Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Katie Savage | Secretary

Workgroup to Study Implementation of an Expanded 3-1-1 Nonemergency System

Meeting Minutes
6/30/2025

Roll Call

Voting Members Present: Sara Elalamy (Secretary Designee),Senator Cheryl Kagan , Senator Paul Corderman, Delegate Tiffany Alston, Delegate Lesley Lopez, Renee Stainrod, Cecilia Warren, Jack Markey, Barry Scheitlin, Charlynn Flaherty, Chris Thompson, Kevin Kinnally, Karen Saymansky, and Christina Cornwell.

Voting Members Not Present: Lorenzo Cropper

Others Present: David Propert - Policy Analyst - DLS, Donavan Ham - Policy Analyst - DLS, Yashodhara Rai - Policy Analyst - DLS, Sherien Youssef - Managing Partner - Gartner, Steve Nichols - Expert Partner - Gartner, Trevor Baier - Associate Director - Gartner, Janice Quintana - Director Of Business Development for Local and State Government - Citibot, Mary Frances Coryell - Chief Revenue Officer - Citibot, and Matthew Jeweler - Chief of Staff - Office of Senator Cheryl Kagan

Summary

Sara Elalamy (Secretary Designee) and Senator Cheryl Kagan welcomed participants to the 311 work group meeting, emphasizing the goal of making Maryland the first state with a statewide 311 system to alleviate non-emergency calls from 911. Steve Nichols and Trevor Baier from Gartner Consulting presented their feasibility study, outlining challenges, opportunities, and the potential impact of AI in a statewide 311 system, while Mary Frances Coryell and Janice Canana from Citybot demonstrated their AI-powered chat solutions for government services. Sara Elalamy outlined the work group's deliverables, including a report due November 1, 2025, and introduced three subgroups: Technology Standards, Marketing and Outreach, and Governance and Feasibility, with various participants volunteering to join.

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New Business Notes

- ***Overview of SB 775 (HB 1027) - Workgroup to Study Implementation of an Expanded 3-1-1 Nonemergency System***: Sara Elalamy -DoIT- welcomed everyone and expressed excitement for the 311 work group's potential to make 311 statewide in Maryland. Senator Cheryl Kagan thanked Sara Elalamy -DoIT- and noted their long-term partnership on this issue, calling the meeting to order and acknowledging the many smart people present. Participants then introduced themself, including state senators, delegates, and representatives from various Maryland departments and organizations.

  Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan highlighted Maryland's progress in NextGen 911 and explained that national studies indicate a large percentage of 911 calls are non-emergencies. Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan emphasized the need to shift these non-emergency calls to a 311 system to free up 911 specialists, envisioning Maryland as the first state with a statewide 311 system. The current focus includes exploring the use of artificial intelligence for basic information requests.

- ***Gartner 3-1-1 Feasibility study overview:*** Between December 2024 and March 2025, Gartner conducted a feasibility study on a potential statewide 311 system, led by Steve Nichols. The discovery process included stakeholder interviews, legislative review, data analysis from 311 systems in Maryland and peer jurisdictions, and a market review of 311 technology vendors. Nichols explained that 311 services have evolved significantly since Baltimore launched the first center in 1996, with over 100 centers now across North America. Modern 311 systems often use CRM platforms and support multiple contact channels beyond phone calls, such as web and mobile apps.

  In analyzing nine peer municipalities—including Austin, NYC, and Boston—Nichols observed common features like dedicated 311 offices, mobile capabilities, and local funding focused on customer satisfaction. Although many channels exist, voice remains the dominant form of contact, with Boston standing out for its successful promotion of web and app usage. Most 311 requests are service-based, requiring action, and Nichols emphasized the need for enhanced GIS mapping to determine jurisdictional responsibilities. The vendor market for 311 technology is robust, with existing tools available from companies active in related fields like CRM and 911.

  Nichols also highlighted the potential role of AI in streamlining 311 operations, while noting that AI cannot resolve foundational issues like inconsistent GIS data or the lack of a standardized request taxonomy. He outlined possible state-level roles, including standards development, outreach, adoption support, and coordination with programs like 211 and 988. However, challenges remain, such as integrating with local systems,

ensuring funding, accommodating diverse request types, and navigating preexisting local investments in 311-like services.

- ○ **Initial Reactions and Funding Considerations -** Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan thanked Gartner for the comprehensive report. Senator Paul Corderman raised the significant question of the cost and funding of a potential statewide 311 system, noting the current local funding model and the financial challenges faced by rural counties. Steve Nichols confirmed that there are no current statewide or regional 311 approaches in the US, unlike some 911 systems.

