

# CUSTOMER SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT FY2020

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT  
OF HUMAN SERVICES





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## FY20 Highlights

- Family Investment Administration quickly shifted focus on business continuity and remote operations once COVID-19 lockdown was instituted to address the quadrupled volume of electronic applications through the Eligibility and Enrollment System
- Continued with development of enhanced intelligent Integrated Voice Response (IVR) System
- Completed statewide implementation of the Child, Juvenile, and Adult Management System (CJAMS) with minimal disruption due to COVID-19 lockdown
- Provided demonstration of the Child Support Management System to Federal Stakeholders rendering accolades that Maryland was setting a new standard for technology in the delivery of Human Services
- Plans are underway to provide a statewide Common Customer Intake (CCI) process that is family-focused, no wrong-door approach, that allows a customer to obtain services for themselves or their family members that they might not be aware exists
- Refined development and tracking of key metrics to gauge customer satisfaction and customer effort to steer future Call Center enhancements
- Honored 47 professionals from the central office and 24 local departments of social service statewide, recognized for excellence with the Customer Service Excellence Award



## Recognition Given to Employees

In FY 2019, DHS formally honored 47 individuals across the state who consistently displayed a strong commitment of 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 FY 2020 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:

**Regina Reed - Kent County Department of Social Services, Family Investment Administration**

Ms. Reed delivers exceptional customer service to customers and co-workers. She incorporates Gold Standard Customer Service values with every interaction. Everyone is treated with dignity and respect and she is always willing to assist others. Her approach is customer-centered and effective. She provides intake/screening and triage for all customers. Her knowledge of the community and resources available make her a valuable asset to the agency. She is often described as “The Face of the Agency.” On many occasions, customers specifically ask for Ms. Reed. KCDSS is proud and honored to have such a dedicated, kind and hard-working employee on its staff.



**Yolanda Patton-Elliott - Cecil County Department of Social Services, Child Support**

Yolanda Elliott is the 2019 Customer Service Excellence Award winner who exemplifies Gold Standard Customer Service by going above and beyond what is required. Many of her customers are dealing with the stress from dealing with children while living apart from the other parent. She listens to every one of her customer’s concerns, even when stated belligerently, leaving them with a smile by the end of the call. She will go above and beyond to help a non-custodial parent, behind in payments, obtain employment to make a payment. The child support process is complicated but Yolanda allays all her customer concerns. Each customer is consistently given her undivided attention.



**Amanda Reiblich – Carroll County Department of Social Services**

Amanda Reiblich demonstrates excellence in customer service, competence, integrity, compassion and adheres to the Department’s Customer Service expectations. Amanda pushes her co-workers and supervisors to think outside the box when handling complex cases and has



even taken on extra responsibilities. She completes her work with little supervision and exhibits compassion in performing her duties. Amanda has great organizational skills, as well. When one of her family’s exhibits an increase in risk factors, Amanda empowers them to make the changes necessary to be successful. The “G.O.L.D.” Standard for Customer Service stands for Goal, Oriented, Leader, Driven, and Amanda is the personification of those attributes.



**Imecka Jones – Baltimore County Department of Social Services, Independent Living**

Imecka carries a full foster care caseload but also volunteers as a field instructor for social work interns. She provides supportive, quality instruction to ensure each of her students reach their fullest potential. She also spearheads the Department’s efforts to run a self-esteem group for girls in foster care while participating in the social worker Morale and Retention Committee. Her diligence, hard work, and customer service skills make her a standout employee.



**Dawn Blades - Worcester County Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services**

Dawn is an intricate part of the Child Protective Services Unit that focuses attention, time, and energy in making certain children have a safe place to call home with family connections. She works collectively to aid her staff to make decisions in assisting the family to look at the whole picture in a situation. Ms. Blades is a strategic thinker and has ensured safety and education for families everywhere across the state. Worcester County is very fortunate to have an individual so commit-



ted to serving children and families to ensure good outcomes.

## FY20 Leadership Analysis or Summary of FY20 Approach

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has engaged the COVID-19 pandemic with an “all hands on deck” approach to evaluate and adapt to the challenges of increased applications of assistance while working in a virtual environment, ensuring a parallel focused approach to uninterrupted implementation of significant system modernization milestones are accomplished to provide our customers with timely and quality delivery of services. In a digitally connected world, Maryland constituents today expect efficient customer service and easy access to programs and information online. The department’s Fiscal Year 2020 successes with the MD THINK (Maryland Total Human-services



