

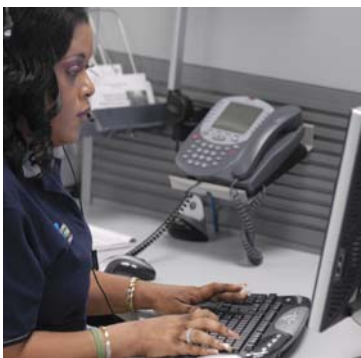
3-1-1 Service Request System

One number, one answer, one time



“Our goal is to provide seamless service for all citizens of the County, regardless of where they live.”

Judi Zito, Chief Information Officer, Miami-Dade County



“Our residents shouldn’t get a bureaucratic bounce from place to place until they get the answers they need.”

— Judi Zito

Situation

A world financial center. A vibrant local economy. A culturally diverse population of more than 2.3 million people. Citizens know to call 9-1-1 for emergencies. However, a concern of Miami-Dade County officials was when residents, visitors or businesses required County services or information, they had to negotiate a maze of over 1,000 different phone numbers for various departments. And if they wanted information from the 30-odd municipalities within county borders, that meant another baffling array of numbers.

To address that problem, County officials began building the foundation for what would become the nation’s first multi-jurisdictional 3-1-1 system. A major challenge involved getting buy-in from a variety of municipalities, all of which approach service delivery in their own way. A 3-1-1 statewide coalition was formed to foster communication among state, county and municipal agencies.

Equally challenging was acquiring a web-based technology that would allow various departments – originally in the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County, and later other municipalities within the county— to be part of a centralized 3-1-1 system at the Answer Center.

Solution

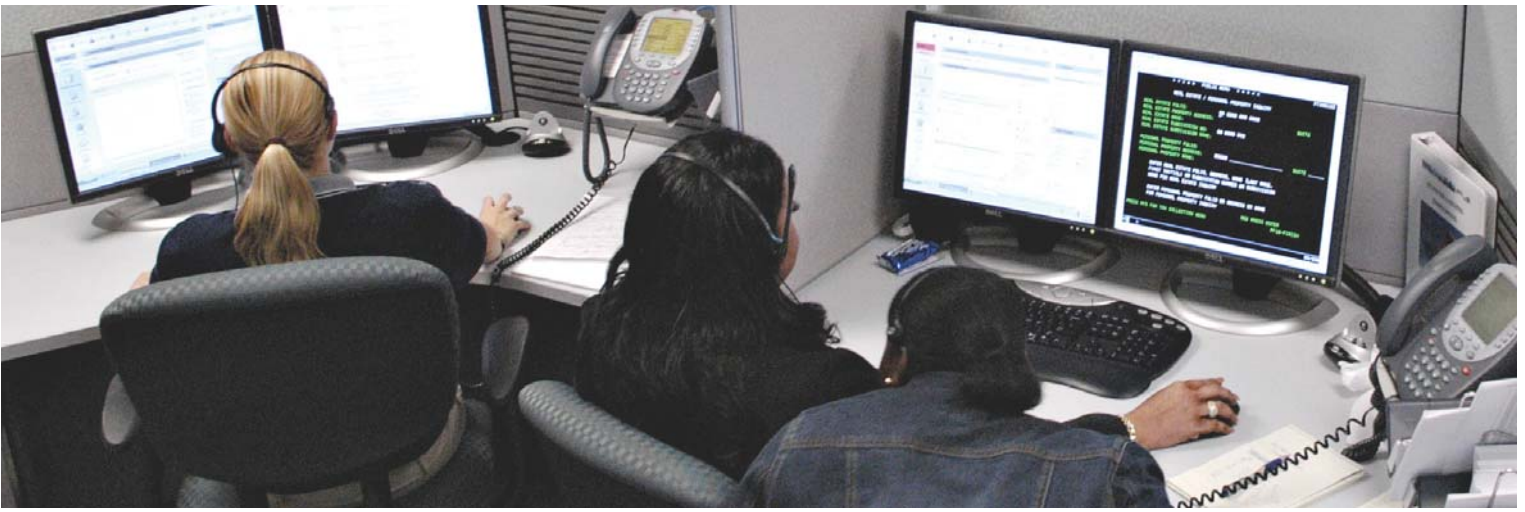
Motorola’s Customer Service Request (CSR) system, the solution behind many other 3-1-1 call centers nationwide. It is the first system that serves multiple jurisdictions, reflecting the close cooperation between city and county agencies that has been a point of pride here for decades.

“This is an extremely ambitious undertaking, not just for Miami-Dade but for any part of the country,” said Zito, who spearheaded the project. “The multi-jurisdictional aspect is the single most radical part of the entire initiative.”

Result

“When residents need services, they shouldn’t be forced to figure out which of the hundreds of government agencies provide the service they need,” Zito says. “Our 3-1-1 system provides one easy-to-remember number for them to call. They get one-on-one service to help them access information and services provided by both the County and the City of Miami.”

