

AUDIT REPORT



CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
BUREAU OF MANAGEMENT AUDIT
WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR., COMPTROLLER

Effectiveness of the 311 Citizen Service Center as Administered by the Department of Information Technology And Telecommunications

MJ05-094A

June 30, 2005



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
1 CENTRE STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007-2341

WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR.
COMPTROLLER

To the Citizens of the City of New York

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In accordance with the Comptroller's responsibilities contained in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter, my office has audited the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) to determine how well its 311 Citizen Service Center is meeting its timeliness performance goal of answering 80 percent of call within 30 seconds, achieving its mission of helping the public gain access to City services and information, and providing accurate information to the public. DoITT manages and operates the City's data center, Web site, telephone systems, fiber-optic network, and municipal cable television network.

Our audit resulted in the findings and recommendations that are presented in this report. The findings and recommendations were discussed with City officials; their comments were considered in the preparation of this report.

Audits such as this provide a means of ensuring that City resources are used effectively, efficiently, and in the best interest of the public.

I trust that this report contains information that is of interest to you. If you have any questions concerning this report, please e-mail my audit bureau at audit@comptroller.nyc.gov or telephone my office at 212-669-3747.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William C. Thompson, Jr.".

William C. Thompson, Jr.

WCT/fh

Report: MJ05-094A
Filed: June 30, 2005

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*The City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
Bureau of Management Audit*

**Effectiveness of the 311 Citizen Service
Center as Administered by the Department of
Information Technology and Telecommunications**

MJ05-094A

AUDIT REPORT IN BRIEF

This audit determined how well the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) 311 Citizen Service Center is meeting its timeliness performance goal of answering 80 percent of the calls to 311 within 30 seconds, achieving its mission of helping the public gain access to City services and information, and providing accurate information to the public.

During Fiscal Year 2004, DoITT reported that the 311 Citizen Service Center received 8,140,907 calls, with an average wait time of 8 seconds per call, and answered 90 percent of those calls within 30 seconds. For Fiscal Year 2005, as of December 31, 2004, DoITT reported that the 311 Call Center received 5,855,149 calls, with an average wait time of 49 seconds per call, and answered only 60 percent of the calls within 30 seconds.

Audit Findings and Conclusions

The 311 Citizen Service Center fell short of meeting its timeliness performance goal; only 72 percent (60 calls) of 83 test calls made to the Service Center were answered by the Call Center Representatives (CCRs) within 30 seconds. In addition, DoITT reported in its monthly *Volume and Performance Level Reports* that 60 percent of the calls received by the Service Center during the period July through December 2004 were answered within 30 seconds.

However, we did find that DoITT does accomplish its mission of providing accurate information and helping the public gain access to City services and information. Of the 83 instances in which CCRs provided us with information or materials, the information or materials were accurate in 81 (98%) instances. Additionally, of the 22 requests for services or information we made, we received the correct services or information in all 22 instances.

In addition, DoITT ensures that the CCRs receive adequate training to carry out their responsibilities. Furthermore, DoITT has an adequate Quality Assurance Program to ensure that the CCRs, both at its main office and at its contracted site, are providing courteous service and accurate information to the 311 callers.

DoITT officials stated that they are aware that they are not meeting the performance standards of answering 80 percent of calls to 311 within 30 seconds. They further stipulated that based on current call volume, the agency does not have enough CCRs in order to meet the standard. The officials informed us that they are in the process of hiring more CCRs to help meet the 311 Citizen Service Center demand.

Audit Recommendation

We made one recommendation to DoITT.