Integrated Network) initiative represent important strides in engagement of constituents online and the provision of faster, more accessible service. The department refocused the needs of



constituents statewide by providing accelerated deployment of virtual hardware and software to DHS professionals to meet the increased demand for DHS services. Working to align IT Modernization efforts with a customer-focused culture, DHS continues to add to the many programs and services available to constituents through the department’s consumer portals. Plans for

the coming year to implement enhancements to the statewide contact center has continued as planned. DHS’ commitment to providing the highest level of customer service has been and remains steadfast. Every piece of feedback received from customers is evaluated, helping us to put into action plans that enable the department to exceed expectations. We invite you to read more about the department’s FY 20 customer experience successes, from the system and business process enhancements to Goal Oriented Leadership Driven (G.O.L.D) standard customer service training and employee recognition programs. Indeed, you will find evidence that customer service is part of DHS’ DNA. In every interaction, internal or external, DHS strives to provide timely, accurate, and pleasant service. As our FY 19 Customer Service Excellence theme suggests, we are “Exceeding Expectations Everyday.”

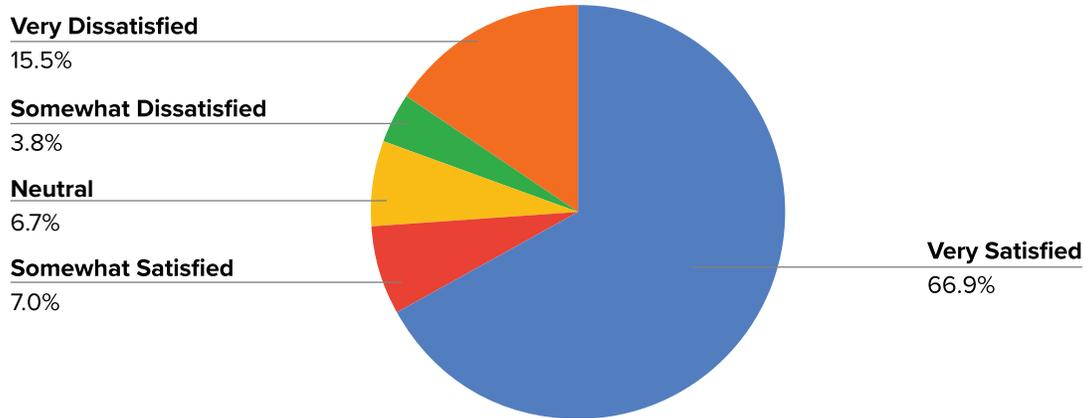


## Customer Service Survey Results

DHS reviews customer survey feedback on a regular basis to determine needed actions and new areas of focus. Customer surveys that required follow up were referred to DHS's Constituent Services Office. Satisfaction and effort scores are derived from both DHS email and website surveys. Primary survey results [1] for FY 20 indicate most DHS customers had a favorable experience with the department, both measurements exceeding 60% Very Satisfied.

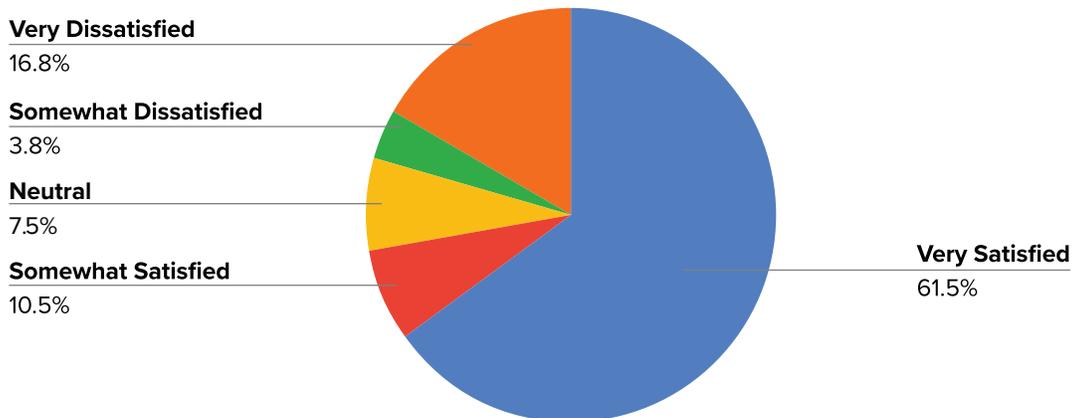
Customers reported an overall customer service satisfaction in the Very Satisfied range, 66.9%.

### FY 2020 Overall, how satisfied are you with the customer service provided?



Customers reported two attributes of Friendly and Courteous in the Very Satisfied range, 61.5%.