When the phone book comes out, it will list just 17 County government numbers: the mayor, county manager, 13 commissioners, 9-1-1 and 3-1-1.



“Our goal is to answer more than 80 percent of the calls on the first contact, rather than to transfer them to another department.” – JUDY ZITO

A State-of-the-Art Call Center

The 11,000 square foot facility accommodates as many as 93 call takers plus administrative staff. Every call taker is able to answer questions and initiate service requests for the full range of City and County services. The call center has a multilingual staff available 24x7. Meanwhile, the individual departments receive fewer calls, saving them the time and money and giving them more time to focus on their core responsibilities.

The Knowledge Base Management System (KBMS)

KBMS is a repository of more than 7,000 items of information about County and City services, continually updated by subject matter experts in the various departments. Because everyone is working from the same central source, it is easier for agencies to disseminate new information and present consistent information to the public. Call takers have accurate, up-to-date information at their fingertips to answer callers’ questions.

The Customer Service Request System

CSR supports call takers as they answer calls, initiate work orders, and track fulfillment of service requests. Workflow management software identifies duplicate requests, generates sub-tasks, issues orders to workers mobile computers, wireless pagers and other portable devices in the field, and tracks real-time performance. As soon as one department completes its phase of the work, the system alerts the next department, helping to coordinate activity tasks when jobs involve multiple agencies. Historical records establish accountability, while performance metrics can be tracked through time to help managers determine where to deploy resources and improve low performing areas. Once the job is complete, callers can optionally be notified via e-mail that their request has been completed.

A resource to share on behalf of the public

Beyond just inquiries and service requests, the Miami-Dade 3-1-1 Answer Center assists other entities serving the people of South Florida.

For example, the County is partnering with the Housing Finance Authority (HFA) to gather initial case information on predatory lending. “Far too many people have lost their homes and their life savings or have gotten into financial difficulties,” says County Commissioner Audrey Edmonson. “We are working to stop this practice.”

Calls to HFA’s Community Education Line go to the 3-1-1 Answer Center, where call takers assist callers and, if needed, refer them to HFA for personal assistance. The CSR system gathers relevant data and sends it to the HFA, which analyzes it to identify historical and future trends and determines the geographic concentration of predatory activity. While 3-1-1 county employees answer the phone, HFA staffers have more time to work in the field, investigate cases, and educate citizens.

SNAPSHOT: JANUARY, 2006

Calls received:	104,016
Average calls/day:	5,201
Calls resolved without requiring transfer to a City or County department:	81%
Calls handled by each agent/day (average):	86
Average wait time for callers:	23 sec
Average call duration:	2 min 18 sec

Top 5 service requests:

- Stray animals
- Junk/trash
- Dead animals
- Commercial vehicles
- Abandoned property



“The evolution of 3-1-1 throughout hurricane season 2005 is evidence that a well-managed call center operation already serving as a gateway to local government service can be readily and effectively mobilized to support an emergency activation.”

— FROM THE COUNTY’S HURRICANE WILMA SUMMARY REPORT



In times of crisis, 3-1-1 facilitates government response

Not only is Miami-Dade 3-1-1 a benefit for anyone in South Florida seeking information about government services, it’s also a valuable performance tool for the County for crisis management.

Wilma’s slow approach, only one month after the 3-1-1 Answer Center became fully operational, generated more than 140,000 hurricane-related 3-1-1 calls over 13 days (averaging nearly 10,800 calls a day). “The volume and nature of calls to 3-1-1 shifts dramatically as a hurricane approaches, strikes and departs,” says Becky Jo Glover, 3-1-1 Manager. “The technology that is used at 3-1-1 enables the County leadership to make real time decisions based on real time events. County resources can be deployed to address urgent community needs.”

The hurricane report notes that during some periods, up to 50% of calls were from cell phones. “The ability to call a single, easy to remember number facilitates their ability to make contact with government at the time it is needed most.”

The 3-1-1 system’s real-time accountability tools helped managers respond to the current emergency and prepare for the next one. “On the spot decision making related to all phases of emergency management based on the need for service is enabled through an assessment of 3-1-1 data. Moreover, a retrospective analysis... is invaluable as a tool for continuous improvement of emergency plans.”

Rapid Acceptance

How long did it take for citizens to start dialing 3-1-1? The 2005 hurricane season tells the story:

Pre-rollout 25%

The answer center was in the early stages of use when Katrina crossed South Florida. Already, 25% of calls were initiated by dialing 3-1-1.

Two days 60%

The public education campaign for 3-1-1 began just two days before an evacuation order was issued for the Florida Keys as Rita approached.

Five weeks 79%

By the time Wilma arrived, four out of five calls were initiated from 3-1-1, rendering the old rumor control hotline nearly obsolete except for calls from outside the county.

Emergency operations and 3-1-1

- Offload calls from 9-1-1
- Reports of flooding, power outages, downed trees, other hazards
- Rumor control
- Evacuation and safe return
- Resource allocation
- Knowledge base for future planning

