

City of Philadelphia Neighborhood Liason Program Case Study

Who knows better than the citizens living in a neighborhood what the real day-to-day problems are? From minor everyday issues to larger community incidents the **City of Philadelphia** knew that engaging its citizens to join in the dialogue of reporting concerns would bring improvement to each neighborhood's quality of life.

All municipalities have to deal with problems such as sidewalk repairs, graffiti, or other disrepair issues. It is challenging for city workers to always be aware of these troubles as they arise, and can be difficult for citizens to know just who to call to make a report. After all who wants to spend their time

on the telephone having their call routed from department to department? The city of Philadelphia knew that if they could make it easier for the citizens to dialogue with them, they could empower citizens to help make their neighborhoods a better place for all. Thus began the idea for the "Neighborhood Liaison Program."

Power to the People:

The vision of the program was to provide a platform where individual communities could have direct access to city services to make their neighborhoods better and improve **Quality of Life** related issues.

The first step involved assigning city employees to lead the programs in each of the communities. Each leader recruits "**Neighborhood Liaisons**", citizen leaders who live within the communities. These liaisons work together with community groups, such as civic leagues, home owner's associations, and faith based groups to discuss problems and share ideas on how to improve the communities. Citizens also attend these meetings, where they are able to share their concerns and ideas for improvement.

The second step involved empowering the Neighborhood Liaisons with tools to converse with City Hall and report on issues. Neighborhood Liaisons are trained to use The Philly 311 system, powered by Novo Solutions,





the same tool that city workers use to log and manage requests. Through the **Philly 311 Citizen Portal** web site (or via a Mobile app) the Liaison can quickly submit a request, alerting the city to the problem. Neighborhood Liaisons can also login at any time to check the status of existing issues, keeping them well informed. In addition, Liaisons are even notified by phone or email when the issue has been resolved.

Robust reporting helps identify issues by problem type and zip code, etc. to help determine the neighborhoods with the most needs. Reports can also be run to help city planners get a feel for the types of problems that exist within the various neighborhoods around the city.

Success:

The program has been a huge success! The City of Philadelphia now has over 450 Neighborhood Liaisons and as the program expands, they are continuing to add more. Investing time to continually talk about the program has proven key to building awareness and growth, and the neighborhoods are becoming a better place in which to live. This is an innovative idea that has turned into a win-win for city government and citizens alike!

For information on the Novo Citizen request Manager Software see:
<https://novosolutions.com/citizen-request-management-software/>

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