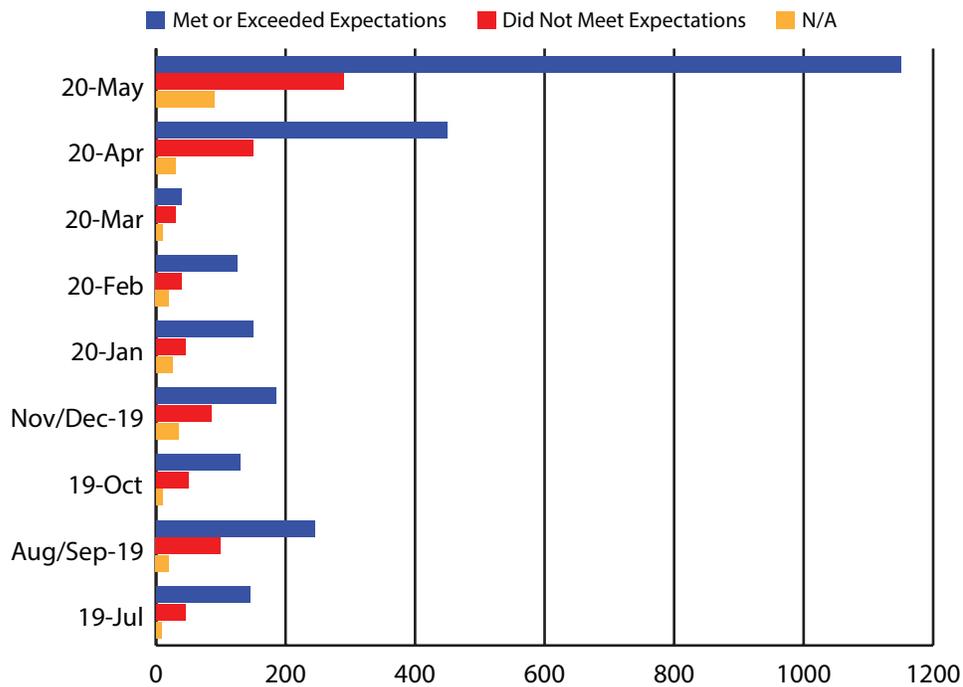
### FY 2020 Customer service on the following attributes: Friendly and Courteous



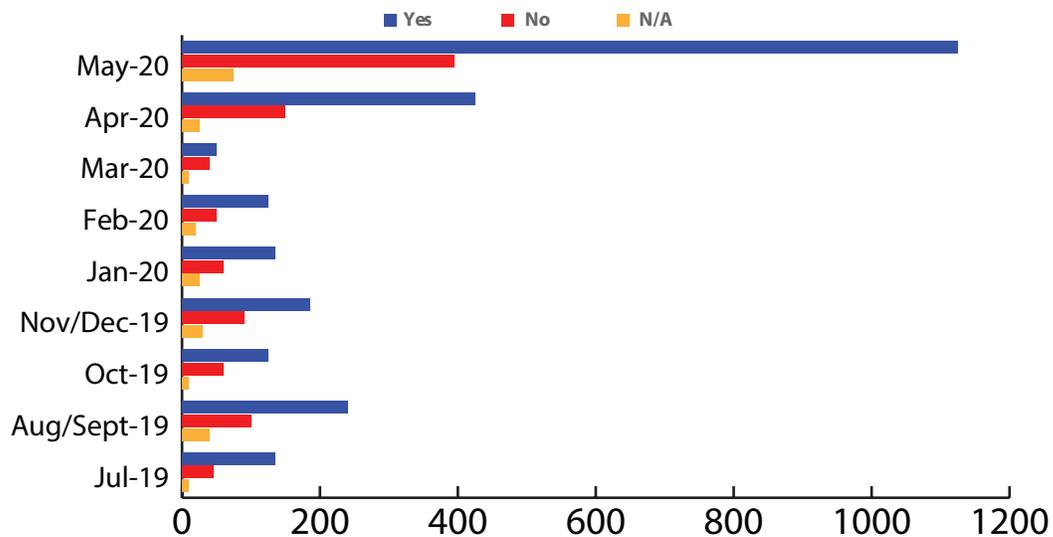


Customer satisfaction and customer effort survey questions were also administered by the department to gather feedback from constituents who used the DHS Statewide Customer Service Call Center. Survey results specific to the department’s 800 number customer service for FY 19 are shown below.

