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OPERATIONAL SERVICES BRIEF
311 In Massachusetts

Executive Summary:

Non-emergency constituent phone service (also known as "311") is a growing nationwide trend among municipalities looking to provide more efficient services and improve communications with their citizens. According to an ICMA report, about 15% already use such a system, and another quarter are considering one. As an example of 311's effectiveness, 43% of local governments reported a significant decrease in non-emergency 911 calls following implementation of a centralized customer service system.

In Massachusetts, 311 is just starting to gain popularity. It currently exists in at least five places (i.e., the cities of Somerville, Springfield, Boston and Worcester; and Dukes County), and there numerous others considering it.

The following provides a very brief overview of this service in the Commonwealth, as well as country-wide information from ICMA studies (International City/County Management Association) on the matter.

Overview of Massachusetts 311 programs:

What follows is very basic information on the existing 311 programs in Massachusetts:
- Somerville: operational 311 municipal service.
  - First implemented: December, 2005
    - Source: http://www.mma.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1273&Itemid=95
  - Initial startup cost: $50,000
  - FY07 budget appropriation: $186,663.70
  - Proposed FY08 budget appropriation: $318,457.54
    - Source: http://www.ci.somerville.ma.us/CoS_Content/documents/forms/FinalBudget6.4.07_Reduced.pdf
- Dukes County (Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands): operational 311 service.
  - Source: http://www.dukescounty.org/Pages/DukesCountyMA_Sheriff/3-1-1
- Boston: operational 24 Hour Hotline for Constituent Services.
  - Number: 617-635-4500 (not 311)
    - Source: http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2008/04/14/boston_misses_the_call/
  - FY09 constituent services budget appropriation: $838,627
    - Source: http://www.cityofboston.gov/TridionImages/01%20Mayor%27s%20Office%20Cabinet_tcm1-3128.pdf
- Worcester: operational 24 hour Customer Service Center administered by the city's Technical Services Division (TSD).
  - Number: 508-929-1300 (not 311).
    - http://www.ci.worcester.ma.us/ (follow "Customer Service Center" link)
  - FY09 TSD budget appropriation: $3,243,190.16 (does not describe specific appropriation for Service Center).

- Source: http://www.ci.worcester.ma.us/reports/BudgetFY09.pdf
- Springfield: implementing new CitiStat Department with 311 Citizen Service Center in FY09.
  - Springfield spent $90,000 on start-up costs for 311 and anticipates annual operating costs of $270,000, although the city already had call center within DPW that it absorbed into 311
    - Source: http://www.mass.gov/Ador/docs/dls/publ/ct/2008/july08.pdf
- Several other communities have 311 systems currently in various stages of planning

ICMA reports on 311:

The following summarizes information on 311 from the ICMA:
- ICMA Local Government Customer Service Systems 2007 Data Report:
  - Development and Implementation (defined as planning, design, consulting, and staff time): cost ranging from $1,000 to $4+ million.
  - Capital Expenditures (software and hardware): ranging from $8,000 to $525,000.
  - Annual Operating Expenditures (staffing, training, supplies, software, and non-capital hardware): ranging from $1,350 to $350,000.
  - Source: http://icma.org/documents/ICMA%27s_Local_Government_Customer_Service_Systems_Survey,_2007.pdf
- ICMA Article: "More U.S. Local Governments Turning to 311 Call Systems; 911 Calls Drop Sharply with 311 Use, Survey Shows":
  - 42% of U.S. local governments have either implemented a centralized customer service system (15%) or are considering adopting one (27%).
  - 43% of local governments reported a significant decrease in non-emergency 911 calls following implementation of a centralized customer service system.
  - Source: http://www.icma.org/main/bc.asp?bcid=923&p=1
- ICMA Case Study: "Lynwood One Call City Hall":
  - Lynwood, CA:
    - Population: 73,212.
    - Annual City Budget (FY 2006 – 07): $92.3 million.
    - "One Call City Hall" Request for Services System budget appropriation (adopted in June, 2006): $56,000.
    - Major System Components:
      - Physical Location: City Hall, City Manager's Office.
      - Square Footage: 144 square feet office.
      - Number of phones: two (one for service requests and one for the hotline).
      - Number of computers: one.
    - Number of Staff: 1.25 full-time equivalents (FTEs), including a customer service manager to coordinate the system and a blockwatch coordination specialist who provides backup support.
    - Location within City Government: under the Quality of Life Department, reporting to the City Manager's Office.
    - Type of System: centralized, online customer service request management system with a dedicated seven-digit phone number and voicemail.
  - Source: http://icma.org/upload/library/2008-10/%7B53CF7BCE-5519-4CE1-86A6-9DFFFDAC93E9%7D.pdf