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## NKU helps non-profits with IT matters

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**HIGHLAND HEIGHTS** - Northern Kentucky University has launched a program to help area non-profits with their information technology needs.

"The Virtual CIO pilot project is an incredible opportunity for non-profits where we're bringing together the assets of the College of Informatics and the skills of the faculty and students to meet the needs of non-profits," said Dayle Deardurff, director of NKU's Institute for Nonprofit Capacity (INC).

The INC conducted a survey of 42 local agencies to find out what their technology needs are. Ten of those agencies were selected to participate in the Virtual CIO pilot project.

Deardurff cited the fall 2009 Stanford Social Innovation Review which published a study called "The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle," which concluded that many nonprofits are at a defining moment with their IT infrastructures and achieving greater value from their investment, as part of the motivation for the project.

"There is a real need for non-profits to have opportunities where they can improve their infrastructure so they can increase their effectiveness and efficiencies," said Deardurff. "This is helping to lay the foundation to improve it infrastructure which is pretty exciting."

She said the purpose is to take the students and faculty and have them assess all of the IT structures and needs of 10 selected agencies and then give those agencies information that helps them understand the status and needs, including data security, servers, e-mail capacity, Web status, database management and general overview of staff skills.

The selected agencies are based in Kentucky and Ohio. Their budgets range from under \$500,000 to over \$5 million. The 10 are Catholic Charities, Diocese of Covington; Center for Chemical Addictions; Children Inc.; G.L.A.D. House; Jewish Vocational Services; New Perceptions; Northern Kentucky Community Action Commission; Power Inspires Progress; Santa Maria Community Services Inc. and the Urban Appalachian Council.

"We choose the agencies based upon large and small medium budget, those who were happy with their systems, those who were not happy, but they all asked to participate in this assessment because they wanted this independent assessment done," said Deardurff. "It's something they would not be able to do without hiring a probably \$5,000 to \$10,000 outside consultant."

NKU's students and faculty also benefit from the work.

"The assessment will be done by faculty and students so they will learn to serve the needs of small- to medium-sized organizations," said Deardurff. "So that it benefits the students and the faculty learning how to assess and how to work with people who have different types of needs, and different sizes of staff and different resources."

Other partners in the project are the United Way of Greater Cincinnati and the Leadership Council of Human Service Executives.

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