

# Transforming City Government: A Case Study of Philly311

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This paper describes the transformation of a city government led by a 311 program, which provides a consolidated channel for non-emergency services and information. The paper first discusses the concept of "smart city" as a foundation for the examination of the 311 program as a practice of government innovation. The paper then presents the details of the 311 program as it is being instantiated in the City of Philadelphia. In-depth interviews with city government officials and managers responsible for operating the city's 311 system (Philly311) offer insights into the contributions the system is making to a more efficient, effective, transparent, accountable, and collaborative city government. Performance data provided by Philly311 enables more efficient resource allocation and informed decision making. Philly311 is credited with making the process of service delivery more transparent to the public, and providing traceability of requested services imbues service departments with a sense of accountability. Service level agreements are providing measurable standards of municipal services and are used to support accountability in terms of service status. Regular reviews of service level agreements and content of the system promote interdepartmental collaboration. 311 systems are broadly recognized as powerful tools to engage residents in improving their neighborhoods. Interviews also revealed challenges Philly311 is facing including limited funding impeding further improvements in software, systems, and staffing, and provided some insights into innovative strategies for addressing resource constraints. Institutionalizing interdepartmental collaborations also emerged from the interviews as a critical new capability required for advancing from the initiation stage of Philly311 to the operational, expansive, and sustainable stages. **[Winner of Best Innovations in Practice Paper Award, ICEGOV2012]**