



Maryland Department of Human Services
Customer Service Annual Report



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FY17 Highlights

Maryland's Department of Human Services (DHS)* trained 100% of its 6,969 full-time and contractual staff in the DHS-designed Goal Oriented Leadership Driven (GOLD) Standard Service Training sessions between September 13, 2016 and June 31, 2017. During this time period, 338 sessions were delivered throughout the state of Maryland by the Department's training unit.

DHS recognized the top 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 2016.

A majority of responders to the DHS Customer Service Survey—more than 1,500 to date—indicated being “very satisfied” with DHS in all customer service categories, including the Department's responsiveness, courtesy, and transparency, among others.

Completed launch of new Customer Service Center (CSC), providing customers with a single point of contact by which inquiries concerning any DHS programs and services may be addressed. Utilized new Customer Relations Management system for tracking customer inquiries and as a workflow tool, better enabling the Department to analyze and improve inquiry response time.

Strengthened social media messaging and effectiveness, improving responsiveness to messages from customers, and promoting program awareness through targeted public relations campaigns. Captured average engagement rate of 1.8K unique users per Facebook post, and improved average Twitter engagement rate from 12.9K impressions per month to 27K impressions per month. Number of Twitter followers grew by more than 100%.

Reached out directly to the general public at 125 conventions and conferences, health fairs, job fairs, festivals, trade shows, shopping malls, community events, and other public forums to provide information and education about the agency's programs and services.

* Per the enactment of House Bill 103 in July 2017, the Department of Human Resources became the Department of Human Services, better reflecting the agency's mission and commitment to serving the community. DHS is proud to operate under its improved name, and is working within the guidelines of the legislation to transform DHR to DHS at no additional cost to the State, and to ensure that services provided to state residents continue uninterrupted. As part of its rebranding efforts, DHS is securing a new URL for its benefits web portal, myDHR, and will rename the site accordingly. Additionally, any Maryland resident using the old myDHR URL will be redirected to the new URL for the portal, thus ensuring continuous access to support and services.

Substantially enhanced the Department's self-service, online application and case management site with two new additional modules: online Background Check Clearance applications and Long-Term Care applications.

Enhanced the agency website to prioritize customer service, offering a streamlined, functional platform that connects our customers in fewer clicks to the information they need, while also making the most sought-after resources easier to find.

Launched development of MD THINK, or Maryland's Total Human-services Integrated Network—a groundbreaking, multi-agency technology platform that will transform the State's ability to deliver vital human services to Marylanders. Once fully implemented, MD THINK will enable a coordinated, 360° client view for all human services programs, using data-sharing, mobility, and predictive analytics to deliver timely, accurate services to residents of Maryland.

Recognition Given to Employees

In FY 2017, DHS honored 45 individuals across the state who consistently displayed a strong commitment to excellence in customer service. Nominations represented those state personnel who performed duties with competence, integrity, and compassion, and adhered to the practices and procedures outlined in the Department's Customer Service Manual. These individuals are some of DHS's best customer service professionals. The FY 2017 winners of the Customer Service Excellence Award were recognized at the Department's annual statewide ceremony, held during National Customer Service Week in October. Those winners include the following exemplary employees:

LaCrecia Knox—Family Investment Administration

Friendly, knowledgeable, efficient, responsive and patient, LaCrecia is the first responder to troubleshoot and resolve issues in her department. She volunteered to serve on the IT Modernization Workgroup and help staff navigate Workday. Ms. Knox works proactively and diligently to ensure FIA staff have the necessary tools and resources to serve Marylanders in need.

Mark Button—Human Resource Development and Training (HRDT)

Mark Button began employment with HRDT in August 2015. He epitomizes the model servant leader through his interactions with fellow Training Unit staff as well as the other employees throughout the State. On numerous occasions throughout the last year, Mark has ensured that the needs of the team are met, even if that meant that he placed himself on the "back burner." Feedback from his coworkers and employees who have participated in Mark's trainings, is always positive. He is friendly, courteous, responsible, and consistently performs his duties with competence, integrity, and compassion.

Marlene Comer—Allegany County Department of Social Services

Marlene Comer was chosen as ACDSS's Customer Service Excellence Award winner in recognition of her 23 years of dedicated service to children and families. Ms. Comer's services include: coordination, ordering and delivery of coats, hats and gloves for various community programs, and coordinating numerous food baskets that are provided to families for the various holiday seasons. As staff have noted, "Ms. Comer does a lot of work for Child Welfare Services, yet most of her efforts are 'behind the scenes work' that is not always acknowledged."

