

Maryland Department of Human Services
Customer Service Annual Report
FY 2018



CONTRIBUTORS

Lead:

Pamela Fusting, Deputy Director, Constituent Services Office
Office: (410) 767-7043, Cell: (443) 928-0481, Email: pamela.fusting@maryland.gov

Alternate Lead:

Timothy Schuster, Deputy Director, Office of Strategy and Performance
Office: (410) 767-8965, Cell: (410) 925-9213, Email: timothy.schuster@maryland.gov

Ryan Lancaster, Special Assistant, Constituent Services Office
Katherine Morris, Communications Director
James Black, Communications Specialist
Alexia Simmons, Communications
LaShawna Williams, Communications
Tom Nappi, Director of Creative Services
Michael L. Dorsey, Sr., Chief Learning Officer

Table of Contents

FY18 Highlights	4
Recognition Given to Employees	5
Leadership Analysis of FY18 Approach	6
Detailed FY18 Results and FY19 Plans	7
Customer Service Survey Results	7
Status of Customer Service Training	7
Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution	7
Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries	7
Best Practices	7
Plans for Improvement	7
Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives	8
Making Agency Services Available Online	8
Processing Times for Customer Transactions	8
Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands	8
Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience	8

FY18 Highlights

- The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) continued modernization efforts in FY18 with the development of an electronic application processing portal, the Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system. Deployed in July 2018, this new system will enhance the Department's ability to provide Maryland's citizens with convenient and efficient customer service.
- DHS also introduced an enhanced electronic version of its Application for Child Support in February 2018. Residents already use the online myDHR portal to apply for a number of services and programs, such as food, cash, energy, and medical assistance. With the addition of the child support application, myDHR is a user-friendly, one-stop shop for Marylanders who are eligible for a range of benefits and services.
- To better serve Maryland's Child Support customers, DHS opened an additional Baltimore City office location with expanded service hours. Office hours for both the new Mondawmin Mall location as well as the One North Charles location are Mondays 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Tuesdays through Fridays 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and the First & Third Saturdays of the month from 9:00 AM to Noon.
- The Department added to its 800 number service a new queue and agent skill group specifically for Food Supplement Program (FSP) inquiries. Inquiries related to FSP make up the second highest percentage of DHS call volume.
- DHS completely redesigned and overhauled its internal Knowledge Base Intranet to prioritize customer service, offering a streamlined, functional platform that connects DHS staff in fewer clicks to needed, accurate information.
- DHS continued its emphasis on training all full-time and contractual staff in the DHS-designed Goal Oriented Leadership Driven (G.O.L.D.) Standard Service Training. FY18 training included the following:
 - 20 G.O.L.D. Customer Service sessions were delivered throughout the state of Maryland;
 - Online G.O.L.D. Customer Service short-course refresher modules were developed for deployment in FY19;
 - The Department's entire Constituent Services Office (CSO) completed training with the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center of Baltimore and Central Maryland (GLCCB) to help staff in speaking with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) customers with respect, sensitivity and appropriateness; and
 - Phase I of a newly designed Fast Track Fundamental Administrative and Supervisory Training Program was successfully delivered to 96 percent of

DHS supervisory staff, in total approximately 1,105 sessions were offered by the Department's learning unit.

- DHS recognized 47 professionals from the central office and 24 local departments of social services across the state with the Customer Service Excellence Award. Recipients were formally honored at the Department's statewide National Customer Service Week ceremony held in Baltimore in early October of 2017.
- A majority of FY18 responders to the DHS Customer Service Survey—more than 1,780 — responded positively to the customer service survey inquiries. This survey reflects customers experiences with the Department's responsiveness, courtesy, and transparency.

Recognition Given to Employees

In FY2018, DHS formally honored 47 individuals across the state who consistently displayed a strong commitment to excellence in customer service. Honored state personnel are those who daily exemplify the agency's gold standard customer service approach. Nominees performed duties with competence, integrity, and compassion - admirably adhering to the practices and procedures outlined in the Department's Customer Service Manual. The FY2018 winners of the Customer Service Excellence Award were recognized during National Customer Service Week at the Department's annual statewide ceremony and included the following exemplary employees:

Geraldine Lashley—Office of Licensing and Monitoring

Ms. Lashley is most often the first person that customers come into contact with at the Office of Licensing and Monitoring. She sets a positive, welcoming, and friendly tone to both our external and internal customers. She goes above and beyond: adeptly ensuring that customers are appropriately directed. Moreover, she confirms that customers understand the best methods for resolving their concerns. Ms. Lashley is always ready to assist with special assignments, offer technical assistance, or plan OLM provider events. She has many outstanding talents, and her vast knowledge and experience in office management has been extraordinarily beneficial to OLM and our customers.