- DoITT should continue its efforts, including but not limited to hiring more staff members, to meet its performance standard of answering 80 percent of calls within 30 seconds.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) works with New York City agencies to manage information systems that support City operations and public access to City services. DoITT manages and operates the City's data center, Web site, telephone systems, fiber-optic network, and municipal cable television network. DoITT redesigned and enhanced the City's Web site, www.nyc.gov, to make it easier to access services through the Internet, and established NYC TV to replace Crosswalk Television. DoITT also established the City's 311 Citizen Service Center to meet its objective of increasing the public's access to non-emergency City services. The Service Center's mission is to help the public access City services and information and to help City government provide the highest possible levels of customer service by calling one simple telephone number—311—24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The 311 Citizen Service Center, which was launched in March 2003 provides the public with information and services for more than 300 agencies and organizations. To respond to the calls, a searchable-knowledge database was designed, containing more than 7,000 pieces of information about government services and relevant organizations. To staff the new Citizen Service Center, DoITT relied primarily on existing City employees, consolidating 11 agency call centers and hotlines by May 2003, and training approximately 200 call takers.

DoITT has two 311 Call Center locations: one in Manhattan and the other in Long Island City. The Long Island City location is operated by King TeleServices L.L.C. (King), a private telecommunications company contracted by DoITT to provide staff and facilities to operate a 311 overflow call center. DoITT establishes the operational procedures for the King facility. Particularly, DoITT determines the number of Call Center Representative (CCR) workstations that King is to provide during any given month, the number of hours King CCRs are to log each month, and the training and monitoring procedures for King CCRs. DoITT has a Quality Assurance (QA) Program that is designed to ensure that CCRs provide accurate information, adhere to policies and procedures, and provide exceptional customer service to callers.

According to DoITT, in the initial four months of operation the number of calls to 311 surpassed one million; and 311 assisted an estimated 8,300 non-English speaking callers through InterpreTalk, its language translation service, which includes at least 170 languages.

According to DoITT officials the performance goal of the 311 Citizen Service Center is to answer 80 percent of the calls to 311 within 30 seconds. For Fiscal Year 2004, DoITT reported that the 311 Citizen Service Center received 8,140,907 calls, with an average wait time of 8 seconds per call, and answered 90 percent of those calls within 30 seconds. For Fiscal Year 2005, as of December 31, 2004, DoITT reported that the 311 Call Center received 5,855,149 calls, with an average wait time of 49 seconds per call, and answered only 60 percent of the calls within 30 seconds.

Objective

The objective of this audit was to determine how well the 311 Citizen Service Center is meeting its timeliness performance goals, achieving its mission of helping the public gain access to City services and information, and providing accurate information to the public.

Scope and Methodology

The scope of the audit was July 2004 through January 2005.

To obtain an in-depth understanding of the day-to-day operations of the 311 Citizen Service Center as they relate to our audit objective, we interviewed DoITT officials, including the Director of the Service Center, the Training Developer, the Quality Assurance Manager, and Special Projects Coordinator. We also reviewed various performance reports that were extracted from the Mayor's Office of Operations Web site, such as volumes and performance levels for various time periods.

To gain further knowledge of the Center's operations, we reviewed activity reports that covered calls received by the Center from July 1 through October 13, 2004. These daily reports provide volume and service information such as a summary of the number of calls received and handled by CCRs on a daily basis and the overall service level of the Center (percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds or less). We also reviewed four *Call Center Curriculums* (dated September 2004) that were obtained from Center officials—the *Call Taker Course*, the *Supervisor Course*, the *Team Leader Course*, and the *Manager Course*. In addition, we reviewed the Center's Quality Assurance Training Course Plan.

To determine whether the Service Center answered the calls in a timely fashion and provided accurate information to the public, we made 83 calls to the Service Center from August 25 through December 9, 2004. (We made these calls during various times of the day—morning, afternoon, and evening hours—as well as on weekends.) We further reviewed the Web sites of the various City agencies related to our 311 calls to determine the accuracy of the information that the CCRs provided to us. In the instances that we requested documents be mailed, we verified that the correct documents were received. In addition, we made follow-up calls to the Service Center to evaluate the correctness of the initial answer we received.