**Overall, how satisfied were you with your customer service representative?**



**Were the phone system’s instructions easy to follow?**

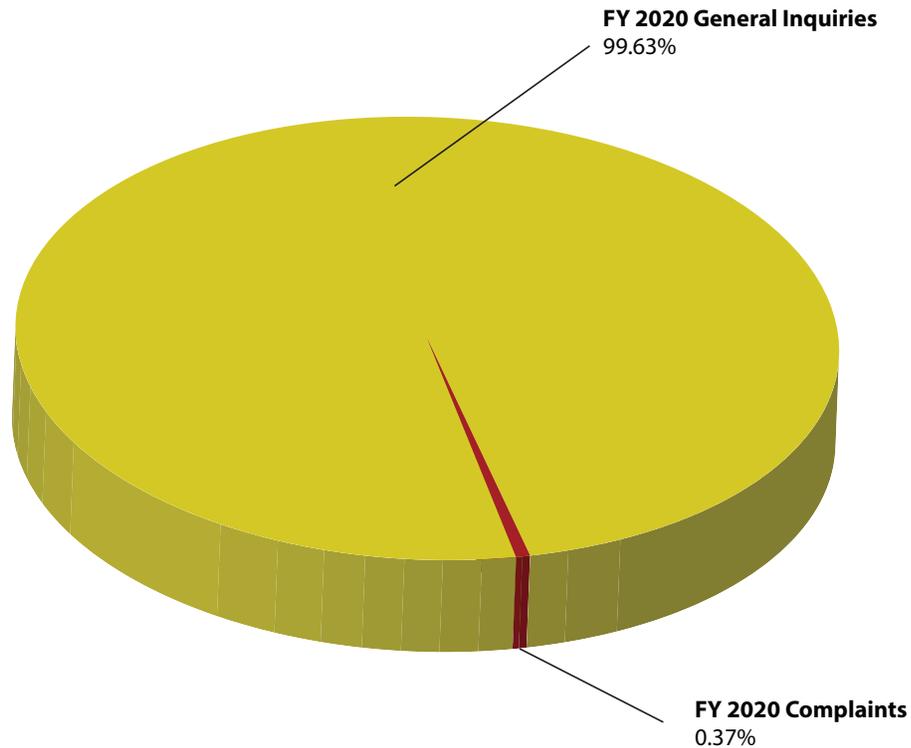


Another way the department maintains a pulse on the health of its customer experience is by tracking complaint volume about the delivery of service across six key categories, including the following: Application Not Processed, Case Discrepancy, Discrimination, No Response from Agency/Administration, Technical Difficulties, and Reports of Unprofessionalism. In FY20, total complaints in all six key categories represented less than one percent of all general inquiries.

<b>Complaint Type</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Application (not processed)</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Case Discrepancy</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>430</b>
<b>Discrimination</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>No response from Agency or Administration</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>669</b>	<b>1660</b>
<b>Staff Unprofessional</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>314</b>
<b>Technical Difficulties</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>603</b>
<b>Total FY2020 Complaints</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>3077</b>
<b>Total Customer Inquiries</b>	<b>219787</b>	<b>200021</b>	<b>210040</b>	<b>201889</b>	<b>831737</b>



**FY 2020  
Handled by Live Agent (excludes Self-Service)**



Though analysis is often data driven, effectively capturing the Voice of the Customer (VoC) involves both quantitative and qualitative measures. Agency Customer Surveys (ACS) capture negative feedback (complaints) and positive feedback (praise) in the form of comments in order to incorporate a holistic data set of customer feedback. All customer feedback provided in the comments section of the ACS is read and analyzed by the department’s Constituent Services Office. DHS’ Constituent Services Office also investigates any comment stating a specific, legitimate complaint and works diligently and expeditiously to provide the best outcomes for customers.



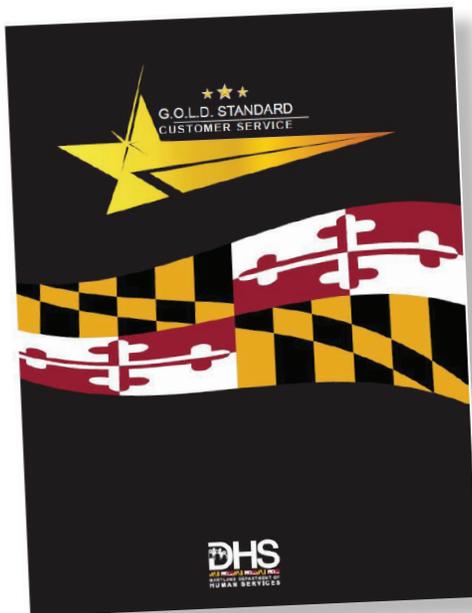
## Status of Customer Service Training

In FY 2017, DHS introduced G.O.L.D. Standard Service Training which was a half-day (3 hour) in-person live customer service training. In this session, all participants were presented with Governor Hogan’s Customer Service Promise and the expectations of all staff to demonstrate proper customer service. Participants were given the



opportunity to engage with various concepts in an interactive session that laid the foundation

for effective customer service at DHS. In FY 2020, DHS Learning continued offering the G.O.L.D. Standard Service Training to all new staff within the first 3 months of their first day with the Department. The learning team conducted 16 in-person live training events until COVID-19 rendered a suspension of all in-person live training after March 13. Two additional sessions were



provided in a virtual format. These sessions had a total of 287 participants. Additionally, all staff (having completed G.O.L.D. Standard Service Training) worked towards the completion of the G.O.L.D. Standard refresher series which is a series of e-learning modules to be taken asynchronously. Through these sessions, our staff have been able to focus on how to provide effective customer service even when the circumstances presented are not “warm and fuzzy.”