Labelle Hillgrove—Family Investment Administration

Labelle Hillgrove brings her 'A' game to work each day as the FIA Ombudsman. She consistently interacts with constituents who have escalated their concerns about DHS services. She calmly and consistently responds to these constituents with solutions or relevant resources on the behalf of any one from officials in the White House, elected officials, FIA Executive team and Bureau of Local Operations. As her supervisor, I have

never had to de-escalate a situation between her and any of these high-level customer concerns.

Candice Smithson— Office of the Secretary

Candice’s contributions go far beyond her position description. She possesses huge capacity and manages a tremendous workload. Candice is relentless with flawless execution of her work duties, is commonly sought to assist with other issues, and yet you never see her without smile and willing to assist. Candice is a great ambassador for our G.O.L.D. Standard Customer service program.

Carol Baltimore Jackson –Anne Arundel County Office of Child Support

When you meet Carol Jackson, you feel like you're meeting a friend. She interacts with customers who are either attempting to establish legal paternity or are following through with the child support process. She carefully and confidently explains the nuisances of obtaining or enforcing court orders. Carol is patient, empathetic, and compassionate. Her keen verbal skills help her convey the child support establishment process to the customers. Carol is pleasant and knowledgeable, and I believe the customers appreciate her informed and positive approach to resolving seemingly complex issues.

Jodi Rill–Carroll County Department of Social Services

In the fast-paced environment at the Department of Social Services (DSS), Jodi’s colleagues and managers steadfastly rely on her for her vast organizational and problem-solving skills. Her calm demeanor and institutional knowledge inspire confidence, and promote positive outcomes for her colleagues and clients. Always ready with an innovative idea and a willingness to help others, Jodi is an outstanding asset to Carroll County DSS.

Leadership Analysis of FY18 and Summary of FY19 Approach

Governor Hogan’s leadership has transformed the art of service-delivery statewide. As a result, DHS has improved best practices, become more efficient, and fostered a greater sense of transparency. DHS strives to meet or exceed customer expectations by promptly responding to telephone calls, answering emails, and putting the customer first. Our staff is deeply committed to the State’s high standards for ensuring excellent customer service. In FY 2018, DHS strengthened its commitment to serving the citizens of Maryland by overhauling its customer service training, improving the customer services support center, and taking significant steps toward modernizing its Information Technology systems. These initiatives help ensure that social service programs utilize a holistic, family-friendly approach to resolving customer concerns.

DHS continues improving its relationships with our sister agencies, federal partners, business communities, and advocacy partners throughout the state who are committed to changing Maryland for the better.

Over the past year, DHS once again improved its customer service framework. The Department overhauled its internal Knowledge Base Intranet to prioritize customer service and offer a streamlined, functional platform that connects DHS staff in fewer clicks to needed, accurate information. More than 1.8 million constituent inquiries levied through the CSC were resolved by CSC and local department staff. Moreover, we implemented supplemental customer service training and supervisory courses for staff.

Maryland continues evolving to better meet the needs of its citizens, and DHS is leading the way in customer service, particularly with initiatives such as MD THINK - Maryland's Total Human-services Integrated Network. This innovative service-delivery model will remove data barriers and revolutionize the way state agencies coordinate delivery of social services. Behind this revolution is an integrated IT system that shares data among state agencies, vastly improving customer service for all residents. For example, a person seeking assistance at DHS will be able to connect to services that were previously only provided by other state agencies.

With the cooperation of our local departments of social services, DHS will continue improving tools to: provide referrals for workforce development programs, facilitate education assistance, coordinate health benefits, and link services that promote healthy individuals and flourishing families. State agencies throughout Maryland will continue collaborating to deliver coordinated care: ensuring that families achieve self-sufficiency and that communities thrive.

