

# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF **HUMAN SERVICES**



## **CUSTOMER SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT**

**FY 2019**



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## FY 19 Highlights

- Completed statewide implementation of the online Long Term Care application, accessible through new Eligibility and Enrollment online portal
- Began development on a statewide, intelligent Integrated Voice Response (IVR) System
- Piloted a Common Customer Intake (CCI) business process in four jurisdictions
- Implemented a creative solution by pooling resources through the Child Support Administration (CSA) Work Sharing Project
- Tested a new **C**hild **J**uvenile & **A**dult **M**anagement **S**ystem (CJAMS), part of the MD THINK (**M**aryland **T**otal **H**uman-services **I**ntegrated **N**etwork) initiative
- Developed and tracked key metrics to gauge customer satisfaction and customer effort and steer future Call Center enhancements
- Deployed web-based refresher training modules to provide continuous G.O.L.D. Standard Customer Service training to all DHS personnel
- Honored forty-seven professionals from the central office and 24 local departments of social services statewide, recognized for excellence with the Customer Service Excellence Award



Customer Service training to all DHS personnel

**think** | **CJAMS**  
Maryland Total Human-services Integrated Network  
Child, Juvenile, and Adult Management System



## Leadership Analysis of FY 19 and Summary of FY 20 Approach

This has been a year of transformation for the Department of Human Services (DHS), as DHS has embarked on the implementation of significant system modernization. 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 2019 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. Working to align IT Modernization efforts with a customer-focused culture, DHS will continue to add to the many programs and services available to constituents through the Department's consumer portals. Plans for the coming year also involve enhancements to the statewide contact center.

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 19 customer experience successes, from the system and business process enhancements to gold 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."



Maryland Total Human-services Integrated Network

## Recognition Given to Employees

DHS recognizes annually those employees who consistently display a strong commitment to excellence in customer service. Forty-seven state personnel were honored in FY 19. These award recipients exemplify daily the agency's gold standard customer service approach and performed duties with competence, integrity, and compassion. They were recognized during National Customer Service Week at the Department's annual statewide ceremony, and honorees included representatives from all twenty-four jurisdictions as well as the agency's headquarters. Below are just a few examples of these exemplary employees:

### **Donna Lee – Supervisor, Bureau of Disability Services Operations Family Investment Administration**

Ms. Lee understands the needs and wants of our clients and provides creative solutions to solve their problems in a timely manner. Our colleagues from other agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Health, have applauded her for taking ownership and quickly communicating the outcome to all agencies involved. She also provides step-by-step guidance to our elderly clients to ensure they find the appropriate resources and products they need. By providing professional, compassionate and high quality service until the clients' needs are met, in addition to directly supervising a thirteen person team, Ms. Lee has proven to be a valuable member of this agency.



### **Hilary Laskey – Manager Evaluation & Research Social Services Administration**

Ms. Laskey is committed to providing customer service internally and externally. As the Manager of Research and

Evaluation, she is responsible for numerous federal, state, and local reports that are pulled together monthly, quarterly and annually that meet requirements for the Social Services Administration. She has a broad understanding of both child welfare and adult services practice that enables her to respond quickly and concisely with reports and data needed to make policy decisions and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. She is a team player, a leader and the epitome of what a great employee and is a great asset not only to SSA but to DHS.



## **Annie Cypress – Fiscal Accounts Technician II Prince George’s County Office of Child Support Enforcement**

Ms. Cypress has a clear understanding of the Child Support policies, procedures, and Federal, State, and local laws, and how to apply them to any scenarios that may arise. She doesn’t hesitate to assist her co-workers, Supervisors or Senior Management. Ms. Cypress is an enthusiastic, hard worker and is the “Go to Person” if clarification is needed on child support issues. She has earned the confidence of others by being a great worker and constantly extending her hand to internal and external customers to ensure that they are given the correct information. She processes approximately 95% of the Local Transaction Requests (LTRs) from our agency to the State Disbursement Unit on a daily basis. Her morning requests are always completed, and they are done before going home. She stays late and always does a great quantity of quality work. She is very committed to the business of the Agency.



## **Carmelyn Bachman – Family Preservation Caseworker Kent County**

Ms. Bachman is committed to the customers she serves. She treats each one in a respectful and caring manner. She exhibits professionalism at all times. She is often assigned the most difficult cases with families who experience extreme hardship and a high level of need. Always positive in her interactions with customers, she goes the “extra mile” to ensure that all customers’ needs are met. Ms. Bachman is the first staff person to assist her co-workers when needed, and she offers support to her peers while sharing knowledge gleaned from many years of hands on experience. For these reasons and more, Ms. Bachman exemplifies customer service excellence in every aspect of her work life.

