
Putting Customers First

Standards for Serving the Public



Citizens expect safe, efficient, and satisfactory municipal services. To keep customers happy, deliver safe,

efficient, and satisfactory services and structure services in a way to make them convenient for the customer.

Education

Education and awareness are powerful tools that can promote departments and reduce communication errors with the public. Inform the public of the departmental mission, services, and how the public can contribute to improve or create additional services.

- Create kiosks of departmental information, such as services and contact information.
- Organize an open house and invite the public.
- Use newsletters to inform readers of current projects and future goals, as well as, plans to reach these goals. Make copies readily available.
- Use the web. Ensure the website is easy to navigate. Publish contacts, hours of service, road conditions, ordinances, and special events.

Customer Feedback

Seek customer feedback to improve services. A happy customer tells others about great service. Ask for feedback in multiple ways and tell customers of all methods to provide feedback.

- Have a “Suggestion Box” on-site.
- Welcome walk-ins during normal business hours.
- Post the comments, ideas, and suggestions; actions taken in response; and any results. Keep the posts anonymous. Posting comments demonstrate that the customer’s input is taken seriously. It also informs others of current

customer service issues and may prevent repeated complaints.

- Post positive feedback and success stories to boost employee morale and productivity. Employees will feel valued and appreciated.
- Use surveys to learn of desired services, what is and isn’t working, and what could work better. Learn why customers feel the way they do and how services can be improved or created to meet their needs.

Customer Complaints

Complaints are a way to know what customers want. The average person tells 5 people about the good service they receive and 20 people about bad service. Once corrected, complaints build loyalty as customers will see the department more favorably. Use these steps for customer complaints.

1. Thank the customer for the complaint.
2. Explain why the complaint is helpful.
3. Apologize for the mistake—this doesn’t mean accepting responsibility.
4. Promise to do something about the mistake immediately—this may mean contacting someone else.
5. Get all the necessary information.
6. Correct the mistake.
7. Check customer satisfaction.
8. Prevent future mistakes.

If a written complaint is received, respond in writing within a week and use clear and easy to understand language. Use a complaint track system to resolve problems.

When working with angry customers diffuse their anger by acknowledging their frustration, apologize, and explain any plans to alleviate the problem. Ask for their approval regarding the action to be taken. Once taken, contact the customer to ensure the situation was handled to their satisfaction.