To determine the Service Center workload, we asked DoITT to provide us with all reports related to volume and performance levels of 311 calls. These reports included the following information: the total number of calls received by the Service Center; the percentage of calls that were resolved by the Interactive Voice Response (IVR), an automated message that initially receives all calls; and the percentage of calls abandoned. The reports also included the service level (percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds or less) of both Tier I and Tier II Specialists. (All incoming calls following the IVR are directed to Tier I. Calls that require in-depth information regarding certain agencies are transferred to Tier II.) These statistics are generated by a call-routing system known as Symposium, which is used by the 311 Call Center to direct calls to the appropriate CCRs and to track call volume data.

We reviewed the CCR training manual to determine whether DoITT provides adequate training for the CCRs on how to use 311's Customer Service Management System (CSMS) and various "legacy" programs inherited from other City agencies and still in use. CSMS is the searchable knowledge database that the Center uses to store information about government services. We further requested the training schedules and attendance records from June 2004 through December 2004 to determine how many training classes were held during the above period and a list of those who attended.

To determine whether the QA Unit is meeting its goal that each CCR be monitored no less than four times a month, we first requested a list of all CCR employees at both the Maiden Lane and Long Island City centers as of December 2004. There were a total of 436 employees: 283 at Maiden Lane and 153 at Long Island City. We took a random sample of 87 employees (one-fifth of the employees)—57 from Maiden Lane and 30 from Long Island City. For each of these employees, we obtained the monitoring histories as reported in the *Summary of Evaluation and History* for the period July 2004 through November 2004 and the *CCR Evaluation Data History* for the month of December. (In December 2004, DoITT revised the monitoring questionnaire used to evaluate CCRs.) Of the 87, 13 were excluded from our review because they served as CCRs for only a portion of the six-month period. For the remaining 74 CCRs, we reviewed the monitoring records to determine whether the QA Unit is meeting its goal that each CCR be monitored no less than four times a month.

To test the reliability of the computer data generated by and obtained from the Service Center, we used the results of the test calls we made to the Center during the week of August 25-31, 2004 to determine whether there was a record of our test calls in the Center's database. (We made 29 of our 83 test calls during this period.) We traced these 29 calls to the Center's call activity data. For eight calls that were service requests, we used the confirmation numbers assigned by 311 to trace the calls to the activity data. For the remaining 21 calls, we used several call attributes (e.g., originating telephone number, the date and time of the call) to trace the calls to the activity data.

To determine whether DoITT allocated the proper number of CCRs to handle the call volume, we asked the agency to provide us the number of calls received for the period January 16-31, 2005 and requested that the call data be broken down into three-hour time intervals. We further requested statistics on the average answer speed (the time it took for a CCR to answer the phone) for the same period, the number of calls abandoned every three hours during the days in question, as well as the staffing schedule.

The results of our samples, while not projected to their respective populations, provided a reasonable basis for us to determine whether the 311 Citizen Service Center met its timeliness performance goals and provided accurate information to the public.

This audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) and included tests of the records and other auditing procedures considered necessary. This audit was performed in accordance with the New York City Comptroller's audit and responsibilities as set forth in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter.

Discussion of Audit Results

The matters covered in this report were discussed with DoITT officials during and at the conclusion of this audit. A preliminary draft report was sent to DoITT officials and was discussed at an exit conference on April 27, 2005. On May 9, 2005 we submitted a draft report to DoITT officials with a request for comments. We received a written response from DoITT officials on May 23, 2005. In their response, officials agreed with the audit's recommendation and stated:

“The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) is taking various steps in response to the audit's recommendation that DoITT continue to strive for a performance standard of answering 80 percent of calls within 30 seconds.”

The full text of DoITT's response is included as an addendum to this report.

FINDINGS

Although DoITT's 311 Citizen Service Center fell short of meeting its timeliness performance goal, it does accomplish its mission of providing accurate information and helping the public gain access to City services and information.

The 311 CCRs answered 72 percent of our test calls within 30 seconds or less, less than its performance goal of 80 percent within 30 seconds. We found, however, that once the callers were connected to the CCRs, the CCRs were courteous and generally provided accurate information. In addition, DoITT ensures that the CCRs receive adequate training to carry out their responsibilities. Furthermore, DoITT has an adequate Quality Assurance Program to ensure that the CCRs, both at its main office and at its contracted site, are providing courteous service and accurate information to the 311 callers.