Looking ahead to FY 2019, DHS remains deeply committed to building on our success and transforming Maryland into a place where people are empowered to flourish independently and create greater economic stability for their families. At DHS, we want to ensure that all people are safe from abuse, harm, or neglect. By seeking and responding to customer feedback, DHS continues improving its staff training. We're aligning our technology to meet future challenges, and we're deepening our commitment with stakeholders who share DHS's vision and mission.

Moving forward, DHS will continue leveraging internal and external resources to improve services to the public. We value protecting children, encouraging parents, and fostering community.

Together, we're changing Maryland for the better.

Detailed FY18 Results and FY19 Plans

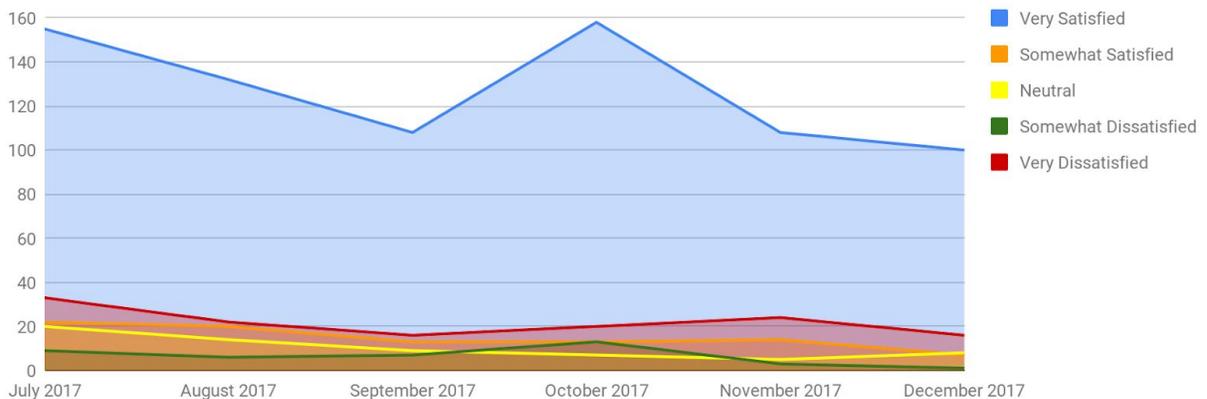
Customer Service Survey Results

A majority of FY18 responders to the DHS Customer Service Survey—more than 1,780 — responded positively to the customer service survey inquiries. This survey reflects the customer’s experience in connection with rating the Department according to three criteria: responsiveness, courtesy, and transparency.

All customer feedback provided in the comments section of the Agency Customer Surveys (ACS) is read and analyzed by the Department’s Constituent Services Office. Positive ACS comments identifying a DHS state employee are forwarded to an appropriate local director and administration executive director. These positive public comments improve staff morale and inspire our professionals to excel and exceed expectations. Negative ACS comments stating a specific, legitimate complaint are investigated by DHS’ Constituent Services Office. Constituent Service staff work diligently and expeditiously to provide the best outcomes for customers.