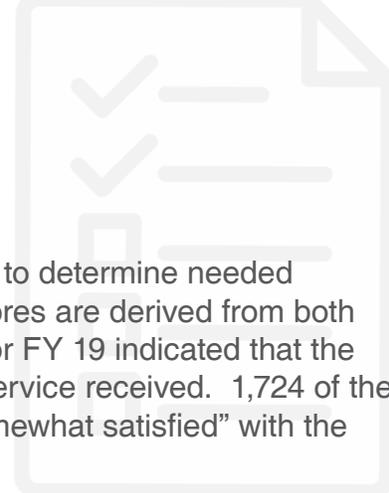
## **Kerri Daye - Director’s Assistant Worcester County**

Ms. Daye is an exceptionally positive individual and has the skills and passion to handle anything that comes across her way efficiently. Her customer service skills are excellent. She is constantly answering questions, listening to someone’s concerns or concentrating on her work. She embodies the agency’s mission and responds to customers in a concerned, caring manner, directing them to the most appropriate service and she engages co-workers the same way. She has gained the trust of all her colleagues. Her positivity is contagious, her motto is “what can I do to help,” and she makes everyone feel important and puts customers first.



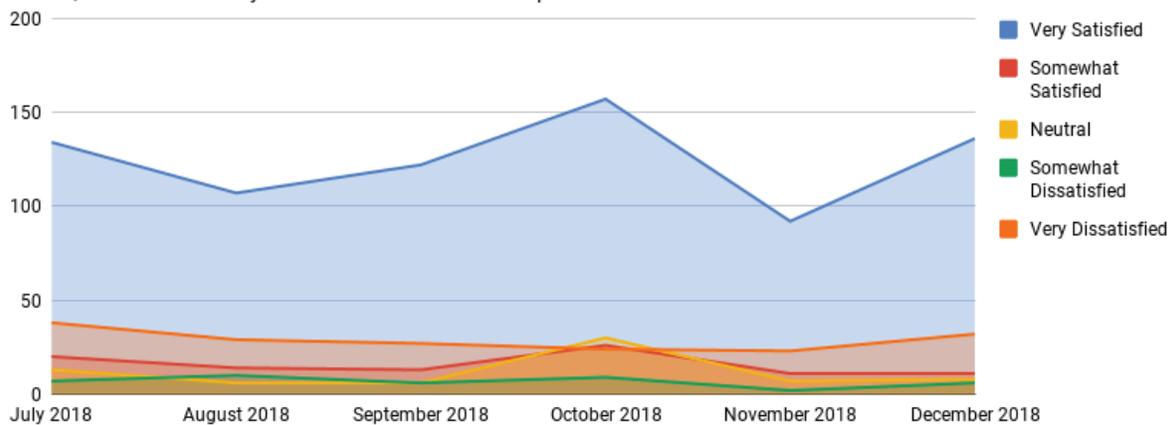
# Customer Service Survey Results

DHS reviews customer survey feedback on a regular basis to determine needed actions and new areas of focus. Satisfaction and effort scores are derived from both DHS email and website surveys. Primary survey results<sup>1</sup> for FY 19 indicated that the majority of Department customers were pleased with the service received. 1,724 of the 2,254 respondents stated they were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with the customer service provided.



