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Tech Innovations Drive 2019 CS Week 311 Award of Excellence
Centers Focus on Integrations, Metrics and Results

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Phoenix, AZ, Tuesday, April 9, 2019 – Two large U.S. cities who implemented major technology initiatives for their customer service contact centers during 2018 have been awarded the prestigious 2019 CS Week 311 Award of Excellence: City of Baltimore 311 is the winner, and City of Los Angeles 311 Contact Center (LA311) is the finalist. Awards were announced today in Phoenix, AZ, at the annual CS Week ENGAGE311 conference, an educational and networking venue that attracts a range of attendees, from those considering 311 operations to those who pioneered this centralized services approach decades ago and now serve as examples, mentors and resources to the industry.

Each year, CS Week 311’s Award of Excellence is presented to one centralized government customer service center that has consistently demonstrated a customer-focused approach to improving local government. The Award showcases significant strides in performance, teamwork, improvements in customer experience, process and collaboration throughout the organization, and service level achievements. The review committee occasionally selects both a winner and finalist.
Here is a summary of both cities’ technology initiatives that contributed to their outstanding service results:

**City of Baltimore 311** refreshed its decades-old legacy Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system with an industry-leading platform with the following features:

- Geo-validates all locations when a user types in an address, points and clicks on a map or presents an image from a mobile device.
- Consolidates and presents a wealth of property information that previously resided in disparate systems to agents.
- Begins service request creation with dependent scripts that lead to required follow-on questions or actually changes the request type to an appropriate one when answers suggest a different direction.
- Connects to other City departments’ work order management systems in a seamless, bi-directional and real-time way, allowing agencies to better manage workload and create configurable reports.
- Integrates agent consoles with the web portal and mobile app so every request is created, queried and resolved through ‘the same right door.’

During 2018, the City of Baltimore 311 received about 865,000 calls that led to the creation and closure of more than 826,000 services requests in their new system. With the features above and others, constituents can independently submit requests that previously required an agent to create. Seventy-thousand annual bulk trash pickup service requests illustrate the downstream benefits. For straight-forward, routine requests like this one, constituents can self-serve allowing Baltimore’s 311 Center to focus resources and service delivery on complex issues, agency coordination and customer experience.
Likewise, the City of Los Angeles and its LA311 updated various customer service center technologies to improve its operations and customer experience. They:

- Migrated to a cloud-based quality monitoring system to offer a “work from home” program where calls are recorded no matter where the workforce is located.
- Converted from desktop personal computers to laptops so operations can relocate easily when conditions arise.
- Replaced the old telephone system with smart cell phones and wireless headsets.
- Expanded MyLA311, their CRM system to allow more self-service and newer functionality like animal service requests.
- Added a virtual assistant to the MyLA311 website called CHIP, a chat bot whose name stands for City Hall Internet Personality. CHIP answers routine questions 24/7/365 about City services and how to use the website.

“An effective and high-performing partnership between front-line customer service and information technology is the bedrock of successful 311 customer service centers,” said Lisa Collins, CS Week 311 Conference Director. “We are particularly proud to recognize centers on both coasts because they are living, breathing examples of how customer service call centers across the U.S. and North America are merging people, technology and processes with great results for their constituents. Congratulations, Los Angeles and Baltimore!”
About CS Week 311

Re-branded in 2016, CS Week 311, formerly known as CS Week 311 Synergy Group, is a year-round educational and networking venue. CS Week 311 offers a professional, unbiased environment for in-depth and on-going discussion of issues and common interests among current and prospective 311 municipal and governmental customer service contact centers throughout North America. It features ENGAGE311, a stand-alone three-day conference with its own Exhibit Hall called EXPO311. Additionally, CS Week 311 encompasses year-round webinars, annual Comparative and Technology Surveys and numerous networking and leadership opportunities for utility and customer service center personnel, their operational issues and service-based concerns.

For more information about the 2019 award winner and finalist or CS Week 311, visit www.csweek.org/web/311 or contact CS Week 311 Manager Amber Wiens at awiens@csweek.org. The 2020 CS Week 311 Award of Excellence will open for submissions in Fall 2019.

CS Week 311 is a major venue of CS Week, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a 40 plus-year history of providing large and small North American utilities top-shelf customer service and supporting technology educational opportunities. Besides its multiple venues and networking opportunities, CS Week boasts the largest customer service and IT exhibit hall in the industry. It offers webinars, videos and blogs year-round to showcase utility success stories, update attendees on marketplace trends and keep utility professionals connected.

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