1st and 2nd Quarter FY 18

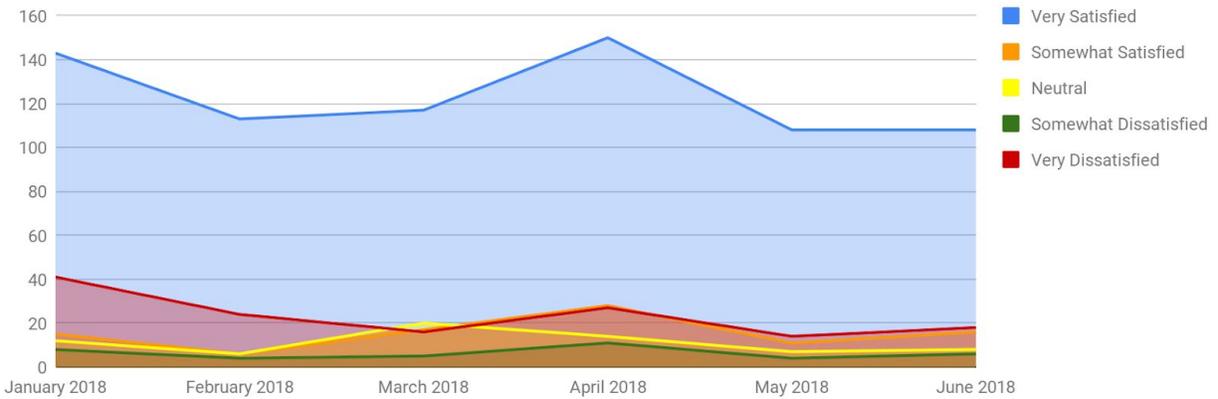
July 2017 - December 2017



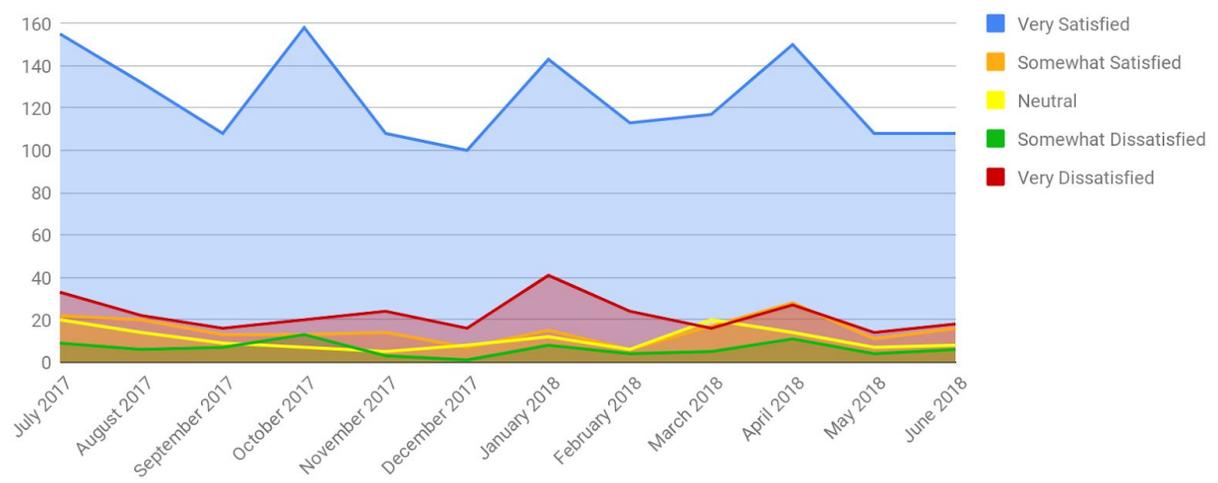
MD Department of Human Services
 FY18 Annual Report

3rd and 4th Quarter FY 18

January 2018 - June 2018



Overall Customer Survey Results - Fiscal Year 2018



DHS plans to put in place additional survey practices during FY19. The goal is to analyze comparatively strong emotional responses in relation to more neutral responses and find solutions that preemptively address customer concerns. DHS will also more closely examine neutral customer responses in an effort to fine-tune our delivery methods. DHS intends to expand its customer survey base by surveying online customers taking advantage of the recently deployed Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system. DHS will strive to gather this feedback via a Popup Survey in the future. Access to this increased customer survey data pool should provide useful information

on the degree of ease by which a customer may submit an application, provide an update, ask a question, or have an issue resolved.

Status of Customer Service Training

DHS continued its strong emphasis on customer service training in FY18, ensuring the availability of training for all full-time and contractual staff. In furtherance of Governor Hogan's Customer Service Initiative and DHS's Customer Service Strategic Plan, all staff Position Descriptions were updated to incorporate expectations for providing exceptional customer service. The "Job Duties" section now includes language requiring each employee to provide both internal and external customer service that meets or exceeds the standards set by the Department.

The DHS-designed Goal Oriented Leadership Driven (G.O.L.D.) Standard Service Training was delivered to 340 staff throughout the state of Maryland in FY18. To maintain momentum and a high level of competency in customer service, DHS also developed online G.O.L.D. Customer Service short-course refresher modules that are scheduled for deployment in FY19.

The Department's FY18 training efforts also focused on supervisory staff. Phase I of a newly developed Fast Track Fundamental Administrative and Supervisory Training Program was successfully delivered to 96 percent of DHS's supervisory staff. DHS's newly branded Learning Unit conducted 202 training sessions to accomplish that milestone. This initiative ensures that staff have a fundamental base of knowledge to be successful in planning, coaching, and motivating others to follow customer service best practices. Phase II of this Fast Track Training will launch in FY19.