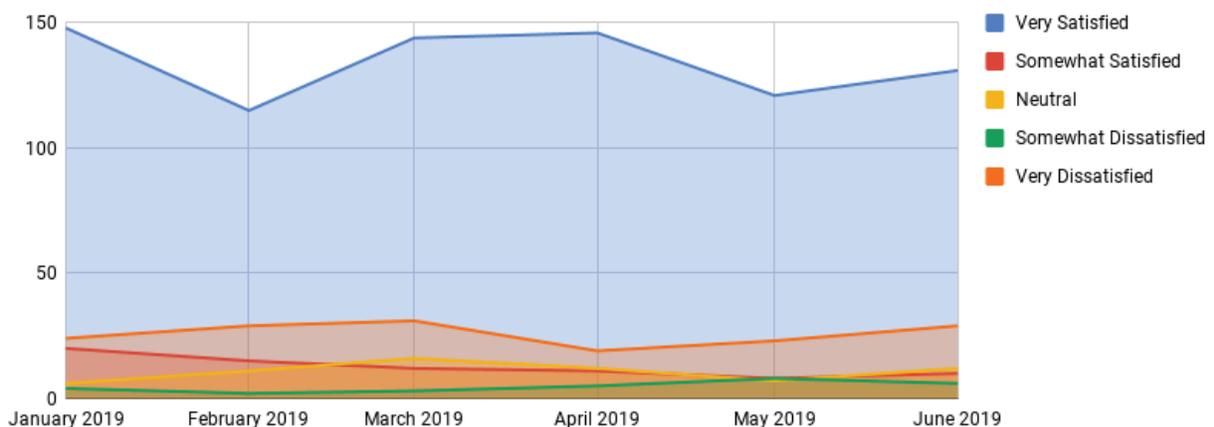
## 1st and 2nd Quarter FY 19

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



## 3rd and 4th Quarter FY 19

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



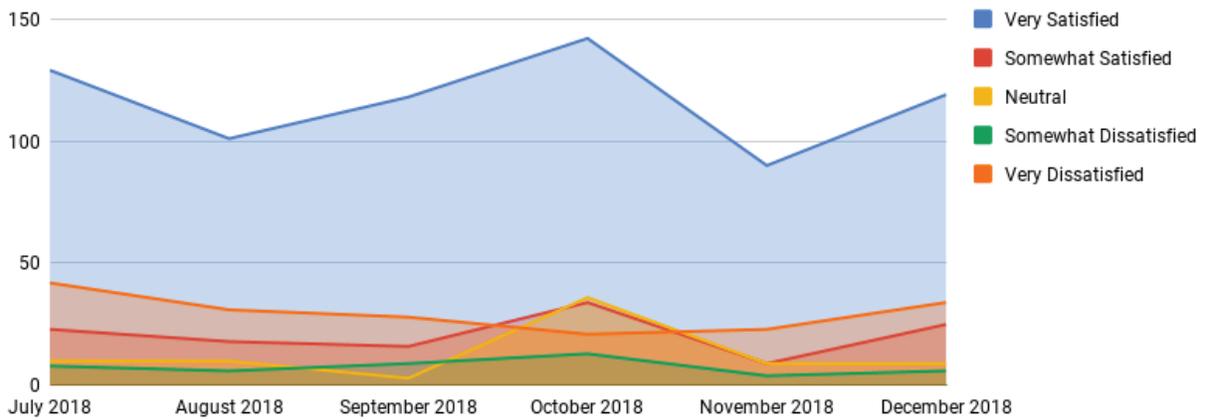
<sup>1</sup> Primary numbers reflect results from the Governor’s Office of Performance Improvement (GOPI) survey.

Similarly, the majority of responders - 1,683 of the 2,254 responders – provided positive customer effort feedback.



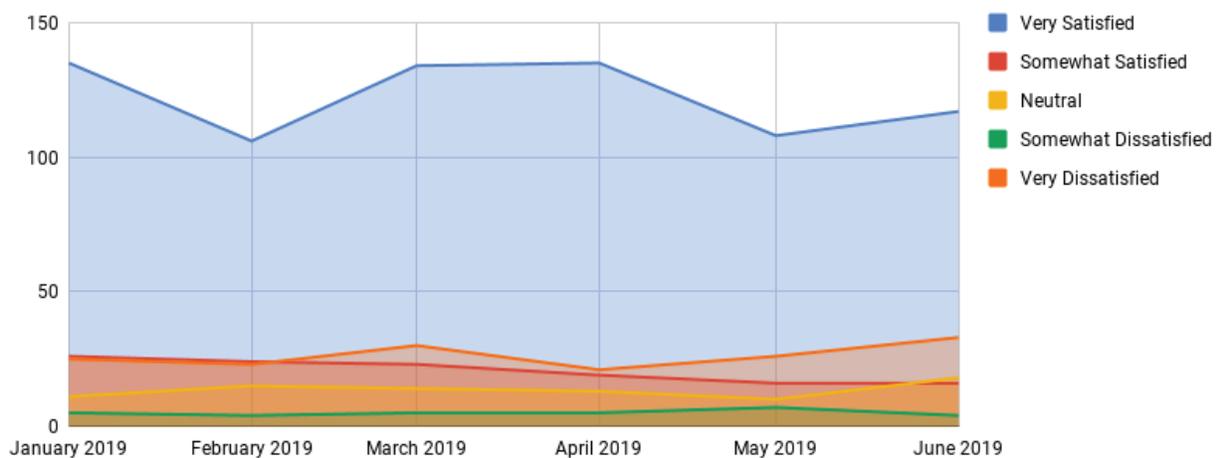
### 1st and 2nd Quarter FY 19

The state agency made it easy for me to handle my issue...

