

In late May, CTG's Knowledge Networking research team hosted a final data collection event in Albany to complete the gathering of impressions and insight from the scores of government professionals who participated in the study. With the end of this phase, the three-year study to examine the formation and operation of knowledge networks (KNs) in the public sector will move to final analysis and publication of research results.

Funded by a \$1-million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the **Knowledge Networking in the Public Sector** research project was designed to compare seven cases involving groups of agencies in New York State engaged in programmatic or administrative innovations that depend on the sharing of knowledge and information. Participating agencies included: New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications; NYS Council on Children and Families; NYS GIS Coordination Program; NYS Office of Real Property Services; NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Bureau of Shelter Services; Office of the NYS Comptroller, Central Accounting System; and Office of the NYS Comptroller, Division of Municipal Affairs.

"As we wrap up the project, the key question that needs to be answered is: 'How do we define success in public sector knowledge networks?'" explains Anthony Cresswell, CTG Research Director. "We need to evaluate success in terms of the organizational network, project objectives, and the knowledge-sharing experience."

By focusing on observable data, elements of success can be described as general concepts, Cresswell notes. For example, success related to the organizational network is evidenced by membership stability and growth; recognition, visibility, legitimacy, and institutionalization of the network; ability of the network to overcome major problems (resilience); and persistence of the network over time.

"In regard to specific objectives of each project, success is related to achievement of milestones or interim goals, ultimate project goals, and additional or unexpected outcomes," he adds. "Success related to knowledge sharing includes mutual awareness of organizational constraints and capabilities, a more complete and sophisticated understanding of the problem and its context, redefinition of tasks and priorities based on more complete information, and finally, conflict uncovered and confronted."

The results of the study will include an enhanced model of knowledge network formation and operation in the public sector, as well as recommendations to practitioners about planning and implementing knowledge networks. Research results have been reported in several papers that are available from CTG, and additional publications are in preparation.