Due to the increased training needed for the various MDThink rollouts and legislative directives, the Department did not want to overwhelm staff with additional mandatory training. DHS Learning has creatively integrated the G.O.L.D. Standard concepts (for reinforcement purposes) into various training activities. These include the supervisory training sessions provided

through FAST Track, the integrated practice model training for our Social Services staff and the various MDThink training sessions. During FY 2021, DHS Learning will be developing a new customer service training for all staff that addresses 2 generation and trauma informed care. Furthermore, the G.O.L.D. Standard Service Trainings will still be offered to new staff virtually within 3 months of their start date with the Department.

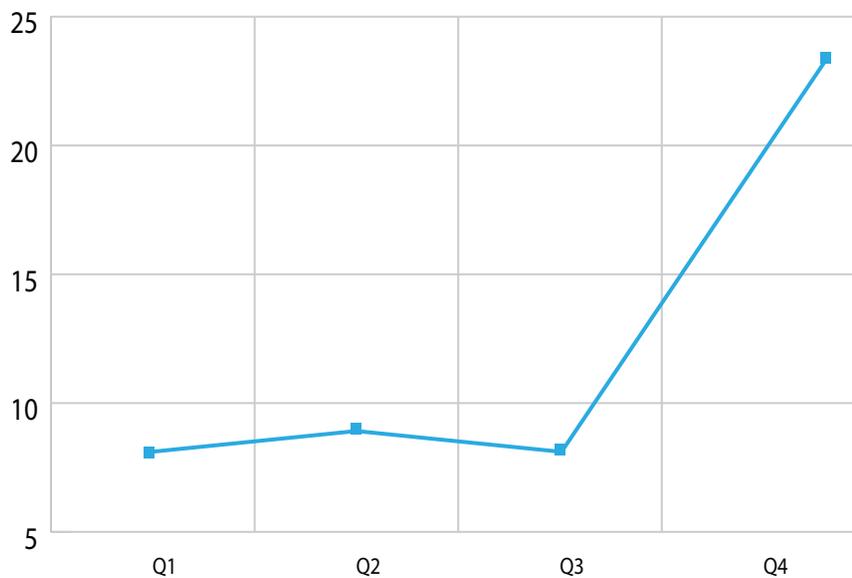
## Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution

### Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

The department also remains committed to improving overall customer inquiry response times. Most customer inquiries can be resolved in real time by accessing the department's online consumer portals, the self-service selections on the department's IVR system, or by speaking with a live agent at the department's Statewide Customer Service Center (1-800-332-6347). In FY20, customer inquiry work orders forwarded to local jurisdictions for further assistance have been resolved within one to two weeks on average; however, in the fourth quarter with the outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown, rendered a spike of 22.09 days to resolve inquiries. The department anticipates that the trend will improve due to strategies and resources that have been implemented to strengthen the DHS professionals ability to serve customers in a virtual environment.

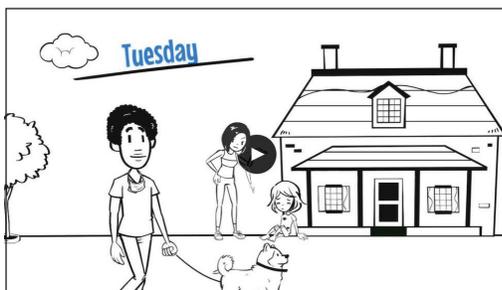
Average # Days to Resolve Work Order Inquiries			
FY 20 - Q1	FY 20 - Q2	FY 20 - Q3	FY 20 - Q4
8.35	9.15	8.91	22.09

Avg. # Days to Resolve Work Orders



## Best Practices

- Maintaining a CRM Database: All customer interactions were documented within the CRM, allowing customer-facing employees to know what has taken place with the customer previously in order to provide more personalized service
- Creating a Customer-Centric Culture via Training leveraging in person and e-learning environments: All employees received training and/or refresher training that provides an understanding of the department's customers and its Customer Service Strategy
- Developed web pages on pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Services (EBTS) and COVID-19 web page
- Produced two animated videos: "Know the signs of child abuse" and "Services for Parents"
- Produced brochures for Local Departments of Social Services on pandemic services within their jurisdiction
- Common Customer Intake: A family-focused, no-wrong-door approach, that allows a customer to obtain services for themselves and for family members that they might not be aware exist
- Recognition of Customer Service Excellence: This year will be a virtual celebration of saluting colleagues who exemplified superior customer service statewide
- Engaging Customers via Social Media: DHS boasts a strong social media presence and maintains a 100% response rate to customer inquiries received via social media
- VoC - Customer insight: In addition to regulatory performance metrics, customer service metrics (both quantitative and qualitative) were tracked through surveys and escalations in order to maintain a central view of how the agency is attending to our customers needs



