

“reducing traffic congestion, improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods, and making City Hall even more responsive and efficient”
Mayor Bill White

“3-1-1, YOUR ONE CALL RESOURCE FOR CITY SERVICES”



3-1-1 HOUSTON SERVICE HELPLINE

Mission

With every call, we assure easy access to municipal government
and deliver excellent customer service to
our citizens

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CITY of HOUSTON

Post Office Box 1562 Houston, Texas 77251 713-837-0311
OFFICE of the MAYOR
3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline

Fiscal Year 2004 presented major challenges for the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline staff. We were now two and a half years into the program and part of our struggles were maintaining highly qualified telecommunicators who could serve as ambassadors on the front line for our city. We had grown by leaps and bounds from our debut year to the next year. The management team had honed their skills and had put in place even greater accountability processes to make our operation a world class place to work. Our email system was growing and we looked for ways to improve service delivery to our customers. In FY 05, the 3-1-1 Call Center will offer limited services via the web. Citizens will be able to report select service requests via their own computers and the requests will link into the 3-1-1 application.

While the changes adopted by the City's pension board were meant to address an unfunded liability, tenured employees opted for the current retirement opportunity and as a result, the 3-1-1 call center, like many departments experienced an unexpected turnover of seasoned personnel. The 3-1-1 staff demonstrated commitment to the organization and dedication to defending our reputation as a top performing call-center by working together and performing multi-tasking functions for long hours whenever necessary. We reduced our average time to create a service request while online with a customer by 21 seconds and reduced the average time to a call being abandoned by 37.5 seconds. Both are major accomplishments within the call-center industry.

We received approximately 2.1 million calls and E-mails by the end of the fiscal year – June 30, 2004. Our performance statistics show we improved by responding to 91 percent of these contacts, which reflects an improved increase from 84 percent in FY 2003.

In February 2004, a customer survey program was initiated as a management tool, to help evaluate our service delivery to citizens. The program is proving to be a huge success not only in feedback as to how we are performing our job at the 3-1-1 Helpline, but also assisting the departments in assessing their field performance as well.

The management team of the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline is dedicated to providing excellent service to benefit all customers. During FY 06, the call center anticipates to further expand services by introducing a "Self-serve" customer satisfaction program. Additionally, we will strive to integrate additional departments into the 3-1-1 Customer Request System.

Gloria L. Bingham
Director

3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline - Houston's key to city services

The 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline is a service-driven call center that provides the residents and neighbors of Houston with easy access to all city services. Our primary goal is to provide a single point for customers to contact the City of Houston for a wide variety of needs: service requests, trouble reports, answers to frequently asked questions and to act as a bridge to department operations. We accomplish this goal by accepting all advantageous changes in our operations, continuous training for our call-taking staff and frequent communications between the departments and our 3-1-1 Liaisons.

The 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline is always available to assist our customers with not only routine inquiries, but for special situations. We become the front-line spokespersons for “the situation of the moment” such as an Amnesty Program (Municipal Courts), or Influenza vaccine and Back-to-School Immunizations (Health Department), Heat Emergencies (City Emergency Management), or the thousands of inquiries sparked by various media announcements.

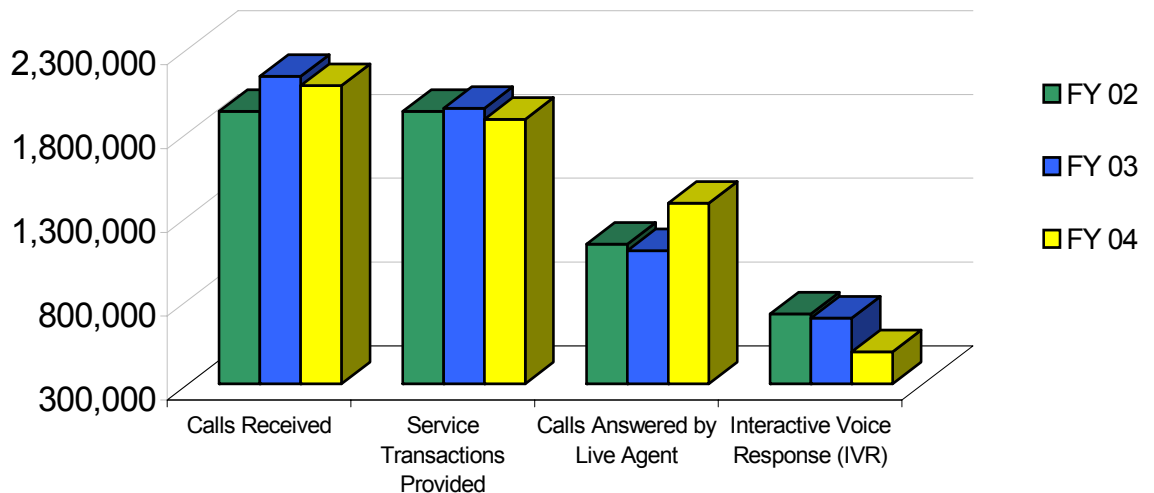
FY 04 Target and End-of-Year Actual Staffing Levels