The Department's Constituent Services Office (CSO), which often serves as a conduit for citizens seeking access to social services, completed LGBTQ Training with Jennifer Eden, Program Manager at GLCCB of Central Maryland. This important diversity and inclusivity training exercise provided staff with an opportunity to become better public servants. At DHS, we treat LGBTQ individuals with respect, sensitivity, and appropriateness.

CSO has developed an LGBTQ Guide that provides a wealth of information on organizations fostering diversity and inclusion. More specifically, this guide may serve as a passport for those seeking well-researched summaries on community resources, college programs, health and safety options, government agencies, housing opportunities, and religious institutions. The guide is used by the Outreach Division in seeking new community partnerships. The Department's Social Services Administration (SSA) has partnered with the University of Maryland School of Social Work and the Human Rights Campaign to offer training for Foster Parents who may be housing LGBTQ Foster Youth. During FY19, LGBTQ training will be a high priority for our social services staff as we strive to better serve an often marginalized community.

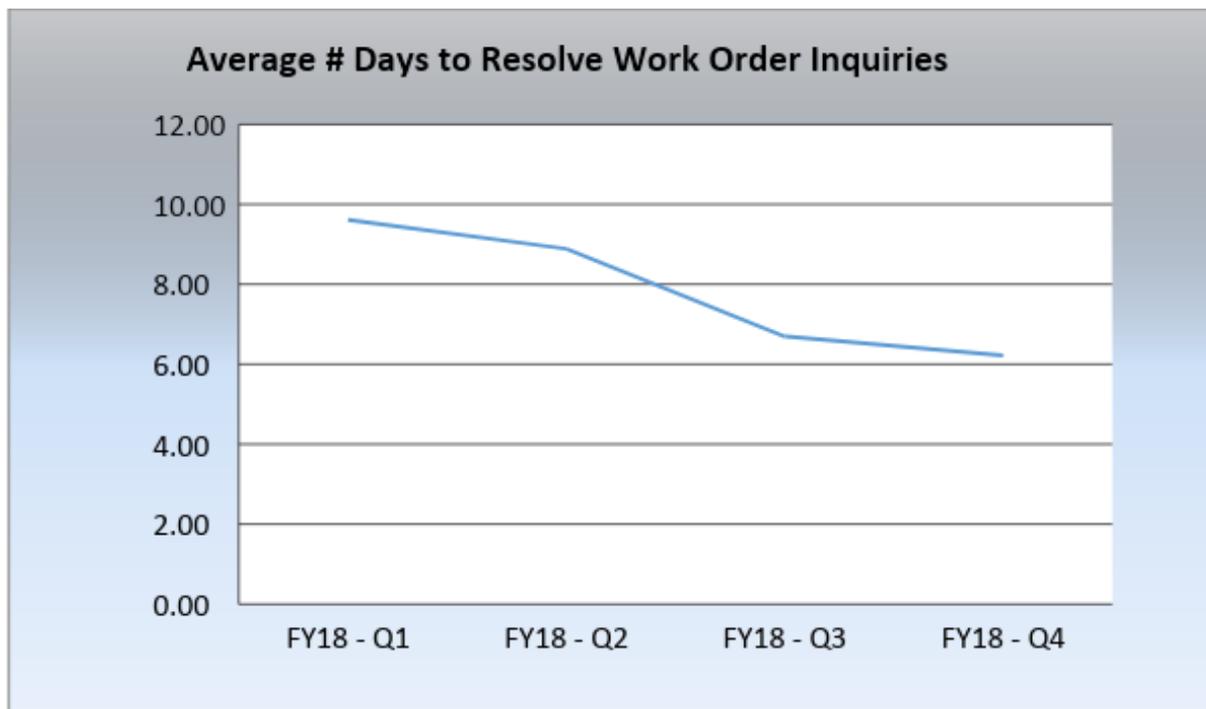
Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution

Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

Department response times to customer inquiries continued to improve with the Department's FY18 modernization efforts. Most customer inquiries can now be resolved in real time by accessing the Department's online myDHR or E&E portals, accessing the self-service selections on the Department's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, or by speaking with a live agent at the Department's Statewide Customer Service Center (1-800-332-6347).