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- Experience Design: The department has invested significant time and resources into aligning IT Modernization efforts with a customer-focused culture

## Plans for Improvement

DHS' vision is a service organization that has continuously applied forward-looking strategies that has been recently challenged with the COVID-19 pandemic. The department was able to apply short notice agile strategies to meet immediate customer service needs, leveraging advanced technology to optimize customer interactions, with a focus on professional development of DHS personnel, to provide a holistic approach to customer satisfaction and service delivery

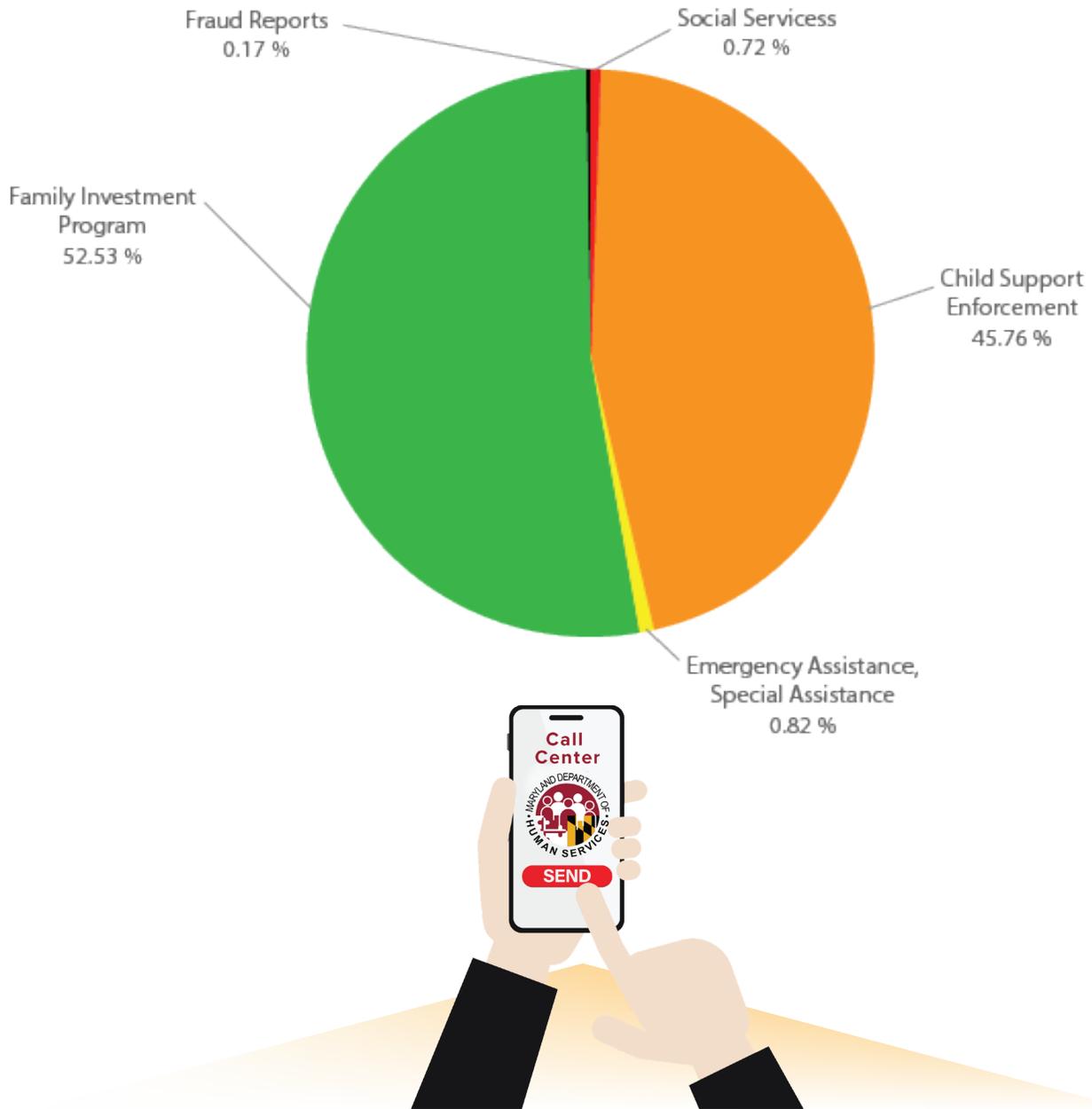
## Call Center Data

In FY 20, center staff resolved with 894,468 live customer inquiries. An additional 912,533 caller inquiries were resolved via use of self-service prompts within the IVR.