	Target	End-of-Year Actual
Assistant Director	1	1
Division Manager	1	1
Management Analyst IV	1	1
Administration Manager	1	1
3-1-1 Liaisons	2	2
Administrative Assistant	1	1
3-1-1 Telecommunicator Supervisors	7	5
Customer Service Representative	1	1
Customer Service Representative III	2	2
3-1-1 Senior Telecommunicators	13	10
3-1-1 Telecommunicators	47	43
3-1-1 Senior Trainer	1	1
Year End Totals	78	69

3-1-1 HOUSTON SERVICE HELPLINE FY04 PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

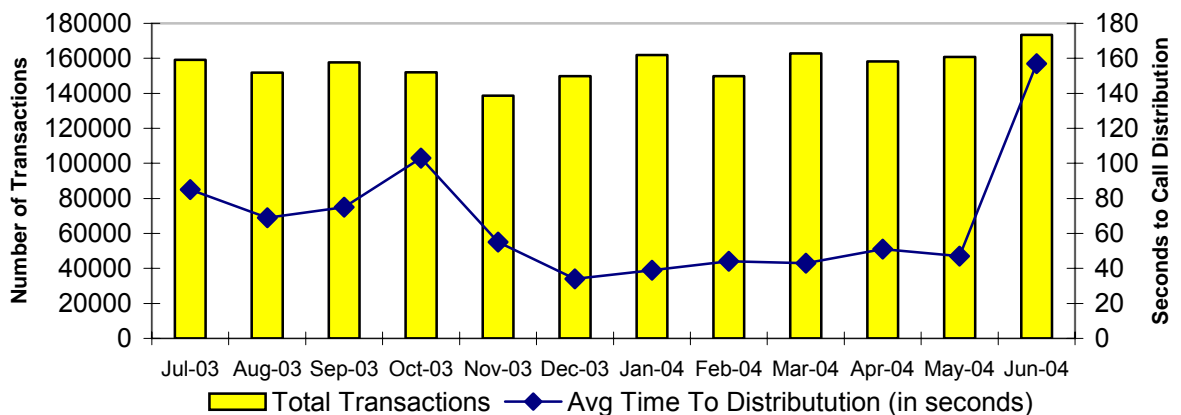
The 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline processed 1,876,242 service transactions in FY 04, slightly lower than the previous two years. The reason was twofold. First, we were understaffed and couldn't handle the volume. Secondly, citizens choose to speak with a live person rather than an IVR.

3-1-1 HOUSTON SERVICE HELPLINE TRANSACTION COMPARISON for FY 02, FY 03, and FY 04



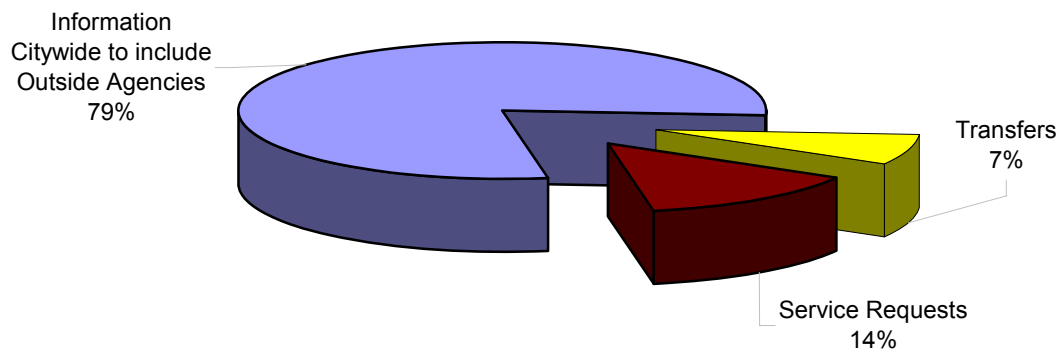
The graph below reflects the number of transactions processed by 3-1-1 call-takers per month in FY 04. The average time to connect to an operator is relative to the volume of incoming calls and staffing levels.

