

City of Chattanooga
311 System Customer Satisfaction Survey
October 29, 2004

Submitted to:

Ms. Elizabeth Henley
Ms. Janna Jahn
Mr. David Eichenthal
Office of Performance Review
City of Chattanooga

Dr. Barbara Medley, Director

Center for Applied Social Research
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
106 Brock Hall Chattanooga, TN 37403
(423) 425-2342

Center for Applied Social Research
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Barbara C. Medley, Ph.D., Principal Investigator
Glory Mathew, Graduate Research Assistant

City of Chattanooga
311 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report
October 28, 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third City of Chattanooga 311 Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted in September 2004. This survey, like its predecessors, looked at the degree to which city residents have had a positive and satisfactory experience in using the 311 call for services centralized system implemented in early 2003. The system streamlines access to the city government and provides a one-stop location to obtain services on a variety of needs, from problems with street conditions, animal control, sanitation, traffic signals, and other related issues. The present survey obtained completed telephone questionnaires from 522 city residents who had called the 311 line between January and June 2004. Results indicate that city residents are increasingly calling 311 for service requests, as opposed to calling city departments directly, and sanitation problems continue to be the most numerous concerns, followed again by street conditions. Customer service showed improvement in terms of “wait” times before being connected to a service representative, and three-fourths of the problems were able to be handled by the representative without further referral. Customer service quality continued to be viewed as predominantly satisfactory, and problems were reported as handled well in the majority of cases. There was an increase in the proportion of complaints resolved within a one-week period in comparison to the previous survey, and a higher proportion of respondents who indicated they were “very satisfied” with how their problem had been resolved.

Center for Applied Social Research
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
Barbara C. Medley, Ph.D., Principal Investigator

City of Chattanooga
311 Customer Satisfaction Survey Report
October 28, 2004

I. Introduction

This survey is the fourth in a series of surveys investigating the success of the City of Chattanooga's 311 city services call system. The survey is of residents in the City of Chattanooga who have called the city for help with services from sanitation to animal control and traffic-related situations. As the City seeks to improve services, response to citizen needs, and reduce problems citizens are experiencing, citizen views of the capabilities of the 311 system to significantly contribute to these objectives are crucial. The present report provides the results for the six-month period of January 1, 2004 to June 30, 2004. In addition, some comparisons are made with results from the 3rd survey, which covered July 2003 to December 2003.

II. Methodology and Sample

A telephone survey was used in the present study, with a random sample of 3,438 persons who had called 311 for assistance between January 1, 2004 and June 30, 2004 as the primary calling base. Of the 3,438 persons contacted, 522 agreed to respond to the survey.

The questionnaire used in previous City of Chattanooga 311 surveys was again employed, with two additional questions added, asking (1) for further information on the number of times the respondent had to call before getting to speak to a customer service representative, and (2) whether the customer service representative was able to help or if the problem had to be referred. The questionnaire continued to be comprised of four groups of questions – (1) Initial Call Information; (2) Initial Call treatment; (3) City Response To Problem; and (4) Rating of Satisfaction with the City's Response to the problem. Only two demographic questions continued to be used - age , and gender (inferred). A copy of the survey questionnaire is contained in Appendix A. Most surveys were completed within three minutes. The resulting data were analyzed using standard statistical procedures.

III. Findings

A. Respondent Characteristics

The respondent group of 522 was comprised of 325 females (62%) and 189 males (36%). The largest age group was of those between the ages of 41-55 years (31.2%), with the ages of 26-40 (23.6%) being the next largest group. A cross-tabulation of gender and age variables indicated that females between the ages of 41-55 made up the largest group of respondents. Table 1 shows respondent characteristics in terms of gender and age groupings.

Table 1: Gender and Age Characteristics of Respondents by Respondent Category

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Male	189	36.2%
Female	325	62.3%
Missing	8	1.5%
Total	522	100%
	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Age		
18-25	24	4.6%
26-40	123	23.6%
41-55	163	31.2%
56-65	108	20.7%
Over 65	97	18.6%
Refused	7	1.3%
Total	522	100%

In comparison to the previous survey, women again comprised two-thirds of the survey respondents, as with the previous survey, making up 62% of the total. Age groups were similarly distributed, with most respondents between the ages of 26 and 65. Slightly fewer persons over 65 were in the current group, with only 18.6% as compared to 21% in the previous survey.

B. Category 1 Questions: Initial Call Information

The number of citizens calling 311 directly continued to increase in the present survey, following the trend of previous surveys. As shown in Table 2, 87.7% called 311, up from 85.9% in the previous survey. Only 7.9% indicated they had called a City department directly, as compared to 11.3% in the previous survey.