	Calls Resolved via IVR Self-Service	Live Calls Resolved During Initial Contact	Total Inbound Calls Resolved During Initial Contact	Calls Requiring Work Orders	Total Inbound Calls Handled by Live CSRs (excludes outbound calls responding to emails)	% Resolved During initial Contact
<b>Total</b>	<b>912,533</b>	<b>536,345</b>	<b>1,448,878</b>	<b>295,392</b>	<b>894,468</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>Monthly Average</b>	<b>76,044</b>	<b>44,695</b>	<b>120,740</b>	<b>24,616</b>	<b>74,539</b>	<b>82%</b>



Call talk time and call handling time during FY 20 averaged 4.45 minutes (04:27) and 6.08 minutes (06:05), respectively. Average wait times during 2020 overall for all queues was 12.72 minutes (12:43).



## Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

### Making Agency Services Available Online

DHS continued to add to the many programs and services accessible to constituents online through its consumer portals. Implementation of the new online Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system) to include the completing statewide implementation of the Child, Juvenile, and Adult Management System (CJAMS) with minimal disruption due to COVID-19 lockdown is a testament of the agility and responsiveness to Maryland's customers.



Additionally, DHS strives to make general program information easy for constituents to access through the public facing website, as customers increasingly look for answers online.

### Processing Times for Customer Transactions

In conjunction with the existing online consumer portals, IVR technology, Call Center, and social media platforms, the MD THINK technological endeavor in the State of Maryland that was initiated in FY17 with federal approval to modernize and integrate multiple state health and human services programs and applications that are targeted towards the most vulnerable citizens in Maryland is progressing despite the challenges of the pandemic. The Department of Human Services with support from the Department of Information Technology (DoIT), the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE), and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) are moving towards a shared technological platform for the various web based technology systems that enable access to Maryland's health and human service programs that will be the foundational tool at the center of the approach. The common platform will be hosted on a cloud service provided by Amazon Web Services (AWS) and will include a Shared Data Repository (SDR) for centralized storage and retrieval of consumer data with the goal of providing timely, accurate and necessary services to our customers



## Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience

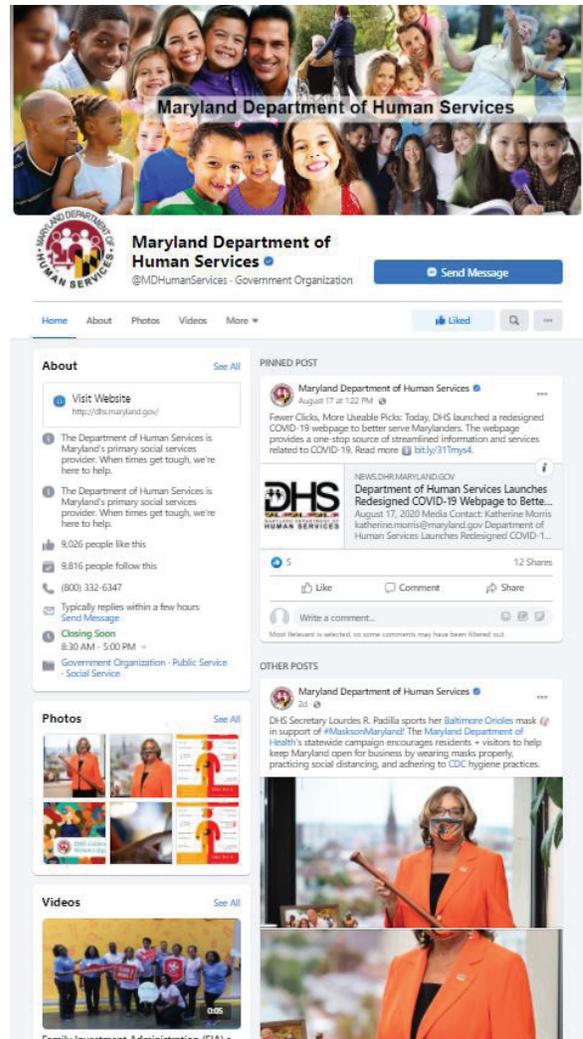
During FY20, DHS continued our efforts to enhance our social media presence and effectiveness as a front door to the agency's resources and information. To achieve our goals, we used social media to focus on improving our tactics for responsiveness to customers and promoting program/event awareness concerning the agency. In FY20, DHS used platforms Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to display swift and instructive customer service for Maryland residents.