FY 04 Total Monthly Transactions to Include Average Time to Call Distribution



Even though the total call volume differs from year to year, the disposition and overall percentages of all calls remain relatively the same. Providing information from data stored in the CSR database satisfied approximately 79 percent of calls taken by the call center in FY 04. General information calls are primarily Municipal Courts inquiries, status checks for water, sewer, garbage/heavy trash, traffic maintenance and outside agencies. Service Requests created using the CSR application remains approximately 14 percent of our business, while 7 percent of the calls were transferred to the appropriate person, or department for services not provided by 3-1-1, or may be referred to external agencies.

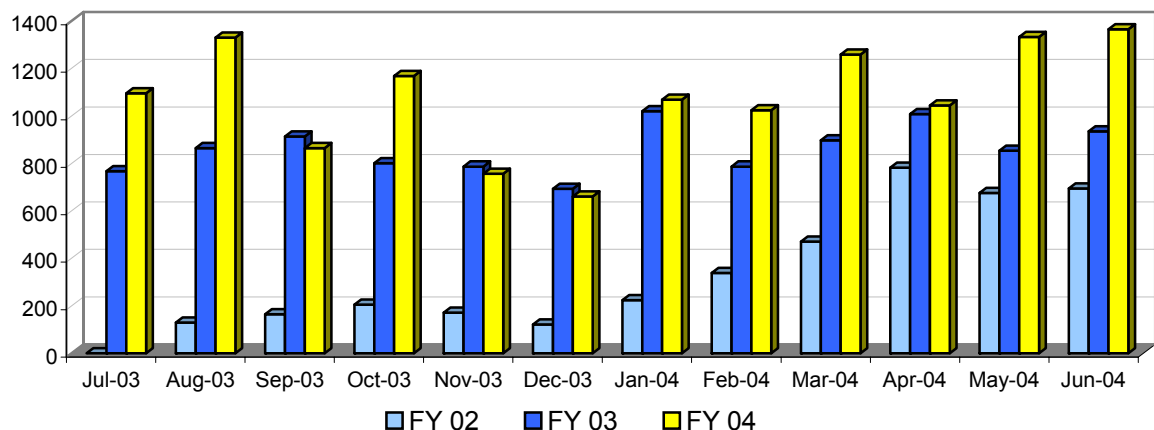
FY 04 HOUSTON SERVICE HELPLINE CALL DISPOSITION



Electronic requests to 3-1-1 have become a popular form of communicating with the call center for the general public and internal customers as well. This form of contacting our center has progressively increased in volume since the option was first offered in September of 2001. Our customers appreciate this service because they have one electronic record to show the original requests submitted, and the response provided by 3-1-1.

Departments find the e-mail requests simplify their understanding of customer problems because the facts as submitted by the customer are copied to the description field of the CSR generated service requests and to Neighborhood Protection investigation requests.

REQUESTS RECEIVED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL Fiscal Years 02, 03, and 04



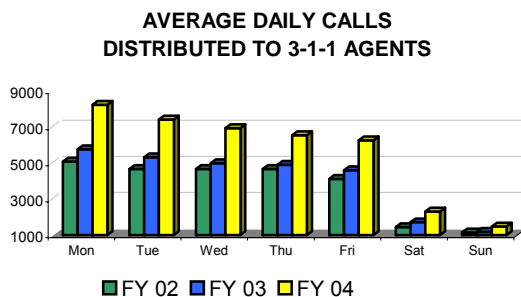
3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline Telecommunicators