Of the 83 calls we made, 60 (72%) were answered within 30 seconds following the IVR; six of them were answered immediately by a CCR. According to DoITT, for the period July 1, 2004, through December 31, 2004, 60 percent of the calls to 311 were answered within 30 seconds. The Center did not meet its performance goal for any of the six months included in this period. Nevertheless, our limited testing disclosed that the CCRs at the 311 Citizen Service Center appear to be providing accurate information to callers. Of the 83 instances in which CCRs provided us with information or materials, the information or materials were accurate in 81 (98%) instances. Additionally, of the 22 requests for services or information we made, we received the correct services or information in all 22 instances.

72 Percent of Our Calls to 311 Citizen Service Center Were Answered Within 30 Seconds or Less

Our calls to the 311 Citizen Service Center revealed that all calls were answered by the fourth ring or sooner by the automated voice response. For the 83 calls we made to 311, 60 (72%) were handled by a CCR within 30 seconds or less. For Fiscal Year 2005 through December 2004, DoITT reports that 60 percent of calls were answered within 30 seconds or less.

Each CCR receives incoming calls at the CCR's work station only after logging into Symposium and being placed in "available" mode. Symposium is a communication application used by the Service Center to monitor calls and to control CCR assignment. When a call first comes in, the caller listens to an automated voice message. Sometimes the caller's problem is addressed via the automated system. If the caller still needs to speak with a live operator, the caller is put on hold for the next available representative. If there are no representatives available, the call is put in the hold queue. When a CCR becomes available, the Symposium call-routing system transfers the call from the hold queue to the available representative.

To determine whether the 311 Citizen Service Center answers calls in a timely manner, we made a total of 83 calls to 311 during the period August 25, 2004 through December 9, 2004. Of the 83 calls, 60 (72%) of them were answered by CCRs within 30 seconds; six calls were immediately forwarded to a CCR without passing through the hold queue. Of the remaining 23

calls, 15 (20%) were on hold for a CCR between one and two minutes, and eight (10%) were on hold for a CCR between two and five minutes.

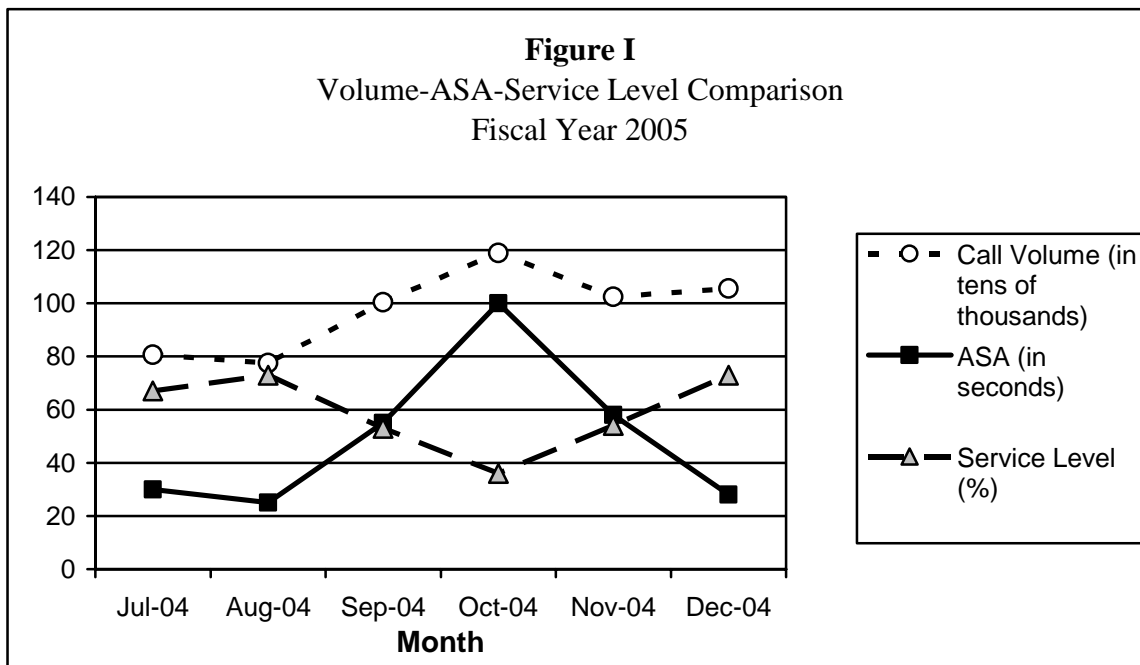
To ascertain DoITT’s performance for our audit scope period, we reviewed the volume and performance levels that were reported to the Mayor’s Office of Operations for July 2004 through December 2004. According to DoITT’s monthly *Volume and Performance Level Reports* for that period, 60 percent of the calls were answered within 30 seconds. A breakdown of DoITT’s performance per month as reported is shown in Table I below.