In FY18, the DHS Statewide Customer Service Center received more than 1.8 million customer calls. Live agents assisted with 713,142 customer inquiries, of which 68 were resolved immediately. Agents forwarded 226,006 customer inquiries to local jurisdictions as Work Orders requiring further assistance. Average FY18 response times were as follows:

Average # Days to Resolve Work Order Inquiries			
FY18 - Q1	FY18 - Q2	FY18 - Q3	FY18 - Q4
9.62	8.89	6.69	6.22



Best Practices

DHS acted on a wide array of customer inputs to systematically improve ease-of-doing-business and enhance the customer experience during FY18. Specifically, the Department engaged the following Best Practices for Customer Experience Enablement:

- **Customer Intelligence** – By analyzing customer call volume data, DHS was able to improve upon its 800 number Customer Service Center, adding to its IVR a new queue and agent skill group specifically for Food Supplement Program (FSP) inquiries. Inquiries related to FSP make up the second highest percentage of DHS call volume.
- **Customer Value** – The Department prioritized speedy analysis and expeditious response to customer survey comments. In an effort to better serve customers, DHS's Constituent Services Office promptly reached out to any client who provided negative survey comments or provided negative feedback on DHS's Facebook page. Positive comments were also analyzed and forwarded to the named employee, local director and administration executive director for recognition.
- **Systemic Improvement** - DHS completely redesigned and overhauled its internal Knowledge Base to prioritize customer service. This new, internal resource offers a streamlined, functional platform that connects staff in fewer clicks to needed, accurate information. DHS also moved forward with development of its electronic application processing portal, or E&E System, which is part of Maryland's Total Human-services Information Network (MD THINK) initiative. This is described in more detail below.
- **Employee Engagement** – DHS expanded its agency Mentorship and Leadership Development activities in order to promote employee growth and encourage employees to proactively manage their engagement with customers. During FY18, a group comprised of 20 mentors and 20 proteges participated in a 9 month-long mentorship program. Among the participants were DHS Central staff - as well as staff from Baltimore City and Washington, Harford, and Charles Counties. Plans are underway to conduct regionalized piloting in the Mountain Region and Eastern Shore during mid FY19.

Plans for Improvement

In FY19, DHS will rollout a variety of continuous improvements to its Customer Service Center IVR. New prompts - played while customers are in the IVR or waiting to speak with an agent - will inform customers about other self-service options available within

myDHR and the IVR. The IVR's call-back feature will also be enhanced, allowing customers to choose the call-back option at anytime.

Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

Making Agency Services Available Online

The Department introduced an enhanced electronic version of its Application for Child Support in February, 2018. Residents already use the online myDHR portal to apply for a number of services and programs, such as food, cash, energy, and medical assistance. With the addition of the child support application, myDHR has become a user-friendly, one-stop shop for Marylanders who are eligible for a range of benefits and services.

Previously, customers submitted applications for child support to an external site managed by a third-party service. With the elimination of this third-party service, applications are now automatically uploaded to the myDHR database in real time, improving efficiency. An upfront pre-screening process verifies eligibility, while the intuitive interface helps increase accuracy by guiding customers through the application process and ensuring that the form is filled out to completion with the most up-to-date information. Maryland parents can expect to have their child support application processed in a shorter amount of time, vastly decreasing the waiting period for collections to begin. The streamlining of the overall application process has greatly improved the applicant's experience.¹

DHS also completed development on a new electronic version of its application for Long Term Care (LTC). As part of the MD THINK initiative, the new application will allow customers and their authorized representatives to apply for LTC more quickly and easily online. Those LTC applications - whether filed by paper, fax, or mail - will also be tracked and monitored through the Department's online Long-Term Care Management Tool.

Processing Times for Customer Transactions

The online LTC application is accessible through the Department's new Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system. Specifically, online LTC applications were made available to case managers, supervisors and administrative staff through the Worker Portal that launched in July, 2018. This allows case managers and supervisors to electronically

¹ Maryland Department of Human Services (2018). *DHS Launches New Online Child Support Application*. [online] Available at: <http://news.dhr.maryland.gov/reports/that/dhs-launches-new-online-child-support-application/>.

process applications and redeterminations in the Worker Portal, greatly improving processing times.

Application information can be seen and verified on the various screens within the workflow, and an eligibility determination is made based on the information entered. Throughout the application process, any data that has not been verified will be tracked, and any necessary Request for Information form will be system-generated and mailed to the customer. There will no longer be a need for employees to send this form manually, greatly reducing processing time. Additionally, once an application is processed, the cost of care will be automatically calculated and a notice generated.