Table 2: Method of Contact by Respondent Category

Method of Contact	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Called 311	458	87.7%
Called a City Department	41	7.9%
Don't Know	23	4.4%
Total	522	100%

The categories of problems reported by respondents are presented in Table 3. As with the previous surveys, the most frequently noted problem was with sanitation services (55.4%), with a substantial increase in the number of these problems indicated in the present survey. Street conditions remained the second most noted problem, with 13.0% stating this was their concern. The proportion of sewer/drainage problems also showed a slight increase, with 6.9% indicating this area. “Other” problems comprised 19.2% of the total, and these are listed in Appendix B.

Table 3: Type of Problem by Respondent Category

Type of Problem	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Sanitation Services	289	55.4%
Street Conditions	68	13.0%
Sewer/Drainage	36	6.9%
Animal Control	5	1.0%
Traffic	17	3.3%
Nuisance	4	.8%
Other	100	19.2%
Refused	3	.6%
Total	522	100%

C. Category 2 Questions: Initial Call Treatment

This group of questions pertains to how well those who called the City using the 311 service felt they had been treated in terms of how long they had to wait before they were connected to a service representative, and the courtesy of the representative once on the line. In terms of response time, there was a slight decline from the previous survey in that 38.1% indicated they were connected to a service representative within 1-2 minutes, as compared to 41.9% in the previous survey. The number who said they waited between 3 and 4 minutes was also slightly up, with 28.4% stating this time frame, as compared to 26.4% in the last survey. The courtesy of representatives also showed improvement upwards, with 54.6% rating representatives as “excellent” as compared to 53% in the previous survey, and 26.2 stated customer representative courtesy was “good” as compared to 19.6% in the previous survey, for a total of nearly 81% indicating they felt

they were treated courteously by customer service representative. In the same vein, considerably fewer respondents indicated courtesy was “poor” in the current survey, with only 7.9% stating this, as compared to 12.3 in the last survey. Table 4 provides the results for call response time for the current survey.

Table 4. Call Response Time and Customer Representative Courtesy Ratings

Contact with Representative	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
<i>Call Response Time</i>		
Call answered on first try	366	70.1%
Called back twice before answered	74	14.2%
Called back three times before answered	33	6.3%
Called back more than three times before answered	28	5.4%
Don't know	20	3.8%
Refused	1	.2%
Total	522	100%
<i>Service Representative Courtesy</i>		
Excellent	285	54.6%
Good	137	26.6%
Fair	56	10.7%
Less than Fair	16	3.1%
Poor	17	3.3%

D. Category 3 Questions: City's Response to Problem

Being able to receive immediate help with a problem when one calls 311 is likely important to most persons. As a result, as a new question in this survey, respondents were asked if customer representatives were able to assist them with the problem or if they were informed that their problem would need to be referred to a specific city department. As shown in Table 5, the majority (75.9%) of respondents indicated that indeed the representative was able to help them with the problem. Only eighteen percent of the respondents indicated that the problem had to be referred to another department in the city.

Table 5. Method of Initial Problem Handling

Contact with Representative	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Service representative was able to help	396	75.9%
Problem was referred	98	18.8%
Don't know	24	4.6%
Refused	4	.8%
Total	522	100%

Those respondents whose problems had to be referred were asked if they were contacted by a city department as a result of their request for service. The majority of respondents did not receive a call from a city department (71.1%), a similar response rate to the previous survey (69.2%). However, when asked to indicate the length of time it took to resolve the customer’s problem, the majority (60.3%) of respondents reported having their problems worked on within six days, a higher rate for this time frame than in the last survey (54.8%). Fifteen percent of the respondents indicated that their problem had never been resolved. This was exactly the same as in the last survey. Detailed results for the current survey can be seen in Table 6.

Additionally, although the majority, 67% of respondents indicated they did not need to make follow up calls to the city to get problems resolved, 30.1% of respondents in the current survey indicated that follow up calls were necessary. These were the same percentages as in the previous survey for this question.

Table 6. Problem Resolution Response Rates by Selected Time Intervals

Time Period	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
0-6 Days	315	60.3%
1-2 Weeks	61	11.7%
3-4 Weeks	16	3.1%
1-3 Months	28	5.4%
Never	20	3.8%
Refused	80	15.3%
Other	2	.4%
Total	522	100%

E. Category 4 Questions: Rating of Satisfaction with the City’s Response

When asked to rank their level of satisfaction with the handling of the problem about which they contacted the city, more than half (54.2%) indicated they were “very satisfied.” Additionally, 14.9% were “fairly satisfied.” A total of 19% of respondents stated that they were either “fairly dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with the City’s response to customers’ problems. Table 7 provides a summary of satisfaction rates with the City’s response to individual problems for the current survey. The results for this survey compared favorably against the previous survey, where 49.8% indicated “very satisfied,” and 26% indicated “fairly dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied.”