Table I

Performance of the 311 Citizen Service Center
On Calls Received July through December 2004

Month	Reported Number of Calls	Percentage of Calls Answered Within 30 Seconds	Percentage of Calls Answered Within 30 Seconds July Through December 2004
July 2004	806,074	67%	67%
August 2004	775,527	73%	70%
September 2004	1,003,817	53%	64%
October 2004	1,189,522	36%	57%
November 2004	1,024,765	54%	57%
December 2004	1,055,444	73%	60%
TOTAL	5,855,149		

Figure I, following, shows a linear representation of several important 311 Call Center performance statistics for Fiscal Year 2005 through December 2004. “ASA,” or the average speed of answer, is the amount of time it takes for a CCR to answer a call that is on hold (i.e., the average number of seconds a caller must wait before initially speaking with a 311 CCR). The “Service Level” statistic is the percentage of calls that are answered within 30 seconds, DoITT’s performance goal.



As shown in Table I, the percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds during the months of July and August 2004 is 70 percent. However, Figure I shows that the performance levels changed dramatically from September through November. The percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds during this three-month period is 48 percent. Only 36 percent of calls received in October were answered in 30 seconds. According to DoITT, the sharp decline in service level in October may have resulted from the increased number of calls received by the Citizen Service Center (as seen in Table I), particularly those regarding the shortage of flu vaccines and the STAR Program (regarding property tax rebates), which were concurrent issues during that period. Twenty-two percent of the more than one million calls the center received in October were property tax or STAR Program inquiries. The service level increased in December, with 73 percent of the calls being answered within 30 seconds.

We discussed the timeliness in answering calls with DoITT officials. Officials stated that they are aware that they are not meeting the agency’s performance standard of answering 80 percent of calls to 311 within 30 seconds. DoITT officials stipulated that based on the present call volume, the agency does not have enough CCRs in order to meet the standard. Officials stated that the agency is in the process of hiring more CCRs to help meet the demand.