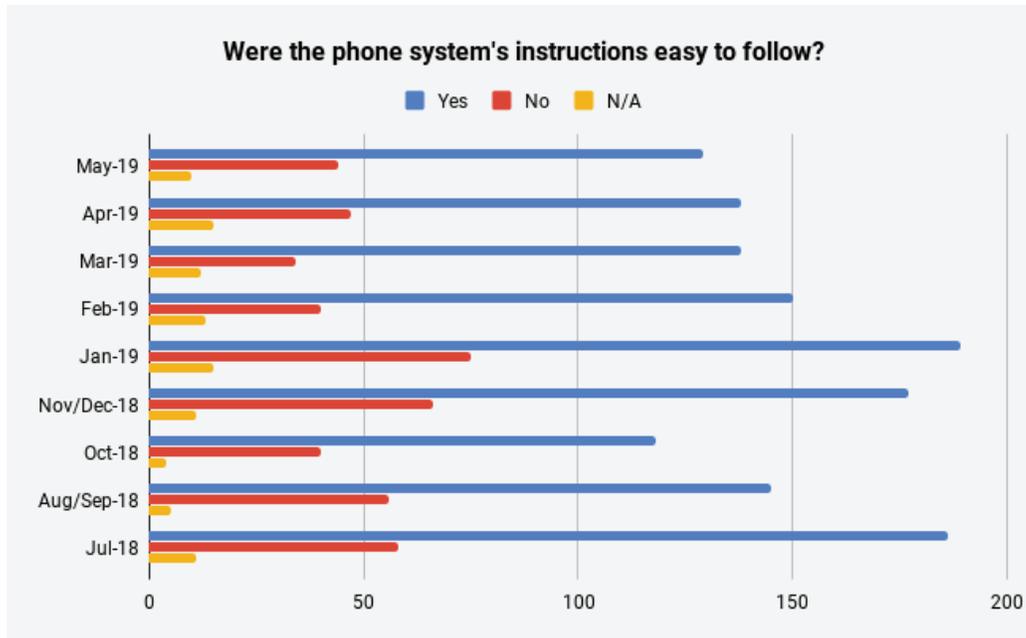


### 3rd and 4th Quarter FY 19

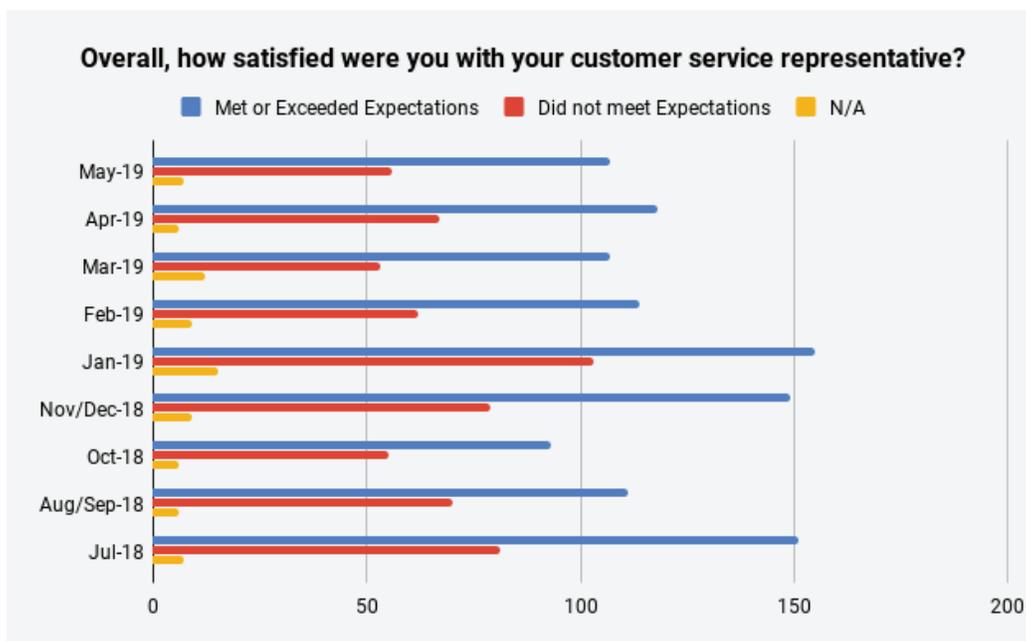
The state agency made it easy for me to handle my issue...



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 in FY 19 are shown below.