    - Jack Markey -MDEM- suggested that using transcription services on voice calls could help analyze the types of 311 requests and identify those that would most benefit 911 if automated. Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan reiterated the strict limitations on using 911 funds for non-911 purposes, with a very limited recent exception for interoperability with 988.

    - Cecilia Warren -MDOD- inquired about the disaster recovery capabilities mentioned in the study's solution capability model . Steve Nichols clarified that the disaster recovery aspect referred to the continuity of operations for the 311 center itself (the back end and operators) rather than disaster recovery for the affected population.

    - Bill Ferretti proposed the idea of a "front porch" for 311, which would be a common access channel (voice or AI) to direct residents to disparate local systems without consolidating the backend. Steve Nichols acknowledged the merit of this idea but noted the challenge of implementing it without creating additional handoffs or delays.

    - Charlynn Flaherty discussed Prince George's County's 311 system and its limitations (not 24/7), which can lead to non-emergency calls to 911 after hours. Charlynn Flaherty raised the concept of an AI switchboard or filter that could route calls appropriately, potentially aligning with Bill Ferretti's "front porch" idea.

    - Charlynn Flaherty suggested that AI could be beneficial for triaging and routing calls to the appropriate personnel, allowing experts to provide a personal touch after the initial AI interaction. Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan acknowledged this as a potentially valuable application of AI.

- ● *Citibot Demo*: Senator Cheryl C. Kagan introduced Janice Canana and the company Citybot during a demonstration intended to showcase a potential AI service for Maryland's 311 system, clarifying it was not an endorsement. Janice, with experience in running 311 and 911 operations in various cities, described her role in establishing DC's

311 system and her current work with Citybot. Mary Frances Coryell, Citybot's Chief Revenue Officer, presented the company's mission and public service roots, highlighting its focus on multi-language, AI-powered chat solutions designed to enhance digital engagement for residents across platforms like text, web, and voice. Citybot addresses common government challenges, such as content-heavy websites and limited staffing, by offering scalable, 24/7 support and integrating with existing platforms.

Operating solely in the government space, Citybot has worked with cities like Denver, Baltimore, and agencies like Cal Fire and Minnesota DOT, earning accolades for improving resident experiences. The platform supports 75 languages and allows communication through various channels, including WhatsApp and voice, with plans to expand to more. Demonstrations showed how users can get answers, submit service requests, and access real-time info. Citybot manages the technical backend and AI development, while states or municipalities only need to supply accurate content sources. The resulting data offers valuable insights into resident needs, preferences, and engagement trends.

- ○ **Initial Reactions and Questions**
    - ■ In response to a question from Thompson Chris about implementing a statewide 311 program and routing inquiries to individual counties, Mary Frances Coryell explained that separate "bots" would be built in the background for each of the 24 counties and potentially state agencies. The system could identify the resident's location based on where they accessed the bot (e.g., county website) or through GIS validation, and would aim to simplify the process for users who may be hesitant to provide personal information initially. Mary Frances Coryell also advised assessing the actual utilization of existing service requests before investing heavily in full integrations.
    - ■ Cecilia Warren -MDOD- inquired about support for video remote interpreters for American Sign Language (ASL), which Mary Frances Coryell stated was not currently accommodated. However, they noted that the platform is WCAG 2.0 compliant, works well with screen readers, and accessibility remains a top priority for their development team.
    - ■ Cecilia Warren -MDOD- also asked if the chatbots accept voice inquiries. Mary Frances Coryell clarified that voice-to-text functionality works through web chat and WhatsApp, and direct voice interaction is available over the telephone as a natural language interface.
    - ■ Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan reiterated the importance of accessibility, aligning with the governor's commitment to "leave no one behind," and thanked Cecilia Warren -MDOD- for raising the crucial point.

- *__Workgroup meeting priorities__*: Sara Elalamy -DoIT- outlined the work group's deliverables, with a report due on November 1st, 2025, and the schedule for full work group meetings in July, August, and September, followed by report consolidation and final review in October.

- *__Selection and assignment of subgroups__*: Sara Elalamy -DoIT- introduced three potential subgroups based on Gartner's recommendations: Technology Standards, Marketing and Outreach, and Governance and Feasibility. Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan encouraged participants to consider their expertise and interests when choosing subgroups, noting they could join one or more. Volunteers for each subgroup were identified.

- *__Next Steps and Follow-Up__*: Sara Elalamy -DoIT- announced that the full work group would meet in July and a doodle poll for scheduling would be sent out the following day. In the interim, the subgroups will also meet and report on their progress in the July meeting. Staff from the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) will be assisting with staffing the work groups. Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan thanked Donovan, Dave, and Vicki Gruber from DLS for their support. Participants were encouraged to respond promptly to the doodle poll.

Meeting minutes drafted by: Sara Elalamy - DoIT
6.30.2025