Christine McMahon—Calvert County Department of Social Services

Christine McMahon has worked at Calvert DSS for 16 years. There, she's served the community through every program and manages all Foster Care and Long Term Care cases, notably helping some of the most vulnerable people navigate the process of putting a loved one in nursing care. Co-workers find her kind and genuine; community partners appreciate her competence and integrity; and constituents frequently comment on her compassion and support. She provides exemplary service to the local community, helping seniors make phone calls to gather information and seeing them without an appointment. She visits customers in their homes to take applications, and meets with nursing center staff to facilitate smooth working relationships. She's gone above and beyond in her service to the citizens of Maryland.

Leadership Analysis of FY17 and Summary of FY18 Approach

Governor Larry Hogan's leadership has shifted the paradigm for service-delivery statewide. Underpinning more efficient service-delivery is the need for improved customer service, visible in everything from program accessibility and positive outcomes, to more responsive community outreach, quicker resolution of constituent concerns, and staff who are committed to the State's high standards for excellent service. In FY 2017, DHS strengthened its commitment to serving the citizens of Maryland by overhauling its staff customer service training, establishing a new customer service support center, taking significant steps toward modernizing its Information Technology systems, and ensuring that programs are accountable to the entire family, among other initiatives. The Department established a stronger collaborative network with our sister agencies, Federal partners, the business community, and advocacy partners across the state who are committed to changing Maryland for the better. One example of this would be a Dept. of Human Services pilot program (STEP Up!) that partners with the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, among many others, to provide job-training to unemployed parents with a child support obligation, thereby enabling them to pursue family-sustaining wages and provide better support to their children. By leveraging internal and external resources to improve services to the public, and reinforcing its strong vision for the future, DHS has ensured that great customer service is fundamental to our mission.

Over the past year, DHS achieved success with improving its customer service framework. For example, the agency overhauled its website, offering a streamlined, more functional platform with mobile responsiveness that connects customers in fewer

clicks to the information they need. The Department has supported these efforts by enabling our social media channels to become portals for case services, and by reducing the time needed to resolve constituent concerns through the Customer Service Center (CSC) by more than 65%. All told, the Department resolved nearly 1.4 million constituent inquiries levied through the CSC. Furthermore, Dept. of Human Services developed and administered a new, half-day customer service training to 100% of its staff, ensuring that staff behind the scenes and on the front line share the Department's commitment to accountable, transparent, empathetic, and efficient service.

As the State continues to evolve to better meet the needs of its citizens, DHS is leading the way in customer service. One of our major initiatives that began in FY 2017, and will continue throughout FY 2018, is the Department's efforts to develop MD THINK, or Maryland's Total Human-services Integrated Network. This innovative service-delivery model will remove data barriers and revolutionize the way state agencies coordinate to deliver human services. With an integrated IT system that shares data among state agencies, we'll be able to greatly improve the State's customer service for all residents, no matter where their request for assistance originates. A person seeking assistance at the Dept. of Human Services, for example, will be able to connect to services that have traditionally only been provided by other agencies. From our local departments of social service, we'll have improved tools to provide referrals for workforce development programs, education assistance, health benefits, and other services that are essential to healthy individuals and families. Across Maryland, state agencies will be able to work together to deliver coordinated care that ensures families achieve self-sufficiency and that communities thrive.

Looking ahead to FY 2018, the Department's priority is to continue to build a Maryland where people can independently support themselves and their families, and to ensure that all individuals are safe from abuse and neglect. By seeking and answering feedback, training our staff to provide the best service possible, aligning our technology with the needs of the future, and deepening our relationships with stakeholders who share our mission, we'll continue to change Maryland for the better.