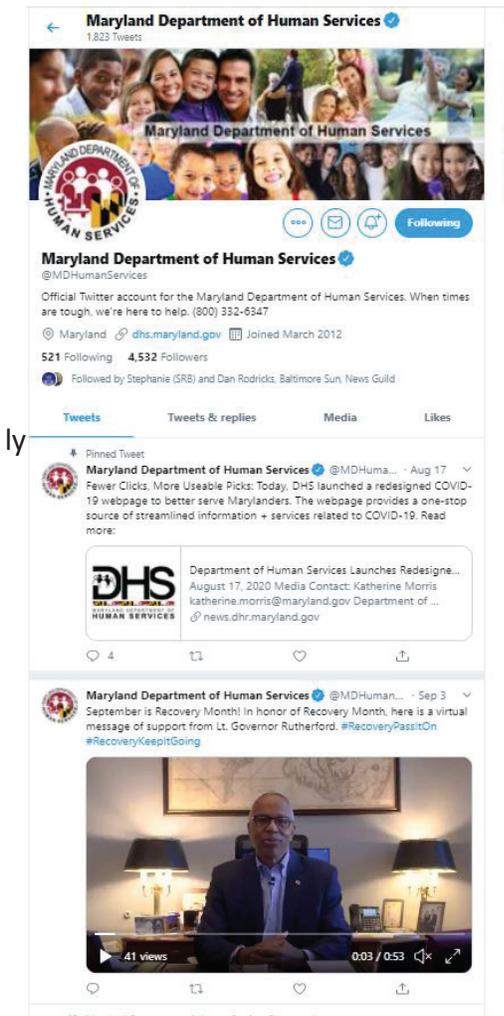
At DHS, it is imperative that we establish transparency to our customers, maintaining easy access to our services, information, and assistance when necessary. It is crucial to actively exude our inclusive atmosphere on all public facing platforms to build our relationship with the public in a way that is reflective of our mission to serve.

### Data Analysis

The DHS Facebook account has global visibility with followers spreading 45 countries, 45 cities, and 41 languages. In FY20, the account accumulated 8,877 followers, reflecting a 26% increase in comparison to FY19. On Facebook, DHS frequently fields inquiries from customers, primarily through direct-messaging, assisting customers in finding the appropriate solution or resource for their concerns. Within the span of reporting, DHS replied to all direct messages, upholding a 100% response rate and connecting with customers over 640 times. As post engagements continued to increase pushing the platform to over 8,740 page likes during FY20, DHS continued to improve by interacting on the Facebook page daily. As stated in the FY19 report, we created a dedicated email account specifically for addressing concerns raised on social media, and continue to monitor that email account daily.

The DHS Twitter account also has global visibility with active followers expanding across the states of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, and more. Our Twitter account had 4,452 followers with an engagement rate ranging from 115.2K to 292.3K impressions per month during the time of reporting. Since FY19, the account has gained 992 new followers,





reflecting a 25.1% audience increase. Like Facebook, however, on a lower frequency, DHS fields inquiries from customers, primarily through direct-messaging, assisting customers in finding the appropriate solution or resource for their concerns. During the time of reporting, the Department replied to all direct messages, upholding a 100% response rate and connecting with customers over 42 times.

The DHS LinkedIn account serves as a recruitment tool for the business community. Our audience is essential-stationed within states such as Maryland, New York, Philadelphia, Delaware, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, and more. On this platform, DHS 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 is eager to learn, impressively trained and credentialed, and highly capable of providing remarkable customer service to the people of Maryland. During FY20, our LinkedIn account had 3,967 followers, and engagement rates ranged from 4.45% to 18.74% per month. Since FY19, the account has gained 937 new followers, reflecting a 26.8% audience increase. With over 5,580 page views, DHS continued to improve by interacting on the LinkedIn page frequently.

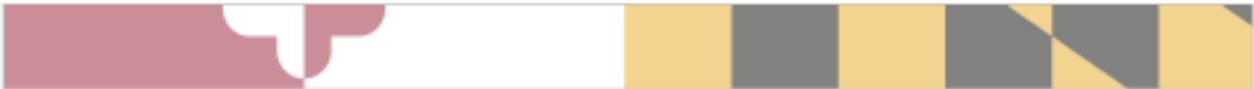
## Forward Thinking

For FY21, DHS strives to continue delivering excellent customer service online making that initiative a top priority. As mentioned in FY19, DHS is focused on improving our social media presence by offering more content aimed to educate, empower, and collaborate with our customers to ultimately help them increase sustainability and access to resources. For this reason, we currently strategize new approaches to social media experimenting with the inclusion of other social media platforms such as Instagram. During the time of reporting, the DHS Instagram account has 968 followers expanding across Maryland in the locations of Baltimore, Washington, Salisbury, Hagerstown, Silver Spring, and more.





DHS is committed to being present and available across the many platforms our customers use, actively engaging with them. Not only do our social media platforms get the word out about DHS services, but they also 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.



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