	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04	Change from 03 to 04
Total Calls Entered, IVR & Emails	*	2,149,887	2,076,143	-3.43 %
Total transactions provided	1,920,094	1,944,106	1,876,242	-3.49 %
Total Calls Answered	*	1,789,724	1,867,969	4.37 %
Total Agent Answered	*	1,097,308	1,376,892	**25.48 %
IVR Answered	716,200	692,416	491,077	** -29.08 %
Percentage of incoming calls answered	96.7	84.0	91.0	8.3%
Percentage of calls abandoned	3.3	16.0	9.0	-43.8%
Average speed of answer	6 seconds	66 seconds	75 seconds	9 seconds
Average time to abandoned	21 seconds	68 seconds	90 seconds	22 seconds
Average time to create a service request	4.09 minutes	4.09 minutes	3:48 minutes	-21 seconds
Average time to process information call	1.49 minutes	2.01 minutes	2:10 minutes	9 seconds
Average time to process a transfer	1.20 minutes	1.33 minutes	1:32 minutes	1 second
Overall average time to process a call	2.06 minutes	2.17 minutes	2:21 minutes	4 seconds

*This was our debut year and partial data was provided from 3-1-1 and the Public Works computerized system.

** Total agent answered increased by 25% and the total IVR answered decreased by 29%.

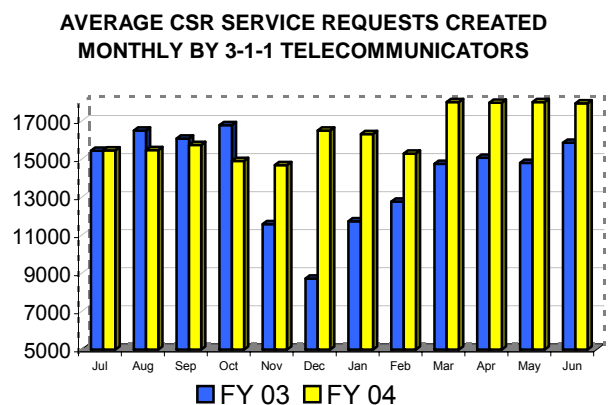
In fiscal year 2004, the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline received 2,076,143 calls and our staff answered 1,867,969 calls, or 91 percent. The statistics represent a -3.43 percent decrease in calls received, and a 4.37 percent increase in calls answered compared to FY03. We anticipate answering nearly 100 percent of all incoming calls in FY 05 as our staffing levels grow and new telecommunicator call-taking skills increase.



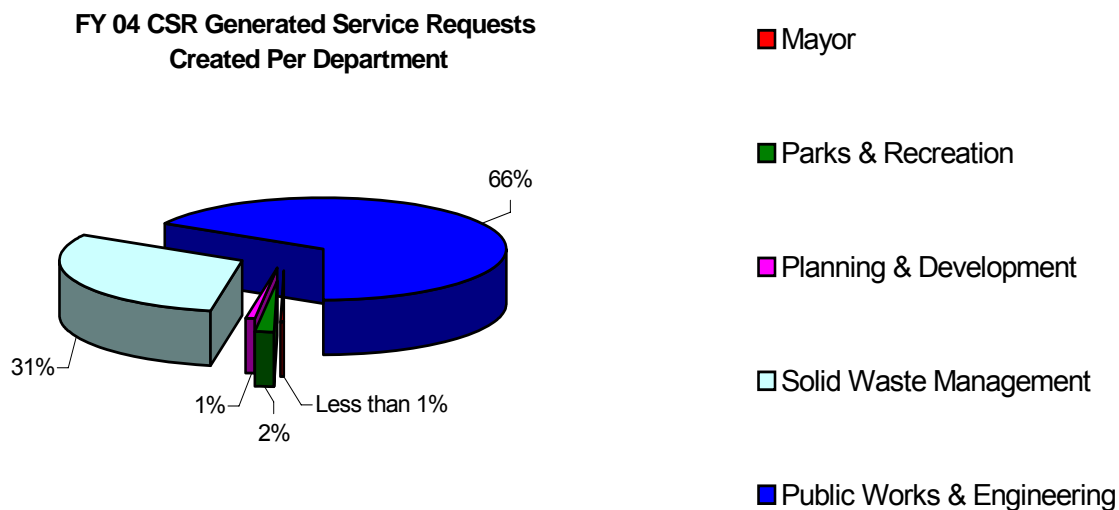
The graph to the left reflects the average daily calls distributed to 3-1-1 Telecommunicators.