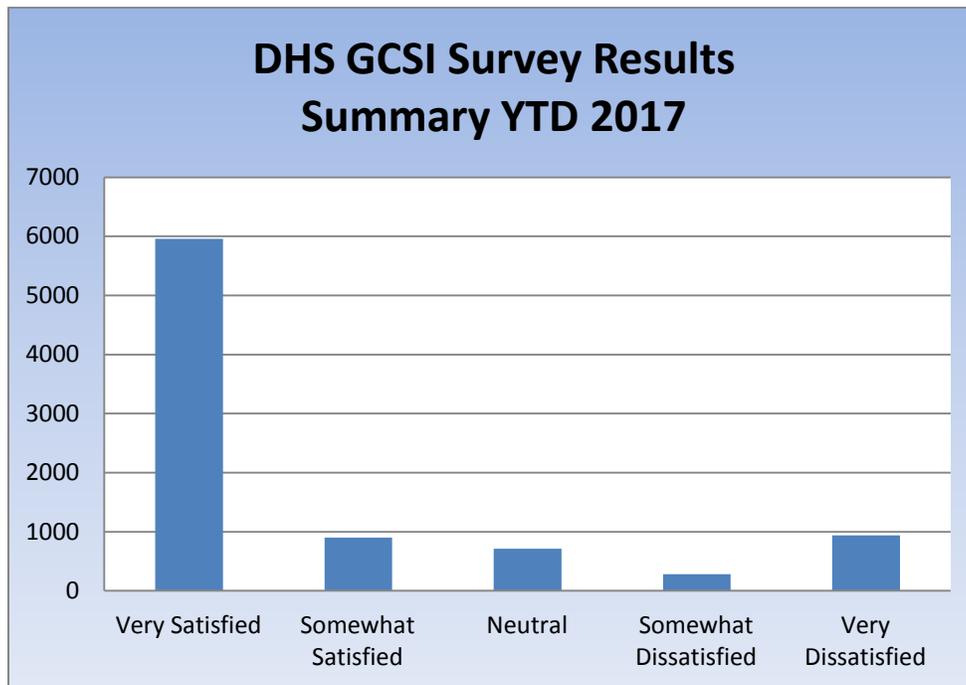
Detailed FY17 Results and FY18 Plans

Customer Service Survey Results

The Department's customer service survey results are shown in the table below. The vast majority of responses received for each category were marked as "very satisfied," with an average of 996 "very satisfied" responses cumulatively. The "most satisfied" results are a direct reflection the DHS commitment to stellar customer service. All "dissatisfied" customers are contacted within 48 hours to render resolution of the issue or concern.

Dept. of Human Services GCSI Survey Results Summary, YTD 2017

Question 1: Overall, how satisfied are you with the customer service provided?								
DHS	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	External Total	Internal Total*	Grand Total
YTD Totals	981	153	99	47	185	1,465	118	1,584
Question 2a: Please rate our customer service on the following attributes: Friendly and Courteous								
DHS	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	External Total	Internal Total*	Grand Total
YTD Totals	1,037	140	128	42	118	1,465	116	1,584
Question 2b: Please rate our customer service on the following attributes: Timely and Responsive								
DHS	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	External Total	Internal Total*	Grand Total
YTD Totals	983	158	95	52	177	1,465	116	1,584
Question 2c: Please rate our customer service on the following attributes: Accurate and Consistent								
DHS	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	External Total	Internal Total*	Grand Total
YTD Totals	979	155	126	50	155	1,465	116	1,584
Question 2d: Please rate our customer service on the following attributes: Accessible and Convenient								
DHS	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	External Total	Internal Total*	Grand Total
YTD Totals	983	152	120	53	157	1,465	116	1,584
Question 2e: Please rate our customer service on the following attributes: Truthful and Transparent								
DHS	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	External Total	Internal Total*	Grand Total
YTD Totals	996	141	143	39	146	1,465	116	1,584



Status of Customer Service Training

A revised, in-person customer service training was a part of the Customer Service Strategic Planning Imperative established by former DHS Secretary Sam Malhotra. The Department's GOLD Standard Service Training (GSST) was piloted in August 2016. The first official session was conducted on September 13, 2016, and over the next nine months, 6,969 Full-time and Contingent workers underwent the training during 338 half-day sessions conducted throughout the state. This training was managed by the Training Team of the Human Resources Development and Training Unit and conducted by 13 certified trainers. From day one at DHS, new staff are taught the importance of our vision for customer service. All new staff are allotted six months to complete GSST, ensuring that the Department continues its 100% participation rate.

