Knoxville Wins IBM Smarter Cities Challenge Grant

November 14, 2012 - Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero today announced that IBM has selected Knoxville to receive an IBM Smarter Cities Challenge grant. The grant provides Knoxville with access in 2013 to some of IBM's top experts to analyze and recommend ways to connect residential emergency utility bills to weatherization and energy education services.

Launched in 2011, the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge is a three-year, 100-city, $50-million competitive grant program. The program, which is IBM's single-largest philanthropic initiative, assigns a team of six top IBM experts to each winning city to study a key issue identified by the city's leadership.

Well before the team arrives for its three-week pro bono consulting engagement (valued at $400,000), the IBMers are already hard at work studying the city's issue. After they arrive, the team works with city officials to analyze data, and solicit the input of local agencies and advocacy groups. IBM then provides detailed recommendations for how the city might efficiently and effectively address the issue.

"We are thrilled to be selected for this competitive program," Mayor Rogero said. "It will be invaluable to have the expertise and outside perspective of IBM's team as we work to make Knoxville a more sustainable city for everyone."

For year three of the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge, cities around the world once again competed vigorously to benefit from IBM's talent. The winning cities proposed innovative projects and areas of focus for IBM experts. These included strategies that address economic and workforce development, social services, sustainability and planning. (For a complete list of this year's winners, see http://citizenibm.com/.)

"Congratulations to Knoxville for earning an IBM Smarter Cities Challenge grant in 2013. Knoxville distinguished itself among its peers by convincingly demonstrating its preparation and willingness to make the kind of improvements that will improve its residents' quality of life and become a smarter city," said Stanley S. Litow, IBM vice president of Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs, and president of IBM's Foundation. "We consider it a privilege to share with Knoxville the talent and expertise of our most gifted employees, who are the envy of the industry. They have premier skills in a range of disciplines -- all useful for helping to build smarter cities and a smarter planet."

Knoxville's application asks for advice on the most effective way to connect weatherization and energy education services to residents who receive emergency utility bill assistance. This will help reduce the demand each year for emergency assistance with utility bills for low-income ratepayers, particularly those in older, inefficient buildings.

In 2012, IBM provided expert counsel to 33 cities worldwide who had earned IBM Smarter Cities Challenge grants.

These included engagements in:

- Cheongju, Korea, where IBM recommended smarter transportation strategies;
- Dortmund, Germany, and Malaga Spain, where IBM formulated plans for economic, workforce, skills development;
- Jacksonville, Fla., where IBM outlined steps for downtown revitalization;

- Louisville, Ky., where IBM showed how the city could use data to identify, predict and mitigate conditions that trigger asthma;
- Nairobi, Kenya, where IBM created a plan for traffic management;
- Geraldton, Australia, where IBM suggested ways for the city to become a leader in smart grid technology adoption and digital services;
- Curitaba, Brazil, where IBM suggested approaches to sustainability and citizen engagement.

In years one and two of the Smarter Cities Challenge, IBM completed work in 64 cities globally, deploying nearly 400 of its most talented experts who delivered concrete and measurable results to winning cities.

The need to use innovative approaches that address civic challenges has never been greater. In 2008, according to the United Nations, more than half the world's population began living in cities for the first time. These population centers are more economically powerful, politically influential, and technologically advanced than at any time in history. But they also struggle with increased demand for services, along with budgetary and operational challenges.

Smarter Cities Challenge is a variant of IBM's Corporate Service Corps, a pro bono consulting program that assists government with projects that intersect business, technology, and society. Since its launch in 2008, Corporate Service Corps has sent more than 2,000 of IBM's top talent based in 50 countries on more than 200 team assignments in 30 countries. While Corporate Service Corps focuses on the developing world, IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge addresses urban concerns in both industrialized and developing countries.

Visit the CitizenIBM blog to read about some of the lessons learned during previous IBM Smarter Cities Challenge engagements, and to better understand the challenges that cities face.

The Smarter Cities Challenge is sponsored by IBM's Corporate Citizenship program and IBM's International Foundation. IBM has been a leader in corporate social responsibility and citizenship for more than 100 years.

To learn more about IBM's corporate citizenship initiatives, visit: www.citizenibm.com andwww.youtube.com/user/citizenIBM. To find out more about IBM Smarter Cities Challenge grants, please visit IBM's Smarter Cities Challenge web site at www.smartercitieschallenge.org. Follow them on Twitter @citizenIBM.