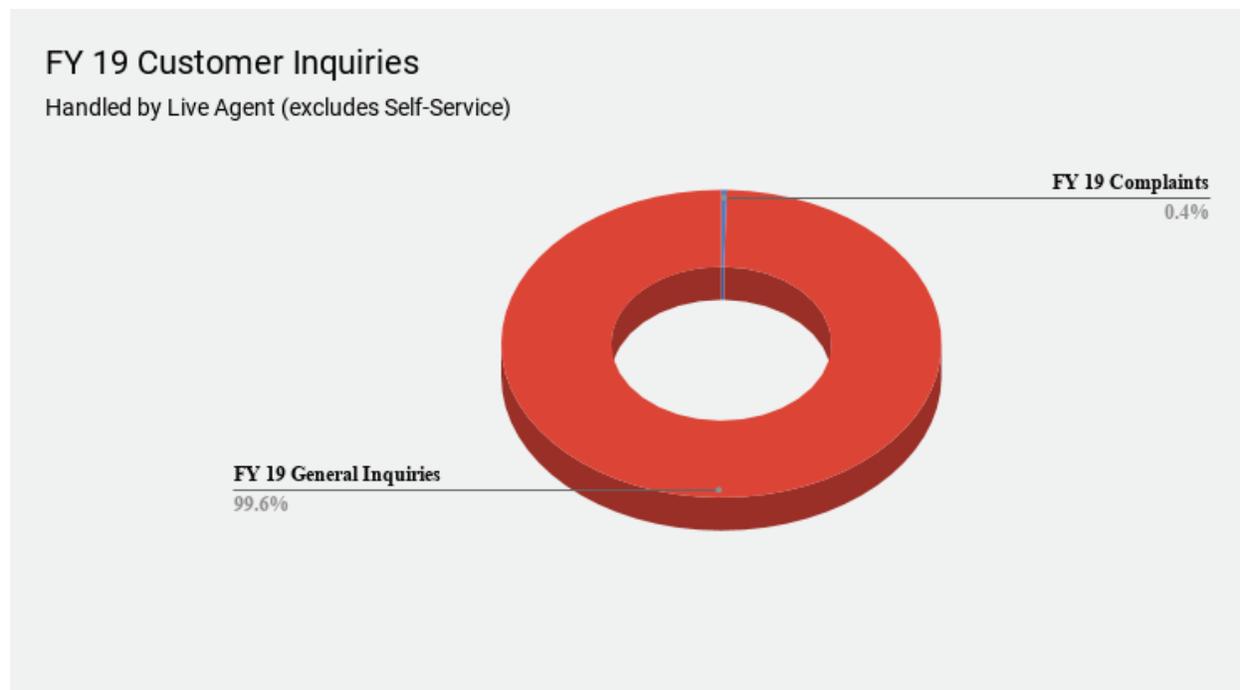
Another way the Department maintains a pulse on the health of its customer experience is by tracking complaint volume about the delivery of service across six key categories, including the following: Application Not Processed, Case Discrepancy, Discrimination, No Response from Agency/Administration, Technical Difficulties, and



Reports of Unprofessionalism. In FY 19, total complaints in all six key categories represented less than one percent of all general inquiries.<sup>2</sup>

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Application (not processed)	45	68	37	27
Case Discrepancy	129	137	197	145
Discrimination	0	0	0	0
No response from Agency or Administration	113	322	250	359
Technical Difficulties	314	225	100	198
Unprofessional by Staff	106	91	48	103
<b>Total FY 19 Complaints</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>843</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>832</b>
<b>Total General Customer Inquiries</b>	<b>197,148</b>	<b>166,075</b>	<b>186,684</b>	<b>214,818</b>

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



<sup>2</sup> General Inquiries include General Information/Referral Requests or Request for a Specific Service.

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

Ensuring the continuous provision of customer service training for all full-time and contractual staff remains a top priority. In FY 19, the Department deployed six web-based refresher training modules to build upon the DHS-designed G.O.L.D. Standard Customer Service training. In total, FY 19 training included the following:

- 28 G.O.L.D. Customer Service sessions were delivered throughout the state of Maryland.
- 18,459 online G.O.L.D. Customer Service short-course refresher modules were completed by Department personnel.
- Phase II of the Department's newly designed Fast Track Fundamental Administrative and Supervisory Training Program was successfully delivered to 70 percent of DHS supervisory staff, in a total of 77 sessions offered by the Department's learning unit.



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

### Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

The Department also remains committed to improving overall 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).



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Applying for Benefits



Earned Income Tax Credit



Social Security Administration



Disability Resources



Food Supplement Stand-Alone Application



Long Term Care Application



Voter Registration Link



Find a Local Office

In FY 19, customer inquiry work orders forwarded to local jurisdictions for further assistance were resolved within one to two weeks on average.