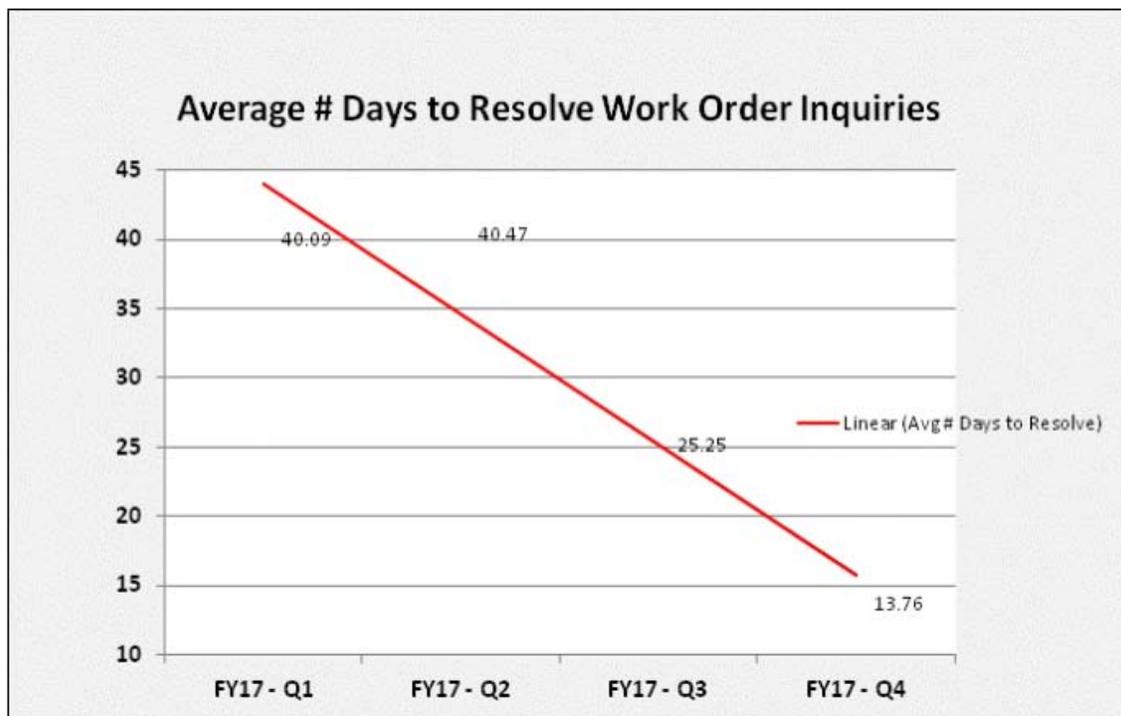
DHS anticipates that opportunities to reinforce excellent customer standards will be ongoing. Therefore, to build upon these efforts for the future, the Department's Training Unit is currently developing online modules that will expand upon the concepts learned in GSST. In fact, customer service is already emphasized in the FAST Track Supervisor Training sessions, which help supervisors develop accountability for their role in ensuring frontline staff serves our constituents in the best possible way.

Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution

Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

Department response times to follow-up work orders has decreased dramatically by more than 65% from the FY17 Quarter One to FY17 Quarter Four, as indicated by the statistics below.

Average Days to Resolve Work Order Inquiries			
FY17 - Q1	FY17 - Q2	FY17 - Q3	FY17 - Q4
40.09	40.47	25.25	13.76



Best Practices

In 2016, the Department launched its new Customer Service Center (CSC), which provides customers with a single point of contact by which public inquiries concerning DHS programs and services may be addressed. Customers served by the local departments of social services and Child Support offices located in all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland can contact the CSC about any DHS programs or services by dialing one number: 1-800-332-6347. CSC services include a live operator and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) services, and receiving and responding to inquiries via telephone, fax, electronic mail and U.S. mail. The CSC can therefore track all information pertaining to FY17 caller inquiries and communicate with local offices via a single Customer Relations Management system, better enabling the Department to analyze and improve upon inquiry response time.

Most customer inquiries can now be resolved in real time by the IVR or live agent interaction. In FY17, the DHS Statewide Customer Service Center received nearly 1.4 million customer calls. Live agents assisted with 629,564 customer inquiries, of which 72.81% were resolved immediately. Agents forwarded 137,477 customer inquiries specifically related to one of the three major program administrations to local jurisdictions via the new system for further assistance.

	Completed Customer Calls to 800#	Customer Inquiries Handled by Live Agents	Customer Inquiries Resolved by Live Agents	Follow-up work orders to LDSS in major program administration areas*
FY2017	1,377,626	629,564	458,408	137,477
*Includes programs and services within the Social Services Administration, the Child Support Administration, and the Family Investment Administration.				

Plans for Improvement

This fall, the Dept. of Human Services is launching a Public Information Act request system to improve transparency and customer service. Customized for DHS and for Maryland’s laws, the system will be accessible through the Department’s website (see below) where citizens can submit a request, check the status of their request, and view responsive documents.

The “Proactive Pages” allow the Department to target specific topics and allows the general public to follow and be made aware of any information that the Department makes public. With the new platform, DHS will improve its internal and external service delivery and customer response by effectively managing all requests in a centralized system.



Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

Making Agency Services Available Online

During FY17, the Department also enhanced substantially its online application and case management site, dhs.maryland.gov/benefits. DHS offers user-centered access to benefits online, where customers may apply for multiple services, manage case information without going into an office, send a message to a caseworker, and locate a local social services or energy assistance office. Easy to use, the online system is cyber-secure and 508-compliant, and is accessible via mobile devices and in 14 different languages.

This year, Dept. of Human Services added a Background Check Clearance module to the online customer portal, which now allows more than 15,000 potential camp employees to apply online for their required background check clearance. The new module launched prior to the 2017 summer camp season to better serve more than

1,700 camps throughout the State, and to ensure that background checks were cleared accurately and efficiently.

Additionally, DHS worked throughout FY17 on a new application module for customers seeking Long Term Care (LTC). The new application will allow customers and their authorized representatives to apply for LTC more quickly and easily online. Those LTC applications filed by paper, fax, or mail will also be tracked and monitored through the Department's online Long-Term Care Management Tool. Full implementation of the LTC online module will be completed in FY18.

Processing Times for Customer Transactions

Online automation of Child Protective Services background clearances for youth camp employees significantly reduced mailing and processing timelines from weeks to an average of three days. Results for the application processing times for the Long Term Care module will be available after the go-live date scheduled in October 2017.

Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

In FY17, the agency's hours remained the same. The Customer Service Center Interactive Voice Response (IVR) is available 24/7 and resolves more than half of customer inquiries in real time outside of normal business hours. In addition, the IVR was recently improved to include a 24/7 automatic, outbound transfer of Foster Youth or Foster Parents seeking to reach the Foster Youth or Foster Parent Ombudsman.

Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience

The DHS Facebook account has global visibility and more than 5,200 active followers from across Maryland. It is often a next step for constituents who may feel that they've exhausted other avenues for assistance. DHS frequently fields inquiries from people experiencing an emergency—for example, a resident who had less than 48 hours to resolve a BG&E power shut-off notification—and who are looking for solutions or another opportunity to be heard.

As DHS has worked to improve responsiveness to people direct-messaging the agency through Facebook, we realized that we also needed to strengthen our relationships with customer service representatives across the different offices. The Department replies to every Facebook message to help customers track down answers, but lasting solutions require coordination with or input from ombudsmen and caseworkers alike. To improve responsiveness, DHS created a dedicated email account specifically for addressing concerns raised on social media, and it's helped consolidate and expedite the process for solving customer inquiries. Because of this linkage, the young resident who messaged us through Facebook received a 55-day extension on his home energy bill, just in time for winter.

In fact, our renewed social media presence and regular Facebook interactions have directly contributed to the effectiveness of our recent public relations campaigns, including for the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP). Through video, PSA, and legislative partnerships—all leveraged through our strong Facebook community—DHS

engaged nearly 10,000 people through Facebook alone, exceeding the reach of many previous social media campaigns. Our engagement number was so high in part because of regular efforts to improve our Facebook presence, content, and responsiveness. The account is now a much more reliable tool for people seeking answers. We execute these same efforts through Twitter, with an added focus on connecting our work to the efforts of our sister agencies and community partners through Twitter chats, re-tweets, and conversations in real time.

For FY18, DHS is focused on improving our social media presence by offering more content that is focused on strengthening family, individual, and community well-being. Instead of just tweeting about where to get help when times are tough, we're providing more content that supports families in being proactive with their health, employment, finances, education, general well-being, and so on. We're their real-time partner, and we work to ensure that we're helping and serving the entire family at all times.

DHS Community and Customer Outreach Efforts

In FY2017, DHS reached out directly to the general public by providing citizens with program literature at 125 conventions and conferences, health fairs, job fairs, festivals, trade shows, shopping malls, community events, and other public forums. Our outreach included the display of Dept. of Human Services exhibits, distribution of brochures and pamphlets, and discussion of agency programs, services, benefits, qualifications, and other requirements.

We also responded to customer inquiries, concerns, and complaints at events and followed up with customers to resolve their problems. The Department's outreach team continually gives customers tips for using the DHS website, online benefits portal, and Customer Service Center.

Furthermore, the Department's Constituent Services Office encouraged its staff to partner with organizations, community groups, and others to educate the community about DHS programs and services. For example, CSO partnered with the Red Cross on numerous blood drives, worked with the Orioles to develop special events that benefitted the community, and collaborated with schools and children's programs.



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Lourdes R. Padilla, Secretary

