

## UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE AWARDS

**Nominee:** City of Vancouver

**Nominator:** Institute of Public Administration of Canada

**Category:** Innovations in the Public Service

**Country:** Canada

**Region:** Europe and North America

**Summary:**

The City of Vancouver established 16 Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NISTs), which held Vancouver residents solve different issues in their community. These might be problems with buildings, garbage, noise or illegal activity. The program was developed in 1994 and implemented in 1995. NIST is based on two premises: (1) local programs have local solutions; (2) cooperation and information sharing are keys to an effective solution. The NISTs radically changed the way government operates - -shifting from top-down bureaucracy to front-line decision-making.

More than 200 City staff sit on 16 teams, each of which represents a particular area of Vancouver. These teams comprise staff drawn from City departments such as Police, Fire, Engineering, Permits and Licences, community centers, libraries, as well as outside agencies such as Health and social services. This staffs work together, sharing information and coordinating their efforts to solve problems that require a multi-disciplinary approach. The teams meet regularly in (and with) their communities.

The NIST program is a unique and effective model of service delivery for Vancouver. Not only has it resolved dozens of difficult problems for Vancouver residents in the sever years it has existed, NIST has also succeeded in breaking down barriers between City departments, fostered better communication and cooperation, and empowered citizens who have taken part in the process. The NIST program has the growing support of the community and the continuing support of Vancouver City Council because it works. Since 1995, NIST members, together with community residents, have resolved dozens of difficult neighbourhood issues. Increasing numbers of staff and residents are becoming aware of the NIST program because of its success.