

The Communicator

We have a Winner!

National League of Cities Grants Oakland, California the 2003 Cultural Diversity Award

The Multilingual Connection

The City of Oakland worked closely with Oakland-based **International Contact, Inc.** to assist in the translation and recording of multilingual content.

"One of the biggest challenges", says Carla Itzkowich, Executive Director of International Contact "was to write the message prompts in such a way that made them easy to update by City staff. The Tele-Works software and staff helped us design something whereby individual departments can update their message recordings via the telephone."

For more information, visit International Contact online at www.intlcontact.com or call 510-836-1180.

In May of 2001, the City of Oakland, California became the first city in the nation to pass an Equal Access to Services Ordinance to provide equal access to government information and services. Since then, City staff has been hard at work implementing different programs to meet this need.

The City's eVision Platform and ACIS/FAQ Module called CITYLINE is one among many successful programs that satisfied the award criteria. CITYLINE offers the convenience of being able to access Oakland information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via a multilingual system configuration.

"By being able to retrieve information from the comfort of their homes, offices or cellular phones, the City is empowering its residents to be informed and more knowledgeable about City services and programs, which will help them make better decisions," says Deborah Liu, Equal Access Director for the City.

Because of local demographic changes, the always-innovative City of Oakland chose to implement CITYLINE to provide its residents with detailed recorded information regarding each City program and service. Supported by U.S. Census report data, the City chose to deliver its fastest growing minorities information in their primary language.

CITYLINE is available in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish and Vietnamese. To our knowledge, CITYLINE is the first system in the nation that provides this level of multilingual information quality and quantity - including the private sector.

CITYLINE brochures are available in these languages or callers can access language-specific menus to navigate the system. Information is available by calling 510-238-2222 or by visiting the City's website (*see left*).

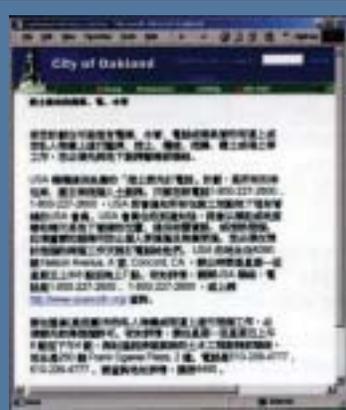
Staff persons are encouraged by the assistance that CITYLINE will give them as a timesaving informational tool and promote CITYLINE to customers when providing direct services. "CITYLINE has nearly eliminated the need to repeat information. Callers get the same information every time," comments one City employee. The City's

diverse communities have also shown interest and excitement for being able to retrieve information in their primary language. Paul Smith, an Oakland resident states, "I really prefer to get the information in the evening and CITYLINE allows me to ask questions of the City anytime night or day."

The reality of the system is an expression of the City's commitment to the delivery of effective services that reflect the diversity of its community. The motto of the Equal Access Office: *Removing Language Barriers — Enhancing Communication*, is certainly apparent in this service deployment. "By investing in CITYLINE, the City is serving, educating and empowering its residents at the same time," exclaims Liu.

Indeed, the City has observed that non-English-speaking residents, who have not traditionally participated in civic life, have begun to take interest in civic affairs. In addition, diverse ethnic groups now acknowledge cultural events that historically have been confined within single communities.

Tele-Works congratulates the City of Oakland's Equal Access Office for a well-deserved diversity award and outstanding public service.



Flexible Content Sets within eVision allow Oakland to recreate the same information in different languages (i.e. Chinese).

The capability allows agencies to utilize the system for a wide variety of customer and organizational needs.

Para recibir el folleto del servicio CITYLINE en español, por favor llame al:

欲取得中文版的 CITYLINE 市政府熱線手冊，請致電：

Để nhận tập hướng dẫn sử dụng đường dây CITYLINE bằng tiếng Việt xin gọi:

To get the CITYLINE brochure in English, please call:

510-238-2222