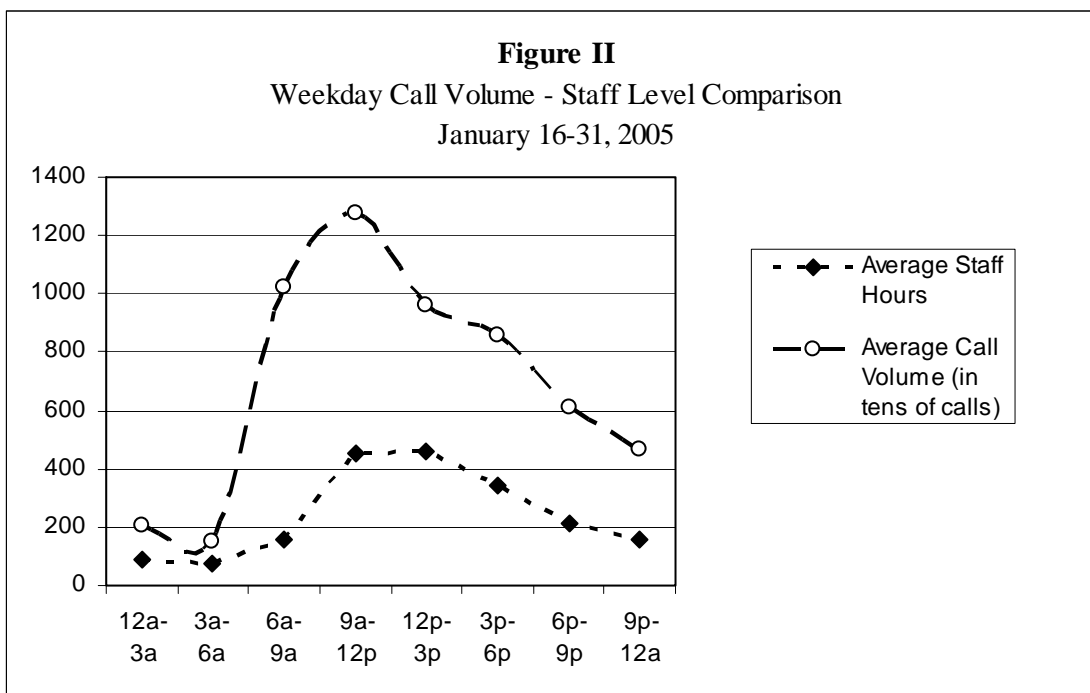
Citizen Service Center Tracks Peak Demand Periods for Calls And Adjusts Staffing Levels Accordingly

The 311 Citizen Service Center retains and reports information regarding the number of calls received by the Service Center. The Service Center has a daily summary report that includes the total number of incoming calls to the Center and the type of services requested by the callers.

The Service Center is also able to segregate the total number of incoming calls, the number of calls handled by the CCRs, as well as the average speed of answer within specific time intervals.

To determine whether DoITT has allocated resources to meet the Citizen Service Center’s demands, we obtained a report that revealed statistics pertaining to all calls received during the randomly selected period of January 16-31, 2005. We requested that these data be segregated into three-hour intervals in order to determine call handling capabilities at different times of the day. We also requested the average answer speed for the same period and had those segregated into three-hour intervals as well. We further obtained the staffing schedule for the same month for both 311 Call Centers—59 Maiden Lane in Manhattan and at King in Long Island City.

Our analysis of that period confirmed that the Call Center attempts to adjust its staffing levels to accommodate the expected fluctuations in call volume throughout the day. As seen in Figure II, for the 11 weekdays in the 16-day period, average staffing levels during a particular three-hour interval corresponded with the average call volume during the same time so that the number of staff hours increased to match increases in call volume and decreased during less busy periods.



311 CCRs Provided Accurate Information to Callers and Helped Callers Gain Access to City Services and Information

Our calls to the 311 Citizen Service Center revealed that the CCRs provide accurate information. For 83 of the calls we made, 81 (98%) of the calls were handled correctly by CCRs. The 311 Service Center also helped the public gain access to City services and information. Of the

83 calls we made, 22 were requests for services or information. In all 22 instances, we received the requested service or information.

To determine whether the 311 Citizen Service Center provides accurate information to the public, we placed a series of non-emergency calls to the Service Center from August 25 through December 9, 2004. We first prepared a list of various types of questions to ask and requests to make of the CCRs. We documented the responses and compared the results of the phone calls with data obtained from the related agencies' Web sites.

Of the 83 total test calls, 81 calls were answered correctly. In many cases, the CCR referred the caller to the correct agency by transferring the caller directly to a 311 Tier II agency specialist, if applicable, or by giving the caller the agency's direct number. With some calls, the CCR supplied the caller basic information. For example, one caller asked the CCR how she could obtain a copy of a birth certificate. The CCR gave the caller the information she requested, including the address, hours of operation, and how much it costs to obtain a copy. In another example, the caller gave the CCR his home address and asked the CCR on what days the Department of Sanitation picks up garbage and recycling materials on his block. The CCR provided the correct days for both pick ups. For certain calls that involved specific complaints or requests, the CCR took the actual service requests over the phone and gave the callers confirmation numbers so they could track the progress of the issue. There were 22 total service requests in our test calling survey. Of the 22 service requests, 11 were for direct services or complaints, and the remaining 11 were for information to be mailed to the caller. In all 11 requests for services, the CCR noted the correct information, and that information was transferred to the correct agency. For the remaining 11 requests that information be mailed to the caller, the caller received the information within two weeks in all 11 instances.