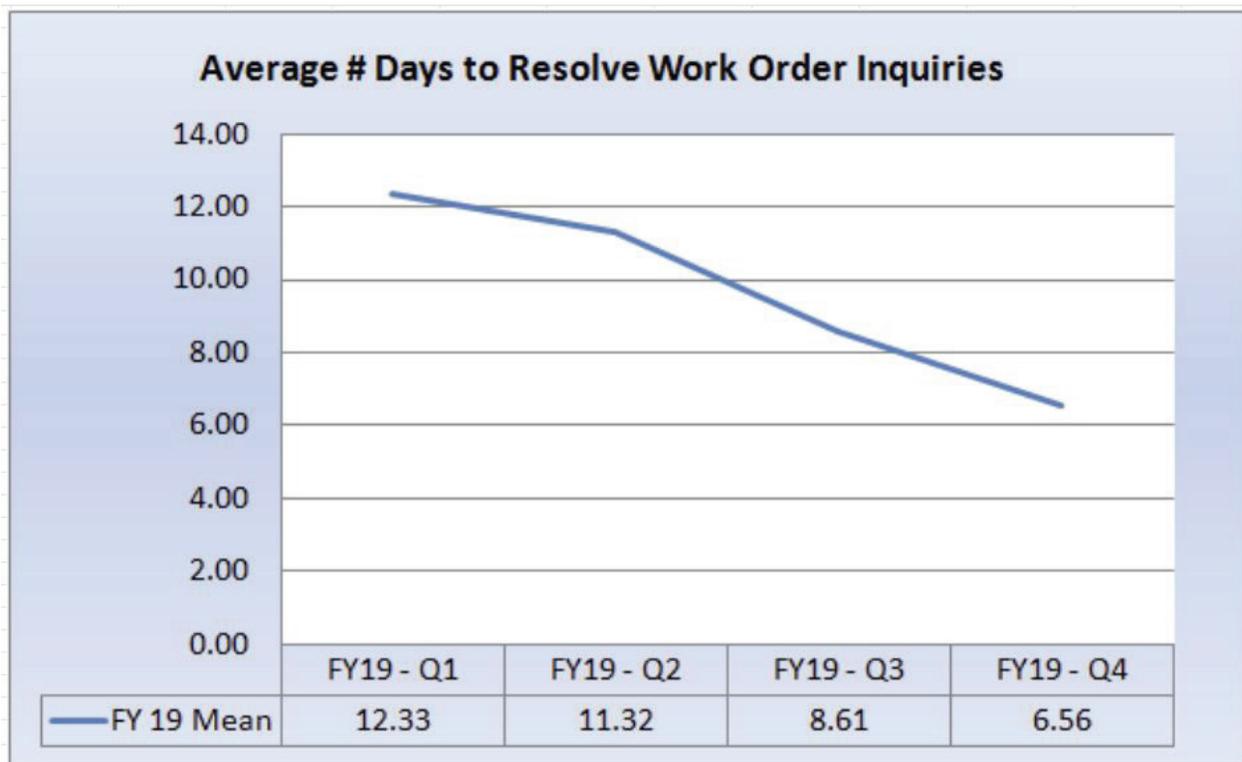
### Call Center Data

The Department’s Statewide Customer Service Call Center serves all DHS programs, providing a variety of information including local office locations, telephone numbers, program details, and policy and case specific information. Operated by a third-party vendor under a five-year contract, its Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) also update client information within DHS case management systems and communicate with local offices using a workflow tool within the Customer Relations Management (CRM) system.

State of the art self-service prompts are available 24/7 via the IVR, and CSRs operate between the hours of 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM on Monday through Friday, excluding state

#### FY19 Work Order Response Time Data:

Average # Days to Resolve Work Order Inquiries			
FY19 - Q1	FY19 - Q2	FY19 - Q3	FY19 - Q4
12.33	11.32	8.61	6.56

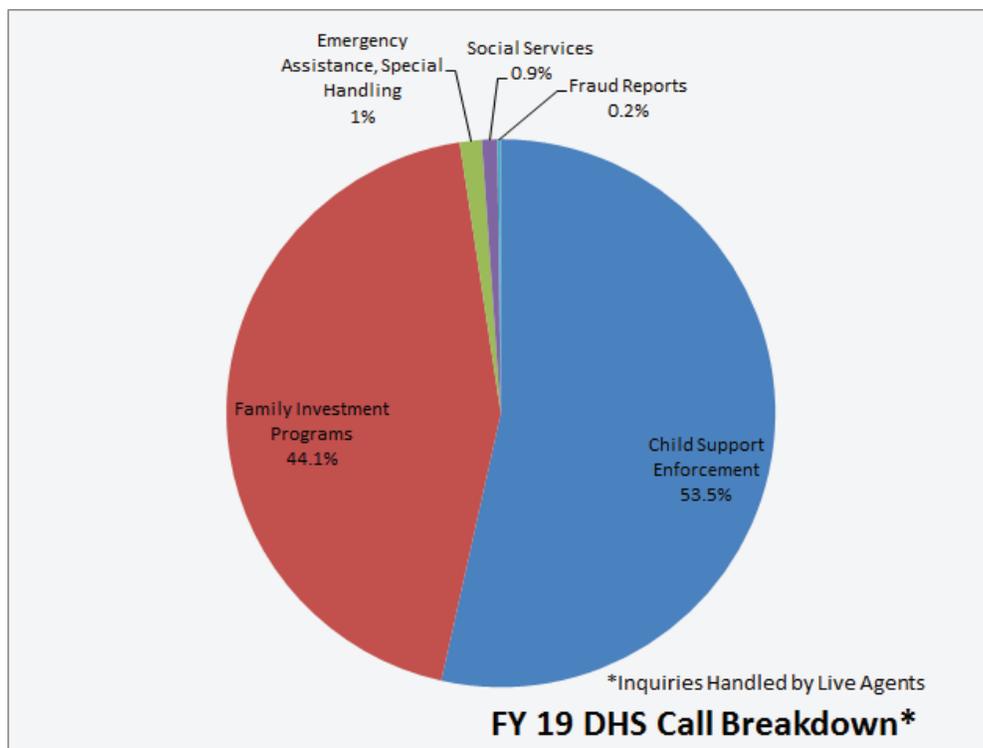


holidays. All customer interactions must meet the standard of service specified by Maryland’s Customer Service Promise.<sup>3</sup>

In FY 19, center staff assisted with 738,845 live customer inquiries. An additional 672,556 caller inquiries were resolved via use of self-service prompts within the IVR. While most caller inquiries pertained to Family Investment or Child Support Administrations, all programs and services were represented in the data.