The top producing 3-1-1 Telecommunicator produced 32,817 transactions during fiscal year 2004.

The graph to the right reflects the average monthly CSR Service Requests created by 3-1-1 Telecommunicators, in FY 04. The steady increase in service requests generated within the 3-1-1 environment was due to additional services included in the CSR tracking system, as well as a citywide campaign to get traffic moving by correctly adjusting the timing of traffic signal lights in the City of Houston.

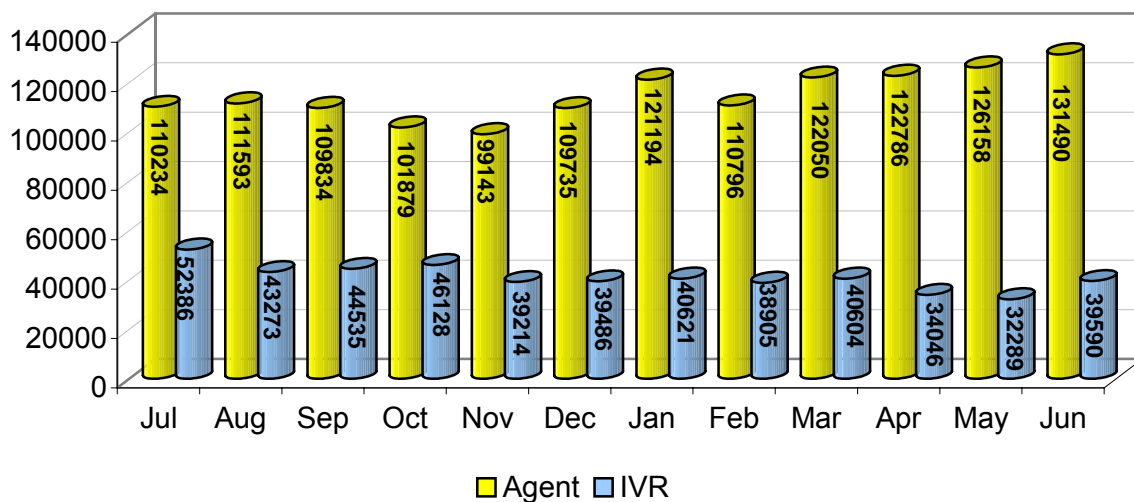


Most of all CSR generated service requests are created by 3-1-1 Telecommunicators. The graph below clearly indicates that Public Works and Engineering received most of the system-generated requests in FY 04 with approximately 66 percent of the total system generated requests. Solid Waste Management received approximately 31 percent coming in second highest in CSR generated requests, followed by Parks and Recreation with approximately 1.6 percent of the total. Approximately 1 percent of the whole were generated for Code Enforcement, which had transferred from Solid Waste Management to Planning and Development, and will appear under the Police Department's Neighborhood Protection Corps in next years report. The smallest percentage of less than one percent were citizen complaints, and/or comments that were documented at the customer's request, to a Mayor's service request for his information, and/or consideration.



The graph below reflects 1,376,892 (74%) of service contacts were greeted by 3-1-1 Telecommunicators versus 491,077 (26%) of requests were greeted via the Municipal Courts Interactive Voice