There were a total of two calls that were handled incorrectly by the CCRs. For one call regarding traffic noise, the caller asked the CCR how she could get a sign saying "Do Not Honk" posted on a street in her neighborhood. The CCR told the caller that the request should be directed to the nearest police precinct. The CCR took the caller's request, gave her a service confirmation number and said the request would be directed to the nearest precinct. However, with further verification, we found that these types of requests should not be directed to the local precinct, but must be handled by the Department of Transportation. For the other incorrectly answered call, the CCR was asked by the caller if he could have the pH level in his home's tap water tested for abnormalities. The caller was told that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) does not test the pH level in the water and that he would have to contact a private water maintenance technician to perform the test. However, through research on DEP's Web site and two subsequent calls regarding the same issue, we found that DEP does in fact test water pH level, and a caller can request that a DEP inspector perform the test by calling 311.

CCRs Are Adequately Trained in Accordance with DoITT Guidelines

DoITT takes numerous steps to ensure that its CCRs are adequately trained to handle calls properly and that they conform to the agency's standards of call-handling conduct.

As previously stated, when DoITT launched the 311 Citizen Service Center in March 2003, it consolidated 11 agency call centers and relied primarily on existing City employees to staff the Service Center. DoITT began hiring new employees in January 2004 and has required that each new employee possess computer skills as well as experience in customer service. Training for new employees lasts four weeks. CCRs receive training in CSMS and at least two "legacy" programs. Legacy programs are the systems inherited from other City agencies that are still in use by DoITT. These legacy programs record, process, and track civilian complaints and requests pertaining to their specific agencies. DoITT currently uses legacy programs for the following five agencies: Department of Buildings (DOB), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Sanitation (DOS), Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and DEP. The legacy programs for which CCRs receive training are determined by the time of the year that training is taking place. For example, if a training class takes place in December, CCRs are trained in the legacy programs that address issues about which 311 receives a high number of inquiries during the winter season.

To gain an understanding of the training that DoITT provides to the CCRs, we requested and reviewed the DoITT training manual entitled *Call Center Curriculum-Call Taker Course*, issued in September 2004. The manual contains a step-by-step guide on how to use both the CSMS database and legacy programs to handle various types of calls.

We further requested the training schedules and attendance records from June 2004 through December 2004 to determine how many training classes were held during the above period and a list of those who attended. We found that DoITT conducted six training classes during the period of June through November 2004. There were no classes in December 2004. The first two classes were held in June and July 2004; CCRs in those classes were also trained in the DEP and DOT legacy programs. The third class was held in September 2004, and CCRs in that class were trained in the HPD and DOB legacy programs. The remaining three classes were held in November 2004, and CCRs were trained in the DOS and HPD legacy programs. However, we were able to determine only the names of the employees who attended training classes in the last three classes because DoITT did not previously save copies of the attendance records (i.e., sign-in sheets) for the training classes; at the time of our request, the only records available were for new hire training conducted in the November classes.

DoITT Generally Monitors CCRs in Accordance with Its Guidelines

The QA Unit generally meets its goal of monitoring CCRs to ensure that they provide accurate information and reliable service to callers. Of the 74 employees randomly sampled, the QA Unit monitored over 90 percent of them at least four times per month, in accordance with the unit's guidelines, during the period July 2004 through November 2004, as well as in December 2004, when the unit implemented a new monitoring procedure.