These benefits illustrate the impact expected by DHS's modernization efforts in FY19 and beyond. The Department will incorporate additional programs and services aimed at increasing efficiency and productivity. To be sure, these developments will greatly enhance DHS's ability to provide Maryland's citizens with more convenient and efficient customer service. For this reason, The Worker Portal has been dubbed the 'gateway to modernization.'

Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

To better serve Maryland's Child Support customers, DHS opened an additional Baltimore City office location with expanded service hours. Baltimore City Child Support Customers may now be conveniently served at either location. Office hours for both the new Mondawmin Mall location as well as the One North Charles location are Mondays 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Tuesdays through Fridays 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM, and the First and Third Saturdays of the month from 9:00 AM to Noon.²

Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience

Throughout FY18, DHS has worked tirelessly to continue our efforts in strengthening our social media presence and effectiveness. Improving our responsiveness to the concerns of customers and promoting program awareness are just a couple of the ways that we have accomplished our goals. In FY18, DHS continued to use Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to effectively display outstanding and reliable customer service for Maryland residents. Utilizing social media platforms allows DHS to act as online liaisons, engaging with constituents experiencing high levels of concern and connecting with those interested in the important work that we do.

At DHS, it's important for our customers to feel that they have easy access to services, information, and assistance when necessary. It is equally important for our agency to

² Maryland Department of Human Services (2018). *DHS Launches New Online Child Support Application*. [online] Available at: <http://news.dhr.maryland.gov/reports/that/second-child-support-office-location-opens-baltimore-city/>.

continue to actively establish and build our relationship with the public in a way that is reflective of our mission to serve with the utmost integrity and excellence.

The DHS Facebook account has strong visibility. Since FY17, our reach has increased 9.6%. At the time of reporting, the account has more than 5,699 followers from across Maryland, reflecting a 9.6% increase in comparison to FY17. On Facebook, DHS frequently fields emergency inquiries from customers, mainly through direct messaging, who have exhausted other avenues for assistance and are looking for next steps. The Department replies to all messages, assisting residents on tracking down answers or finding the appropriate resource for the issue in question. Our Facebook account has a 100% response rate and 1 hour response time to direct messages, demonstrating our commitment to providing swift social media customer support. With over thousands of post engagements and page views during FY18, DHS continues to improve response time by monitoring the Facebook page daily. As stated in the FY17 report, we created a dedicated email account specifically for addressing concerns raised on social media and that email is also monitored daily.

The DHS Twitter account has more than 2,800 active followers spanning across the states of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, and more. Our Twitter engagement rate ranges from 18.2K to 50.6K impressions per month. Since FY17, the account has gained 769 new followers, reflecting a 37.64% audience increase.

The DHS LinkedIn account has 2,471 followers and serves as a recruitment tool for the business community. The DHS LinkedIn highlights organizational events, initiatives, and the accomplishments of DHS staff. By spotlighting the great work that we do and the professional development of our staff, we demonstrate that our staff are eager to learn, impressively trained and credentialed, proving they are highly capable of providing remarkable customer service to Maryland residents.

Forward Thinking

Now more than ever, delivering excellent customer service online is a top priority for DHS. Social media has provided a platform for organizations like ours to interact with customers publicly. Customers often turn to social media for additional customer service support. Whether that is to simply keep up with DHS and its services, develop a perception of DHS, express gratitude, or seek consolation. Because of this, DHS is committed to being present and available across the many platforms our customers use, actively engaging with them.

For FY19, DHS is focused on improving our social media presence by offering more content aimed to educate, empower, and collaborate with our residents to ultimately help them increase sustainability, and access to resources. DHS is constantly strategizing new ways of expanding and looks forward to adding Instagram to our circle of virtual outreach. Using notable Instagram features such as Instagram Stories, Instagram Live, IGTV, Story Highlights, direct messaging, and video editing features, DHS can engage with constituents through various angles. Instagram is hands-on, requiring users to press buttons, swipe, and type to receive the results they want, allowing DHS the ability to promote programs that support families while enticing our audience into a proactive atmosphere.

Not only do our social media platforms get the word out about DHS services, they serve as the face and personality of our organization. Our goal is to have every customer positively associate DHS with the personality they connect and interact with online. By continuing our social media efforts, DHS will gain an even greater following, brand likability, and reach to Maryland residents.



Maryland Department of Human Services
Customer Service Annual Report
FY 2018