FY04 Calls Greeted by Live Agents vs Calls Greeted by IVR

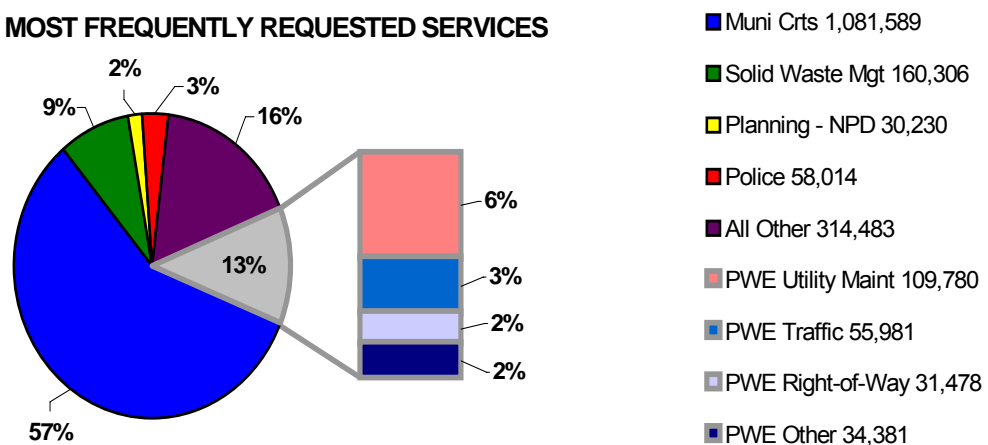


The table below reflects a comparison of total number of calls processed for each department in fiscal year 04 compared to the two previous years of 3-1-1 operations. The numbers in bold indicate a substantial increase in call volume from the previous year. Public Works and Engineering received a 10 percent increase in volume during FY 04 over FY 03, and the Houston Police Department received a 20 percent increase over FY 03.

Department	FY 02	FY 03	FY 04
Affirmative Action	827	974	782
Aviation	865	582	747
Building Services	1,736	866	754
City Council	4,624	4,235	4,393
City Secretary	4,266	2,428	2,774
Controller's Office	860	590	599
Convention & Entertainment	1385	1115	1,285
Finance & Administration	41,677	10,824	6,184
Fire Department	3,639	4,315	5,631
Health & Human Services	11,757	20,671	25,232
Housing & Community	3,589	2745	2,694
Houston Emergency Communications (HEC)			96
Human Resources	10,140	8,772	8,496
Information Technology (IT)	N/A	119	440
Legal Department	2,394	2,103	2,145
Library	1,557	3,377	2,146
Mayor's Office	8,261	5,097	6,523
Municipal Courts—Admin.	374,057	482,349	590,446
Municipal Courts—Judicial	3,897	71	66
Parks & Recreation	5,458	6,660	8,223
Planning & Development		17,970	20,178
Planning & Development NPD	16,882	31,235	30,230
Police Department	45,841	48,230	58,014
Public Works & Engineering	276,756	210,207	231,620
Solid Waste Management	162,878	170,498	160,306
All Other	182,144	215,657	215,161
Interactive Voice Response (IVR)	716,200	692,416	491,077
Aug 1-9, 2001 manual count in transition for 311 Go Live	38,404		
Total Transactions Provided	1,920,094	1,944,106	1,876,242

The below graph indicates 57 percent of the services provided by 3-1-1 in FY 04 were dedicated to Municipal Courts inquiries concerning warrants, rescheduling court dates, traffic ticket fees, and other informational inquiries related to Municipal Courts issues.

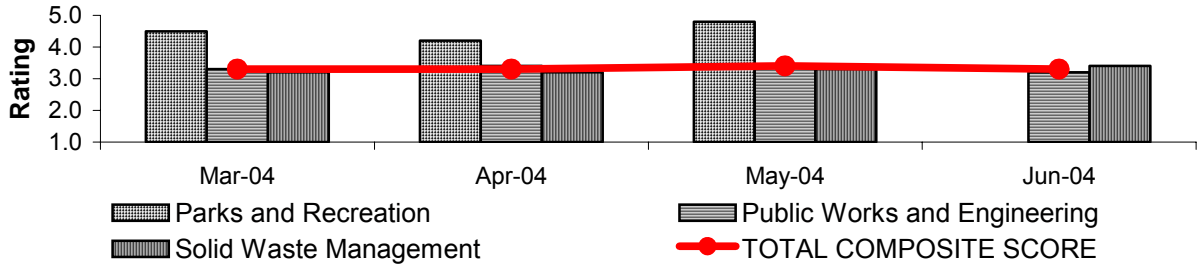
FY 04 MOST FREQUENTLY REQUESTED SERVICES



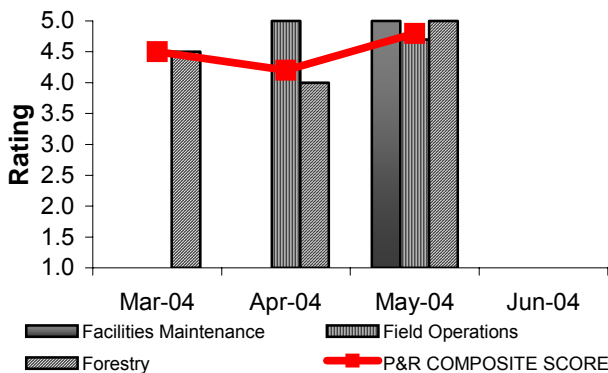
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

