
 - Walking buses

SCHOOL DISTRICT REGIONS:



Number of Homeless Students by Region:

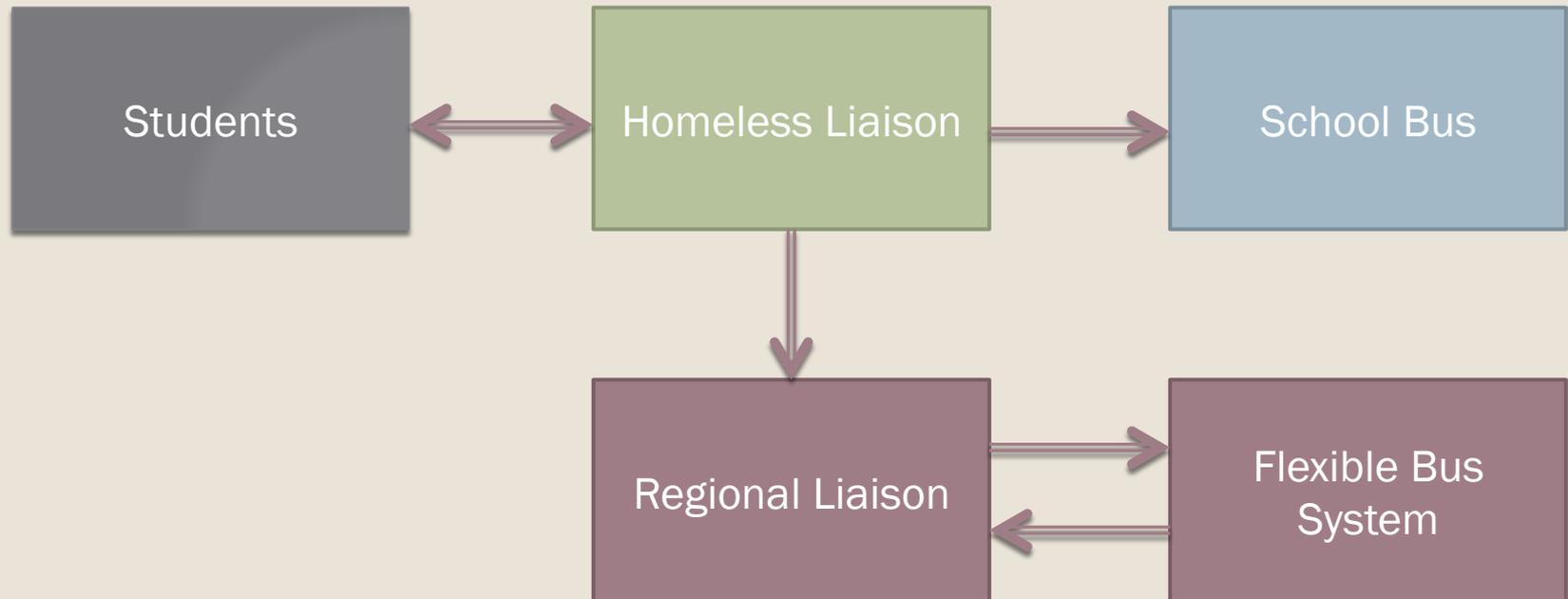
- North: 187
- South: 133
- East: 414
- Central: 803
- McKeesport: 233

As reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the 2011-2012 school year, through Pittsburgh's Chanel 4 Action News

Number of recommended flexible busses per region:

- North: 3
- South: 2
- East: 6
- Central: 12
- McKeesport: 4

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL FOR HOMELESS YOUTH



ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION METHODS: WALKING BUSES

- Can be used for students within the 1.5 to 2 mile radius
- Benefits
 - Helps address the childhood obesity epidemic
 - Positive associations between active commuting and total physical activity
 - Shows promise in improving child pedestrian safety behaviors
 - Walking with an adult improves safety
 - Provides modeling opportunities
 - Environmental impact
 - Less vehicles on the road
 - Social opportunities for children and parents



TIMELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1st Annual meeting
between DHS and
School District Boards

Implementation of
Regional Liaison

Integration of
Flexible Bus System

Introduction of
regional coordination

Coordination of buses

School
Transportation

Improved
Communication

Introduce and begin
integration of App.

Evaluation of services and
needs. Evaluate roles of
CYF employees.

Development of mobile
application

Collect and analyze data
for transportation needs

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- **Cost:**
 - Mobile application/text development
 - Cost of buses (with contributions from Title 1, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)
 - Administration, including Regional Liaison
- **Cost Saving:**
 - Time saving (case workers, case aides)
 - Tracking and recording (transportation needs)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS

- **Short Term**

- Feedback from app
- Survey students and their guardians
 - Ease of use
 - Time to get a bus
- Survey case workers, case aides and liaisons
 - Time is more effectively and efficiently used

- **Long Term**

- The number of students who are late and absent from school
- The number of students who take Port Authority Buses
- Number of new data records of homeless youth

WHY THIS SHOULD BE PRIORITIZED:

- Children with unstable housing have the right to transportation
- School provides a sense of stability; school attendance is highly correlated with school performance and success
 - A consistent school provides familiar faces through teachers and friends
- Children in out-of-home placements and children facing housing instability are a vulnerable population
- Effective transportation is the first step to getting these children on a track to success

REFERENCES

- Mendoza, J., Watson, K., Nyguyen, N., Baranowski, T., & Nicklas, T. (2011). Active commuting to school and association with physical activity and adiposity among US youth. *Journal of Physical Activity & Health, 8*, 488-495.
- Mendoza, J., Watson, K., Chen, T., Baranowski, T., Nicklas, T., Uscanga, D., & Hanfling, M. (2012). Impact of a pilot walking school bus intervention on children's pedestrian safety behaviors: A pilot study. *Health & Place, 18*(1), 24-30.
- Yimam, B. (2014, January 15). Thousands of students identified as homeless in Pittsburgh area. Retrieved November 21, 2015.

QUESTIONS?