

# 311

## Charlotte and Mecklenburg County Customer Contact Center



Briefing for the Board  
5/10/05

# Refresher: What is 311?

- FCC designated 311 for the public to reach non-emergency governmental services and reduce inappropriate 911 calls
- 311 is also used by local governments to simplify access to services by centralizing call-taking functions from many departments into one center

Bottom line:      This is an initiative to improve  
Customer Service

# Current 311 Call Centers

- Approximately 28 local governments have 311 centers or are in the process of implementation, including:
  - Columbia, SC
  - Houston, TX
  - Dallas, TX
  - Chicago, IL
  - Baltimore, MD
  - Detroit, MI
  - New York, NY

# Project Plan Overview

- 7 Agencies Included in Phase 1:
  - Customer Service and Information Center
  - City of Charlotte Solid Waste Services
  - Charlotte Department of Transportation
  - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Non-Emergency Police
  - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities
  - **Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation**
  - **Mecklenburg County Tax Collections**

# Key Call Center Action Steps

- ✓ City Council approval of call center lease (Jan)
- ✓ Hire 311 Call Center Director
- ✓ Determine Operating Model
  - Organizational structure
  - Staffing requirements
  - Job profiles
- ✓ Develop Training Plan and Materials
- ✓ Training for 311 staff (April–June)
- ✓ Facility Build-out (February-May)
- Launch 311 July 2005

# Operating Agreement

The City and County are using the existing principles of the Shared Services Agreement as a starting point for year one operations. The County reimburses the City 26% of costs associated with the existing Customer Service Center

# 311 FY 06 Costs

## Annual Operations:

Projected Operation Expense (7 Agencies: 5 City/2 County)	\$ 5,288,787
Projected County Cost (Based on current Agreement @ 26%)	1,375,085
Less Tax Office Staff Reduction (10 FTEs)	(340,185)
Less Budgeted Amount for Current CSC Operation	(290,978)
<b>County Operation Share FY 06</b>	<b>\$ 743,922</b>

## Start-Up Costs:

Projected 311 Center Start-up Investment	\$ 3,120,418
Projected County Cost (Based on current Agreement @ 26%)	811,309
Start up Cost Allocated Over 5-Year Recovery	162,262
<b>County Start up Share FY 06</b>	<b>\$ 162,262</b>

<b>FY 06 Budget Enhancement</b>	<b>\$ 906,184</b>
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# Is the 311 Initiative a Good Value?

- The average cost per call handled by call center agents ranges anywhere from just over \$2.00 to more than \$15.00
- Estimates are for approximately 460,000 County calls to be handled via 311
- Estimate County Cost per call: \$3.34\*

Source: Cahners In-Stat and Giga Information Group

\* Based total County cost, including start-up



# How Does 311 Service Compare to Other Service Methods?

- Customer Service industry average costs per customer inquiries:

Regular mail:	\$25-35 per inquiry
Fax:	\$25-35 per inquiry
eMail:	\$15-20 per inquiry
Call Center:	\$ 2-15 per inquiry
Web site:	\$.50-1 per inquiry

Sources: Giga Information Group, BenchmarkPortal, and Purdue University

# Project History

- 2001-02: Feasibility analysis of 311 for CMPD as a part of a 911 review; City/County team formed to further explore feasibility
- May, 2003: Business Case developed (Telvation)
  - 22 high-volume call areas across City and County
  - 300 staff, \$14.6 million/yr, 2.3 million calls per year
  - 400+ numbers listed in the telephone blue pages
- July, 2003: County Manager/ SET receives Business Case and directs staff to begin implementation planning
- Nov, 2003: County engages Telvation to do telephone customer service process improvement work for targeted County departments
- Spring, 2004: Avaya phone system purchased/installed by the City
- June, 2004: County communicates to the City its intent to participate in the center; City to develop – County to purchase service
- Oct. 2004: Accenture engaged as consultant to prepare City and County

# Guiding Principles

- Create a “one stop shop” for the citizens of Charlotte Mecklenburg needing City and County information and services
- Provide near 24 X 7 service through the 311 call center
- By focusing on the highest volume and lowest complexity calls, strive to maximize first call resolution rates
- Recognizing that many high volume call types are of moderate complexity and may require handling by a specialist within the 311 call center. Strive to limit transfers to one seamless transfer with minimal delay
- Build on the foundation that exists with the current Customer Service and Information Center (336-7600)
- Maximize the use of Emerald as the service request tracking system to minimize the need to train all call takers on multiple systems

# 311 General Call Types

## Categories of Calls

- **Directory Assistance/Referrals** – Calls for individuals, departments, and facilities. Seeking phone numbers, addresses, or hours of operation
- **General Information Requests** – Frequently ask questions about services, programs, and facilities
- **Specific Information Requests** – Basic requests for information regarding specific entities such as tax accounts, utilities bills, or police reports. Requiring some type of specific database look-up
- **Service Requests** – Specific requests for City or County services requiring dispatch of a technician, field worker, or crew for fulfillment. Service requests are generally location-centric, rather than customer-centric
- **Transactional Requests** – More customer-centric requests that reflect some type of business transaction between the City/County and a citizen, such as setting up a payment plan, registering for a program, or having a bill re-assessed
- **Research Requests** – More complex requests that require deep subject matter expertise and the ability to investigate and solve problems. Often require a follow-up call(s) with the citizen
- **Back-Office Requests** – Citizen requests that require some type of “back-office” fulfillment but do not require dispatch of a technician, field worker, or crew. Examples include document fulfillment and e-mail processing

# 311 County-wide Services

## Tax Specific Call Types

### **General Information Requests**

- Tax Payment Policies and Procedures
- Due Dates (Real Estate and Personal Property)
- Block Removal Process
- Tax Rates and Fees and Tax Calculations
- General Proration Rules
- Change of Address Process
- Exemption Rules
- Appeals Process
- Business License Process
- Assessments

### **Specific Information Requests**

- Amount Due
- Due Date of Motor Vehicle Taxes
- Payment Confirmation
- Block Removal Confirmation
- Account Validation/Verification of Name and Address
- Billing Number Look-Up

### **Transactional Requests**

- Change of Real Estate Address
- Change of Personal Property Address

### **Back-Office Requests**

- Document Requests

# 311 County-wide Services

## Park and Recreation Specific Call Types

### – General Information Requests

- Facilities – Location and Amenities
  - Parks
  - Nature Preserves
  - Greenways
  - Recreation Centers
  - Fitness Centers
  - Dog Parks
  - Shelters
  - Special Facilities
- Program/Events - Descriptions
  - Aquatics
  - Athletics
  - Cooperative Extension
  - Fitness Center Programs
  - Nature Center Programs
  - Park Programs and Special Events
  - Recreation Center Programs
  - Therapeutic Recreation

### – Service Requests

- Complaints
- Notifications

### – Transactional Requests

- Shelter Scheduling
- Program Registration
- Field Scheduling

- One-Day Rentals
- Non-League Fields
- Cancellations/Refunds

### – Back-Office Requests

- Document Requests
- Contracts
- Beer/Wine Permits
- Educational Materials
- Trail Maps