Call talk time and call handling time during FY 19 averaged 4.42 minutes (04:25) and 5.93 minutes (05:56), respectively.<sup>4</sup> Average wait times during 2019 varied between 4.98 minutes (04:59) and 13.6 minutes (13:36), depending on the specific caller queue.

	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>	672,556	445,773	1,118,329	293,072	738,845	79%
<b>Monthly Average</b>	56,046	37,148	93,194	24,423	61,570	79%



<sup>3</sup> See <http://dhr.maryland.gov/about-dhs/customer-service-promise/>.

<sup>4</sup> Data represents a weighted average based on call volume.

**In addition to its self-service options, the IVR offers customers a call-back option at anytime while waiting to speak with a representative.**

**Best Practices**

The Department's FY 19 processes for handling and resolving customer inquiries utilized multiple industry 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:** All employees received training and/ or refreshers that provided an understanding of the Department's customers and its Customer Service Strategy.
- **Recognition of Customer Service Excellence:** The Department's October 2018 celebration marked the 19th year of saluting colleagues who exemplified supreme 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 platforms.
- **A Holistic Approach:** the Department incorporated a holistic approach in the development of digital tools; DHS also piloted in four jurisdictions a Common Customer Intake business model.
- **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 doing.
- **Experience Design:** The Department invested significant resources into aligning its IT Modernization efforts with a customer-focused culture.

**Plans for Improvement**

DHS' vision is to be a service organization that is forward-looking and focuses on enhancing the customer experience, leveraging technology to optimize customer interactions, and is focused on professional development, customer satisfaction, and service.

These principles guided the FY 19 development on an intelligent IVR. The enhanced, intelligent IVR will anticipate customer needs, streamline calls and provide additional self-service options. Callers will be directed based on previous call patterns and interaction with Customer Service Representatives. Deployment of the enhanced IVR

is scheduled for early FY 20, and expected results include reduced wait times and improved overall customer experience.

## Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

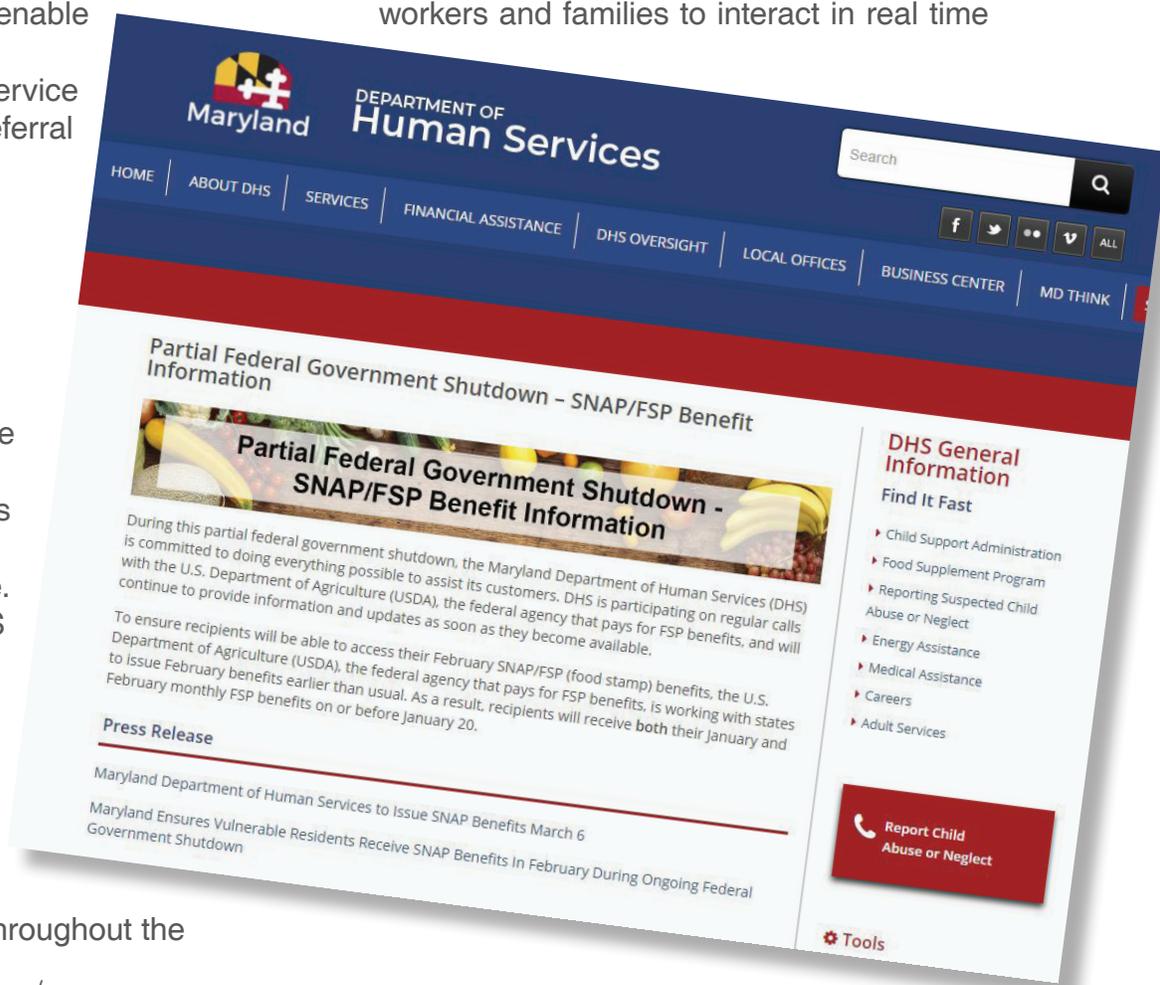
### Making Agency Services Available Online

