



**TLG and LMC 2016 Case Study Application**  
**Future Ready Communities**

**DUE:** September 4, 2015



**Email to:** Ryan Spillers at [rspillers@transformgov.org](mailto:rspillers@transformgov.org)

**COVER PAGE**

1. Case Study Title: Making Connections: 2-1-1 Information and Referral and the City of Knoxville

2. Case Study Category (Select only one, selection identified by highlighting your choice):

Planning for Your Future

Creating an Inclusive Community

Reinventing Local Government

**Community Networks**

Blinders

3. Jurisdiction Name: City of Knoxville

4. Jurisdiction Population (US Census): 183, 270

5. Would you like the application to be considered for our Rapid Fire Session? (Rapid Fire presentations are fast-paced, entertaining, interactive presentations. Each jurisdiction will have five minutes to make their presentations using 15 PPT slides set on auto-forward primarily containing photos/graphics. Participants will be seated at round tables to facilitate an energetic idea exchange. A cash bar will be available.)

**YES**

NO

6. Project Leader (Primary Contact for case study notification):

Name: Jordan Frye

Title: MSSW Intern

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List additional presenters contact information below:

Russ Jensen

Director of 3-1-1 Call Center

865-215-4311

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1. Presentation title and description of the innovation. *100 word maximum.*

This innovation uses the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Service in East Tennessee--managed by the City of Knoxville's 3-1-1 Information Service--to target Knoxville 2-1-1 callers with utility assistance needs. Once identified, these individuals are referred to Knoxville's community partner, the Community Action Committee, to determine eligibility for funds awarded to the city for weatherization and home repair to make homes more energy efficient. This innovation uses an existing community resource to identify a barrier to self-sufficiency for low-income community members, and this collaboration allows agencies to partner to address a prevalent community need.

2. When and how was the program, policy or initiative originally conceived in your jurisdiction? *100 word maximum.*

In July 2015, Knoxville's 3-1-1 Information Service began handling East Tennessee 2-1-1 help line phone calls. East Tennessee 2-1-1 is funded by the regional United Way organizations. Currently, the regional United Way organizations, Knox CAC, and the City of Knoxville are in partnership to localize and improve East Tennessee 2-1-1. Because East Tennessee 2-1-1 is being managed by the City of Knoxville, utility assistance is the most prevalent need among callers, and the City recently received grant funding from the TVA for weatherization to improved energy efficiency for low-income housing, the partnership between East Tennessee 2-1-1, the Knoxville Office of Sustainability, and the Community Action Committee was a natural fit to identify and address a community need.

3. How exactly is the program or policy innovative? How has your innovation changed previous processes, products or services? *100 word maximum.*

The partnership between East Tennessee 2-1-1, the City of Knoxville, and the Knoxville Community Action Committee is innovative because information and referral services such as the 2-1-1 help line generally address an immediate need rather than identifying a long-term solution to a problem. This collaboration between community agencies identifies a prevalent community issue and directs individuals in need towards available community resources to provide a long-term fix to the problem.

4. Explain how the program or initiative substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations. *200 word maximum.*

This project exemplifies governmental effort to increase their sphere of influence to bring together community partners to address a need of low-income citizens. This project represents a proactive effort to address utility affordability in Knox County since the data from East Tennessee 2-1-1 has indicated a vast need for utility assistance among low-income residents. Rather than continuing to refer residents in need to short-term solutions, this partnership prevents community resource drain by funneling people to a long-term solution using grant resources.

5. What individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? Were strategic partnerships and/or community networks developed as a result of the innovation? *200 word maximum.*

The primary initiators of the innovation include several employees of the City of Knoxville, connected to the United Way, who initiated the partnership between the United Way's 2-1-1 Information and Referral help line and the City of Knoxville's 3-1-1 Call Center. Because 2-1-1 Information and Referral for East Tennessee was undertaken by the City of Knoxville,

partnerships between city departments were able to form as a result of the city managing 2-1-1 Information and Referral calls. The primary innovation discussed in this application was initiated by the director of the 3-1-1 and 2-1-1 Call Center and the director of the Office of Sustainability and other members of the Community Development staff. This innovation is an example of high level existing and new partnerships developing to make services more efficient and to reach a wider range of people experiencing a problem.

6. If a private consultant was used please describe their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. *100 word maximum.*

N/A

7. To what extent do you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please provide verification of the replication. *200 word maximum.*

This innovation could absolutely be replicated in other jurisdictions who already had existing, well-developed 3-1-1 Call Centers that are looking to expand their outreach to the community. 3-1-1 Call Center call specialists have an intimate knowledge of the community they serve, and because of their familiarity with the community, adding social service referral to their skill set is a natural fit. As long as jurisdictions have this type of infrastructure in place and a willingness to partner with the existing 2-1-1 in their area, this partnership is definitely achievable. To my knowledge, there are currently no partnerships of this nature in other areas.

8. What were the costs? What were the savings? *100 word maximum.*

The cost per year is approximately \$72, 000, and the approximate savings per year by integrating 2-1-1 into the existing 3-1-1 structure is \$44, 000.

9. Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain? *200 word maximum.*

N/A

10. What outcomes did this program or policy have? What baseline data did you collect? How did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment? *200 word maximum.*

Because this project is in the early stages of development and implementation, there is no data available on effectiveness. However, since the integration of 2-1-1 into the existing 3-1-1 structure, call times has gone from 4.5 minutes to 3.6 minutes per call.

11. Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage. *100 word maximum.*

At this time, the partnership between the City of Knoxville, United Way, and the Community Action Committee in regards to the referral of 2-1-1 callers to the Community Action Committee for weatherization resources has not been publicized. However, the partnership between the United Way and the City of Knoxville in regards to integrating 2-1-1 Information and Referral into the existing 3-1-1 services offered by the City has received press.

12. Please provide web links where the innovation can be seen/tested (in the case of something that is web-based) *100 word maximum*.

<http://www.wbir.com/story/news/local/2015/05/27/knoxville-311-partnering-with-211-to-serve-the-city/28029765/>

13. Please provide any key references and their contact information who can be interviewed/called to discuss the innovation and its impact. *100 word maximum*.

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14. You've been to a lot of conferences. TLG should be a unique experience for everyone. Describe how your case study presentation will be different than other conference presentations. *200 word maximum*.
- How will you make the session creative and unique?
  - How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational?
  - Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction.

Overall, the innovation will be the creative and unique element of the presentation. We also hope to incorporate media and a substantive question and answer portion to the presentation to help troubleshoot misconceptions and issues of strategy with the audience.

15. Anything else you would like to add? *200 word maximum*.

N/A