In February, 2004 Mayor White tasked the 3-1-1 Helpline to perform customer surveys for purposes of rating city departmental service performance. The three major service providers that participate in CSR generated service request are: Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Engineering and Solid Waste Management. The first four months of this program took place in the last quarter of FY 04. The results can be seen in the below graphs.

Customer Satisfaction Score Trend Composite for all Calls versus Department Scores



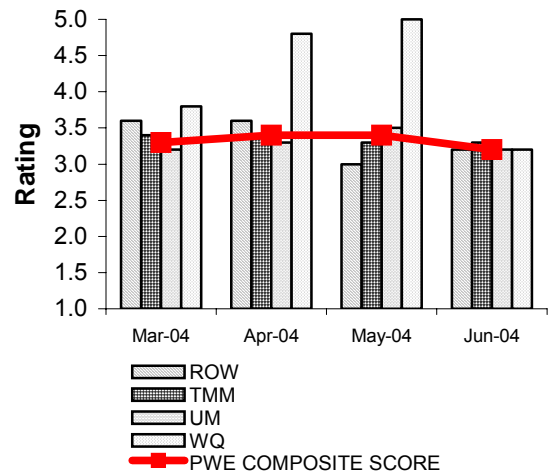
Customer Satisfaction Score Trend Parks and Recreation by Division



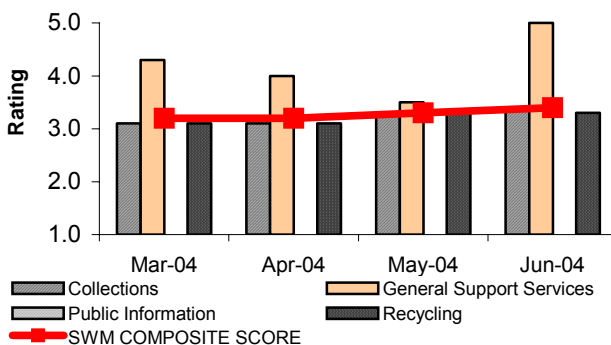
Left: Parks and Recreation had three divisions onboard with CSR service requests during FY 04. While this department did not receive any requests during the month of June, 2004, the average rating for Mar 04 through May 04 was 4.5.

Right: Public Works and Engineering maintained an acceptable rating of approximately 3.3 in all divisions that are onboard with CSR service requests.

Customer Satisfaction Score Trend Public Works and Engineering by Division



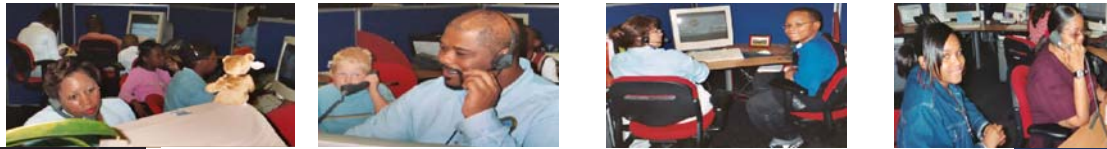
Customer Satisfaction Score Trend Solid Waste Management by Division



Left: Solid Waste Management also did well in maintaining a steady acceptable average rating of 3.3 during the first four months of our customer satisfaction surveys.

National Bring Your Child To Work Day

Since inception, the Management Staff of the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline have made the National Bring Your Child To Work Day a special day in the lives of our children. Our team of planners for this special day include: Demetria Brewster as Team Leader, Jackie Strickland, Yvonne Guillory, and other members of the 3-1-1 Social Committee. The planning team insures that our children not only have a day of fun, but they have a day of education and hands on experiences that provides our children a realistic working experience.



Each child had the experience of sitting with a professional telecommunicator and actually listening to incoming calls and how the call-taker processes various customer issues.



As with most workplace relations, good food and friendship with fellow co-workers is always a highlight of the workday experience.



