

## IBM Report Calls for 'Citywide Campaign' on Weatherization

**August 13, 2013** - The IBM Smarter Cities Challenge team that visited Knoxville this spring has issued a final report calling for a multi-pronged effort to help low-income residents weatherize their homes and learn more about energy efficiency to reduce the need for emergency utility bill assistance.



In the report, the five-member team recommends that the City of Knoxville and partners including KUB, TVA, the Community Action Committee and many others should work together toward five goals: Develop one voice around a shared vision; harness the available data; educate the community on weatherization and energy efficiency; identify funding sources to implement improvements; and engage local landlords as part of the discussion.

"We are grateful for the intensive effort and thoughtful work of the IBM Smarter Cities Challenge Team," Mayor Madeline Rogero said. "These problem-solving professionals from around the world dedicated three weeks to living here in Knoxville and interviewing a wide range of stakeholders to help us deal with a difficult, complex challenge. Now it is up to us in the City and our partners to take their work and build on it, to provide help for some of our most vulnerable citizens."

Among its findings are that more than \$4.8 million in public and private funds were spent in Knoxville in 2012 to help low-income residents pay their utility bills. By better identifying those households and working with residents and landlords, the IBM team says the City and other agencies could find long-term solutions that would avoid the need for such emergency assistance.

The report concludes, "The City will achieve sustainable energy efficiency targets through its commitment to collaboration and business-friendly practices and by engaging the landlord community. The City should leverage its academic and community assets to create a long-term solution that delivers education. In the future, the City should engage all its constituents and gain buy-in for a citywide campaign to create a stronger Knoxville. Through the system of systems the City will make fact-based decisions on how to best spend its precious resources."

The public is encouraged to review the report and send feedback to the City's Office of Sustainability by e-mailing [Sustainability@knoxvilletn.gov](mailto:Sustainability@knoxvilletn.gov). Quarterly Stakeholder Council meetings begin on Thursday, September 26th at 9:00 A.M. in the Small Assembly Room and are open to the public.

Last November, IBM announced that Knoxville had been selected for a Smarter Cities Challenge grant. 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 top IBM experts to each winning city to study a key issue identified by the city's leadership. The grant provides consulting services valued at \$400,000.

Knoxville's application asked for advice on the most effective way to connect weatherization and energy education services to residents who receive emergency utility bill assistance. The IBM team arrived in Knoxville in April, and it provided preliminary findings in May.