Table 7: Customer Satisfaction with City Response by Respondent Category

Satisfaction Rating	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Very Dissatisfied	71	13.6%
Fairly Dissatisfied	28	5.4%
Neutral	59	11.3%
Fairly Satisfied	78	14.9%
Very Satisfied	283	54.2%
Refused	3	.6%
Total	522	100%

Those who reported they were dissatisfied with the City’s response to their problem were asked to indicate the reason for dissatisfaction. Eight percent of respondents reported that their dissatisfaction was caused from the problem not being resolved sufficiently. Additionally, the second reason for the level of dissatisfaction with the city’s response was due to the length of time in problem resolution.

A cross-tabulation was conducted to determine the level of satisfaction by the type of problem that was being reported. As shown in Table 8, it was found that customers’ there was a large portion (173 respondents- 33%) of respondents who were very satisfied with the sanitation services while only 32 respondents (6.1%) indicated to being very dissatisfied. Additionally, 9% of the respondents who very dissatisfied were those who did not have their problems resolved at all. Fourteen percent of individuals who followed up on their service request were either fairly satisfied or very satisfied.

Another analysis was conducted to examine level of satisfaction by whether respondents had to make repeated calls to the city to get their problem resolved. Table 9 shows that satisfaction level was not necessarily affected by having to make follow up calls. Those who were very satisfied make follow up calls at the same rate as those who were very dissatisfied with the City’s response.

In another new question for this survey, respondents were asked if they had contacted the city about any other problem in the last 12 months. 53.6% stated they had not in comparison to 42.7% who indicated they had contacted the city previously about a problem. However, when the length of time to resolve the problem is correlated with level of satisfaction, clearly those whose problems were resolved more quickly had the highest level of satisfaction, as shown in Table 10.

Table 8: Customer Satisfaction Rating and the Type of Problem

Satisfaction Rating	Problem Type								
	Sanitation Services	Street Conditions	Sewer/Drainage	Animal Control	Traffic	Nuisance	Other	Refused	Total
Very Dissatisfied	6.1%	2.7%	1.9%	.2%	1.0%	.0%	1.7%	.0%	13.6%
Fairly Dissatisfied	2.7%	1.0%	.6%	.0%	.2%	.0%	1.0%	.0%	5.4%
Neutral	4.6%	1.5%	1.3%	.2%	.2%	.0%	3.1%	.4%	11.3%
Fairly Satisfied	8.4%	2.3%	1.1%	.2%	.4%	.0%	2.5%	.0%	14.9%
Very Satisfied	33.1%	5.6%	1.9%	.4%	1.3%	.8%	10.9%	.2%	54.2%
Refused	.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.6%
Total	55.4%	13.0%	6.9%	1.0%	3.3%	.8%	19.2%	.6%	100%

Table 9: Cross-tabulation – Customer Satisfaction of those who did or did not make additional calls to the city

Satisfaction Rating	Follow up Calls				Total
	Yes	No	Don't Remember	Refused	
Very Dissatisfied	7.9%	5.7%	.0%	.0%	13.6%
Fairly Dissatisfied	3.1%	2.3%	.0%	.0%	5.4%
Neutral	4.8%	5.9%	.4%	.2%	11.3%
Fairly Satisfied	6.3%	7.7%	1.0%	.0%	14.9%
Very Satisfied	7.9%	45%	1.3%	.0%	54.2%
Refused	.2%	.4%	.0%	.0%	.6%
Total	30.1%	67.0%	2.7%	.2%	100%

Table 10: Customer Satisfaction Rating and the Length of Time for Problem Resolution

Satisfaction Rating	Length of time for Problem Resolution				
	0-6 Days	1-2 Weeks	3-4 Weeks	1-3 Months	Never
Very Dissatisfied	1%	1%	.0%	1.1%	10.0%
Fairly Dissatisfied	1.1%	1.0%	.8%	.0%	1.9%
Neutral	3.1%	3.1%	.8%	1.7%	1.3%
Fairly Satisfied	9.4%	2.5%	.6%	1.7%	.2%
Very Satisfied	45.8%	4.0%	1.0%	.8%	1.5%
Refused	.0%	.2%	.0%	.0%	.4%
Total	60.3%	11.7%	3.1%	5.4%	15.3%

Finally, respondents were asked if they would request city services online if they knew they could do so. More than half, 52.3% indicated they would do so, 34.9% stated they would not, and 9.4% stated they did not have Internet access (preventing them from using this method). Additionally, for those respondents who stated that they were aware of the online method to request city services, another question was asked to determine the lack of usage. Twenty-four percent of the respondents indicated they would prefer to talk to a ‘live’ person; while 15% indicated they did not have access to a computer.