



Donna Dendy-Roberts,
director of User Support, Office
of Information Technology,
New York City Department of
Homeless Services

NO TIME FOR DOWNTIME

Gateway desktops help New York City Department of Homeless Services serve clients more quickly and avoid processing penalties.

In May 2006, the New York City shelter system housed an average of 31,380 homeless citizens a night and oversaw outreach services to an estimated 3,843 homeless individuals living on the street.

Hundreds of shelter workers are responsible for serving thousands of clients, who are often enduring the worst times of their lives. Helping this population can be a grueling job performed under crushing deadlines. The last difficulty case workers, managers and shelter directors need is computer problems.

All About the Image

The New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) purchased 500 Gateway desktops in spring 2006 for the agency's administrative offices building in Manhattan. These offices serve as the informational hub for 203 facilities throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

"Our administrative offices are where all the number crunching takes place. If those machines are down, it really has an impact on our ability to serve our clients," said Donna Dendy-Roberts, director of User Support in the Office of Information Technology.

"As a city agency, the department took advantage of the New York State Aggregate Buy for PCs that was awarded to Gateway based on their competitive pricing. Gateway's high-performance machines and unique understanding of how to

service government IT professionals were key in our decision to do so," said Dendy-Roberts.

"They worked really well with us in terms of meeting our needs," she said.

Gateway warehoused the systems and delivered them to the department preimaged. Staff merely had to program the configurations before a Gateway partner installed them.

Dendy-Roberts said Gateway's preimaging services enabled her to cut deployment time in half. The department did its last major deployment in 2000 when it transitioned all systems from Windows 95 to Windows 2000.

"We did that entirely by ourselves, and it took at least twice as long without the imaging services," Dendy-Roberts said. "Gateway worked with us to develop the image and menu system we used to deploy the new machines, so they already came preimaged for the applications we run. Basically, all we had to do was turn them on, attach to the domain, enter the computer name, and off and running we'd go. We didn't have to do any kind of software install except for special applications."

Delay Not an Option

A combination of high performance and reliable service was imperative for Dendy-Roberts, because the New York City shelter system is required by court mandate to process clients in a prescribed period of time.

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Customer Profile

Agency: New York City Department of Homeless Services

Mission: To provide temporary shelter to men, women and children experiencing homelessness and help them transition to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

Technology Objective: Switch old PCs to a high-performance brand with reliable service that would reduce service downtime and resulting penalties for late processing.

Gateway Solution: The department standardized its administrative offices on preimaged Gateway desktops with four-year warranties and next-day part replacement services.

ROI: Gateway's preimaging service allowed the department to cut deployment time in half, and the company's reliable parts replacement service enabled the agency's IT staff to drastically reduce service downtime, serve clients more quickly and avoid late penalties.

“Now I’ve got one of the Gateway machines, and it’s lightning fast. I’m very pleased.”

Donna Dendy-Roberts, director of User Support, Office of Information Technology, New York City Department of Homeless Services

“The city can incur penalties for not processing clients according to these court orders and mandates, so time is critical,” Dendy-Roberts said. “We have a family intake center in the Bronx, which is the single intake point for all homeless families. Whether it’s an adult family or families with children, we have to process their applications quickly so they can receive shelter and get on with rebuilding their lives.”

Gateway’s parts replacement process dramatically reduced downtime, Dendy-Roberts said. Gateway allowed her staff to diagnose problems and order parts for next-day delivery through a special phone number, eliminating needless troubleshooting.

Past vendors forced Dendy-Roberts and her staff to wait for a vendor-sponsored technician to arrive on-site and diagnose the problem before ordering the needed part, slowing repairs. It was especially frustrating when the technicians failed to show up altogether, she said.

Gateway only sends a technician to handle repairs Dendy-Roberts’ staff can’t do itself, which is rare because the machines are easy to repair — usually not even requiring tools, she said.

City laws require agencies to retain computers for at least five years, said Dendy-Roberts. She selected a four-year warranty, enabling her to utilize Gateway’s service for most of the desktops’ life cycle.

Enviably Performance

Dendy-Roberts said the administrative offices’ Gateway desktops are the envy of employees

in the field, whose computers weren’t due for replacement when the department bought the Gateway desktops.

“They’re already all over me about it,” Dendy-Roberts said. “If they were eligible, I would have used Gateway because I’m not happy with what I’ve got out there. They’ve caused us a lot of problems.”

She said the field workers’ current computers had problems with freezing when they arrived.

“We then had to go back and reimage all the machines — more than 500 of them that were deployed to the field — to get them operational,” Dendy-Roberts said. “If I had had the Gateway boxes I wouldn’t have had the problem.”

She plans to deploy Gateway desktops in all of the field sites when they are eligible, where employees are eager to have them. She recently expanded the use of Gateway desktops into the agency’s Facilities Maintenance and Design division as well.

“They were waiting for the upgrade to their CAD software, which required a high-powered machine,” Dendy-Roberts said. “We were able to use the Gateway boxes, which are more than powerful enough to run CAD operations.”

Dendy-Roberts herself was one of the few hold-outs on taking one of the Gateway computers. “I’m of the mindset of, ‘I don’t want a new PC unless there’s something wrong with my old one,’” she said.

When her machine started slowing down, Dendy-Roberts didn’t waste time.

“Now I’ve got one of the Gateway machines, and it’s lightning fast,” she said. “I’m very pleased.”



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