

# DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County  
Department of Human Services



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## **New Scholars class announced**

Nick Cotter and Jessie Lamb have been selected for the DHS Scholars in Local Government class of 2018-2019. Both received their master's degree in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College in May.

Nick grew up in the south Pittsburgh neighborhoods of Carrick and Brookline which inspired an interest in the major differences between high and low poverty neighborhoods. This encouraged him to learn more about the discriminatory housing, lending and development practices that led to areas of concentrated poverty and the search for solutions to combat poverty and residential segregation.

He graduated from Wheeling Jesuit University with a degree in research psychology and philosophy and a minor in film. After graduating, he served as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America) at Higher Achievement. He worked for several years as a caseworker at Catholic Charities of Pittsburgh before returning to graduate school at Carnegie Mellon. While at CMU, he interned with the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation and the Urban Redevelopment Authority.

Nick works out of the Office of Data Analysis, Research and Evaluation (DARE) with a focus on housing. His work includes researching local and national best practices in affordable housing creation and preservation for a countywide affordable housing convening that will take place this fall. Additionally, he will be working on program evaluations and data analyses for the department, as needed.

"Being a Scholar gives me the autonomy to research things I care about," Nick said. "It is exciting to use the skills I gained at Heinz to have input on projects that truly interest me."

Jessie, who is originally from Morgantown, West Virginia, has a Bachelor of Arts degree in history with a minor in women's studies from Allegheny College. After completing her undergraduate studies, Jessie also served as an AmeriCorps VISTA, completing her service term at a food bank in Austin, Texas. This experience compelled her to get a master's degree to create policies that can help more people.

From May 2017 through May 2018, Jessie interned in DHS's Immigrants and Internationals program, supporting the Bhutanese community by assisting with grant

writing and strategic planning. She decided to return to DHS as a Scholar to learn more about Allegheny County beyond the city of Pittsburgh.

As a Scholar, Jessie will be in the prevention and community services team of the Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) working as a prevention specialist. She will primarily be focusing on wellbeing initiatives within the community through an asset-based model.

"Scholars have a unique opportunity to do things differently – we can be creative and think outside of the box," said Jessie. "As a Scholar I hope to help further the work DHS has already taken to promote collaboration across systems and services."