

**City Council Committee on Technology in Government**  
**Testimony of Dean Schloyer, Deputy Commissioner**  
**Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications**  
**February 14, 2006**

Good morning Chairperson Brewer and members of the Technology in Government Committee. My name is Dean Schloyer, Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications. I am responsible for managing the 311 Citizen Service Center. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding New York City's enhanced 3-1-1 Initiative.

Since the beginning of his Administration, Mayor Bloomberg has championed the use of technology to support agency missions and make government more accessible, responsive, and accountable. Perhaps the single largest factor in improving the public's access to government has been the creation and growth of the 311 Citizen Service Center. Since its official launch in March 2003, 3-1-1 has provided New Yorkers with one easy-to-remember phone number while revolutionizing the manner in which they access government information and services. Calls to 3-1-1 are answered by a live operator, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in an average of less than thirty seconds—with services offered in over 170 languages. The call center regularly receives more than 40,000 calls each day, and has received more than 30 million calls since its inception.

Building on 3-1-1's mission to provide callers with easy access to government, 3-1-1 began co-hosting 2-1-1 Planning Committee and Steering Committee meetings with United Way of New York City in January 2005. Our intention was to explore how New York City could provide an enhanced capability to supplement what we currently do at 3-1-1. Specifically, we were interested in providing callers for human services with an appropriate over-the-phone assessment of need and referral to the best available resource for service—whether that was government or a non-profit organization.

The committees consisted of representatives from 3-1-1, the United Way, non-profits, City health and human service agencies and elected officials. Their work focused on issues relating to how a 2-1-1 service could be successfully offered in New York City given the size and complexity of our environment. Some unique factors about New York City to consider include the City government's dominant role in the delivery of health and human services (relative to other localities), the absence of a comprehensive Information and Referral (or I&R) service (although we have a well-established network of specialized I&R services), the diversity of our population, and the prominence and success of our 3-1-1 system.

Many questions regarding the implementation of these services remain to be resolved. However, our collaborative process has laid a blueprint for how New York City can offer 2-1-1 type services to the public.

First, we have made a commitment to adhere to national and New York State Collaborative 2-1-1 standards for the Enhanced 3-1-1 service. Among other things, this includes incorporating a standard taxonomy in the database we will develop to provide this service, utilizing rigorous and objective criteria for including resources in the database, employing qualified and trained I&R specialists to provide this service, and offering access to the resources through a website as well as over the phone.

Second, the committees also recognized DoITT's role as the lead technology expert for the project, and the key position of 3-1-1's capabilities and technology to enable the development of a comprehensive I&R function in New York City.

Leveraging the infrastructure of the 3-1-1 environment, we will be able to include an even wider wide array of health and human services provided by government agencies, non-profits and community-based organizations in New York City. Through 3-1-1, callers will be able to speak to specialized call takers trained to assess their needs and provide them with the appropriate information and referrals. Callers will be able to receive information and referrals to assist with housing, health care, job training, daycare, substance abuse programs and educational opportunities, among others.

3-1-1 has established itself in New York City as the main point of contact between the public and a wide range of government-related services, including a variety of health and human services offered by government agencies, and will be the sole point of entry for these expanded services. 3-1-1's robust technology infrastructure means that we can move quickly to enhance our capabilities to deliver these services, and are already providing many of the benefits that are typically sought for 2-1-1 initiatives. For example, as demonstrated during the August 2003 power failure, and the Staten Island Ferry disaster, we are already capable of supporting large-scale disaster response and 911 call deflection. Our ability to handle large volumes of calls during a citywide emergency was most recently demonstrated during the Transit Strike, in which we handled over 240,000 calls in a single day. In addition, 3-1-1 also already provides access to government-provided health and human services, and information on volunteer opportunities in the City.

In the first phases of the project, we will be enhancing our technology to meet the needs of this additional service. We will also continue working with the Mayor's Office, government agencies, United Way, specialized I&Rs and non-profits in the City to make decisions about the appropriate next steps and planning for later phases of the implementation.

Finally, although DoITT and 3-1-1 represent a key element of this program, we believe that the enhanced 3-1-1 initiative will only succeed in New York City if it develops in phases, as a partnership of the non-profit community and City government. In addition to leveraging our investment in 3-1-1, we must also ensure that enhanced 3-1-1 draws on the strength of the existing specialized I&Rs. We plan to build a new comprehensive

information and referral system that brings all of these assets together, and we look forward to the participation of the non-profit community, government agencies and the City Council in the planning and implementation process.

On November 10, 2005 Mayor Bloomberg formalized our commitment to this project by announcing the Enhanced 3-1-1 initiative that will expand access to community-based and non-profit health and human services. At that announcement, he highlighted our relationship with United Way of New York City, an organization we look forward to continuing to work with. Since then, Linda Gibbs has been appointed as the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services and we also look forward to her leadership in this effort as we move forward.

Thank you again for inviting us here to testify. That concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.