Another activity enjoyed by many 311 participants, was Bingo.



3-1-1 Call Center Manager, Kendall Baker provides a presentation highlighting the major functions of running a call-center for the 4th largest city in the nation.



At days end, every participant is presented with a certificate of participation.



3-1-1 Customer Comments

"The trees are being trimmed as we speak. Thank you for taking care of this matter in such a timely fashion. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated."

"THANKS YOU SO MUCH FOR THE PROPER CHANNELING OF THIS REQUEST!

AS OF TONIGHT ---MONDAY, JUNE 7TH---THE LIGHT IS WORKING!

You get the Efficiency Award at the beginning of the week! It used to take w-e-e-k-s to get a street light replaced!"

"Hi! 311.

i want to say thanks for getting this request answered so fast.

your men came today, how ever i was able to get my landlord to pick up the limb plus clean out the tree it come from. tell the proper people the 311 system works and many thanks for the fast reply. no pick up here but you actions were great. request well done. good show."

"You guys work fast. After not working for the last 3 days, it was back to working fine this morning already." Response to request to synchronize traffic signal.

"thank you very much for your quick reply!" Citizen request for Courts mailing address.

"Thanks so much. Someone came Monday and did the replacement. My HAT"S off to all of you for the quick response."

"Many thanks for the quick service. This is the first time we got some update from anyone." Reply to report of a sinking hole on front yard

"Thank you. I really appreciate your quick response." Reply to forwarding request to investigate dirty pool.

"Thanks for the quick response. The ride out of town this evening was extremely smooth." Response to a request to retime traffic signals.

"thanx for your effort and follow-up. You have revived my confidence in the City process. ☺" Reponse to a report of a downed cross-walk signal.

"Thank you very much for your assistance--this is the most professional office I have dealt with, and I deal with hundreds of different people a week!" Response to Municipal Courts assistance with getting ticket entered into the system to be available for Online Ticket Pay.

"I have been working on having storm drains repaired in Regency Square Improvement Association (Business Park) and had several service requests in this system. I would like to thank everyone who helped me with these orders. They were timely and efficient in answering my questions. Especially, Elroy Morrison, I would like to receive credit that he came in the office and was so pleasant and agreeable to work with. He explained everything in detail, and got the job done. The city repaired two of the storm drains and the other two we found out were private drives. Thanks to Mr. Morrison we will have the other two repaired immediately and appreciate his time and follow up on the matter. Thanks"

NATIONAL PEER RECOGNITION

Since our opening ceremony, the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline has sparked the interest of other cities considering implementing a 3-1-1 service. We are serving as the model for municipal government non-emergency call-taking services. Our call center has been visited by more than 20 United States cities and from other countries as near as Canada and as far away as Japan. We are frequently contacted via telephone or e-mail for information by individuals who have not visited our facility but have heard of it.

Our call center has been honorably recognized in publications such as the COPS Innovations, Promising Strategies from the Field produced by the U. S. Department of Justice and we have been asked to participate in numerous conferences throughout the United States to speak about our operations and lend insight of implementing a call center of this nature.

In closing, the 3-1-1 Houston Service Helpline has become recognized worldwide as a popular resource for fostering neighborhood oriented government and a model of an accountability tool for city government.

Some of the municipalities that have requested Houston to share it's experiences in the implementation and operations of a 3-1-1 call center are:

City of Oakland, CA	City of Des Moines, IA
City of Dayton, OH	City of Austin, TX
City of Austin, TX	City of Los Angeles, CA
City of Seattle, WA	City of Pasadena, TX
City of Miami, FL	City of San Mateo, CA
City of El Paso, TX	City of San Bernardino, CA
City of Chattanooga, TN	City of San Diego, CA
City of New York, NY	
City of Olathe, KS	
City of Kansas City, MO	
City of Grand Rapids, MI	
City of Virginia Beach, VA	
City of Honolulu, HI	
Nashville Government	
District of Columbia	
Miami Dade County, FL	
Sarasota County, FL	
Harris County, TX	
Lafayette City-Parish Government	
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	
City of Vancouver, Canada	
Region of Peel, Ontario Canada	
Regional Municipality of York, New Market Ontario	
City of Sendai, Japan	

NATIONAL PEER RECOGNITION CONTINUED

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