The QA Unit monitors the CCR in several different ways. It may perform side-by-side call monitoring, in which the QA monitor sits next to a CCR while the CCR handles a call; remote real-time monitoring, in which monitors listen in on a call while the CCR is currently on the phone with a caller; and pre-recorded call monitoring, in which the monitoring is done by listening to a previously recorded call handled by a particular CCR. According to DoITT, most monitoring is conducted by the pre-recorded call monitoring method. In addition to a QA Unit staff member, a CCR's manager, supervisor, or team leader can monitor the employee.

In December 2004, the Citizen Service Center updated their Quality Assurance Monitoring Questionnaire Guidelines. Under the previous guidelines, each CCR was rated on 12 general categories and the score they received was based on the discretion of the employee that was evaluating the CCR. With the new revised questionnaire, the general 12 categories were broken into 44 specific categories and the CCR would be rated on these specific categories by the evaluator simply stating yes, no, or not applicable on the form. For example, under the previous questionnaire, one of the categories was listening. With the new questionnaire, that same category is broken into two specific categories, such as "does not cut customer off" and "demonstrates understanding verbally". In addition, the computer will generate the score as opposed to the evaluator using his/her own discretion in rating the CCR. If a CCR rates poorly in a particular area, the evaluator may coach the CCR and provide pointers. If a CCR consistently rates poorly in an area, DoITT may refer the CCR for refresher training.

The QA Unit's informal goal is that each CCR be monitored no less than four times a month. To determine whether the QA Unit is meeting this goal, we requested a list of all CCR employees at both the Maiden Lane and Long Island City centers as of December 2004. There were a total of 436 employees; 283 at Maiden Lane and 153 at Long Island City. We took a random sample of 74 employees—48 from Maiden Lane and 26 from Long Island City, and reviewed the QA Unit's monitoring records of these CCRs. Our evaluation was segregated into two periods: July 2004 through November 2004 (under the old system) and December 2004 (under the new system). For the first period, 73 (99%) of the 74 sampled employees were monitored at least four times a month. For the second period, 67 (91%) of the 74 were monitored at least four times a month. We also saw instances in which CCRs were coached in areas where they did not perform well.

RECOMMENDATION

1. DoITT should continue its efforts, including but not limited to hiring more staff members, to meet its performance standard of answering 80 percent of calls within 30 seconds.

DoITT Response: "The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications' (DoITT) is taking various steps in response to the audit's recommendation . . .

"Additional staff is being hired to help meet the high call volume demands at the call center. . .

“Current CCRs are being cross-trained on the various skill sets in the call center to create additional flexibility and gain efficiencies in managing demand across different skillsets . . . [and]

“Automated voice messaging technology is being utilized to manage spikes in volume more efficiently.”



The
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MARGERY BROWN
Deputy Commissioner
Finance and Administration

May 17, 2005

Greg Brooks
Office of the Comptroller
1 Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Draft Report
Audit of the Effectiveness of the 311 Citizen Service Center
as Administered by the Department of Information Technology
and Telecommunications
MJ05-094A


Dear Mr. Brooks:

The Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications' (DoITT) is taking various steps in response to the audit's recommendation that DoITT continue to strive for a performance standard of answering 80 percent of calls within 30 seconds.

- Additional staff is being hired to help meet the high call volume demands at the call center. We are planning to have 24 new Call Center Representatives begin training on May 23rd. They are scheduled to begin working their shifts at the Call Center on June 18th. With that, a focus has been placed on ensuring our ongoing recruitment is sufficient to meet the call center's staffing needs.
- Current CCRs are being cross-trained on the various skill sets in the call center to create additional flexibility and gain efficiencies in managing demand across different skillsets. There is also supplemental training being provided to CCRs as needed to ensure they can effectively handle the calls they receive and to ensure they are managing work efficiently.
- Automated voice messaging technology is being utilized to manage spikes in volume more efficiently. This allows us to communicate information that many callers are seeking without engaging our CCRs each time; this allows us to assist a larger number of callers by making the most of technology and our call taking staff.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (212) 788-6616.

Sincerely,


Margery Brown



Government Information and Services for NYC