DHS continued to add to the many programs and services accessible to constituents online through its consumer portals. Implementation of the new online application for Long Term Care (LTC, accessible through the Department's new Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system) was completed in FY 19.

DHS also began piloting its new **C**hild **J**uvenile & **A**dult **M**anagement **S**ystem (CJAMS). Part of the MD THINK initiative, CJAMS is an information management system application that supports Child Welfare and Adult Services combined with DJS Juvenile Services. The system will enable workers and families to interact in real time when dealing with issues of safety, service planning, and referral to services.

Additionally, DHS strives to make general program information easy for constituents to access through the public facing website,<sup>5</sup> as customers increasingly look for answers online. For example, DHS launched a new website to support Marylanders impacted by the partial Federal shutdown in January 2019.<sup>6</sup>

Data shows that throughout the



<sup>5</sup> <http://dhs.maryland.gov/>.

<sup>6</sup> Maryland Department of Human Services (2019). [online] Available at <http://news.dhr.maryland.gov/reports/that/department-human-services-launches-website-support-marylanders-impacted-ongoing-partial-federal-shutdown/>.



fiscal year, 970,472 first time users visited the DHS website, of which more than half accessed the site via a mobile or tablet device. This resulted in more than 4 million page views throughout the fiscal year.

### **Processing Times for Customer Transactions**

In conjunction with the development of the intelligent IVR and improved, online consumer portals on a shared data platform,<sup>7</sup> DHS also tackled physical business unit processes within the local office. Four jurisdictions have now piloted the use of a Common Customer Intake (CCI) process, an updated intake approach designed to improve the customer journey by eliminating or minimizing customer handoffs between agency modal/units. CCI requires the use of a singular intake specialist, trained to coordinate resources and make all necessary program referrals. By serving customers with a holistic intake approach, the agency is able to reduce duplication of services and facilitate early intervention and barrier removal.

The Child Support Administration (CSA) also pursued creative solutions with its

Work Sharing Project in FY 19. CSA staff in seven counties pooled resources to help hundreds of families in need of child support payments. Without regard to county borders, they made extraordinary strides in disbursing over \$900,000 owed to custodial parents. That success translated into tangible assistance used to feed, clothe and house children, giving them the opportunity to thrive.

### **Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience**

Throughout FY 19, DHS worked to strengthen both its social media presence and effectiveness. DHS used Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and its newest platform, Instagram, to effectively display outstanding and reliable customer service for Maryland residents. Use of these social media platforms enable the agency to establish and build relationships with the public on all public facing platforms in a way that is reflective of our mission to serve.

DHS Facebook followers span 47 countries, 47 cities, and 36 languages. At the time of reporting, the account had 6,840 followers, reflecting a 20.02% increase in comparison to FY 18. On Facebook, DHS frequently manages inquiries from customers through

<sup>7</sup> MD THINK is a multi-program, multi-departmental shared human services cloud-based platform using Amazon Web Services (AWS). This approach allows Maryland agencies to gain a holistic view of citizens receiving benefits and analyze data across agencies to design better assistance programs.

direct-messaging, assisting residents or finding appropriate resources for the issue in question. The Department replies to all messages, upholding a 100% response rate in FY 19 and connecting with customers over 380 times. With more than one thousand post engagements on each post, an average of 40 daily page views, and more than 6,900 page likes this fiscal year, DHS continues to improve the customer experience.



The DHS Twitter account also has global visibility with active followers from Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, and more. DHS' Twitter account has 3,460 followers and the engagement rate ranges from 64.2K to 225.4K impressions per month. Since FY 18, the account has gained 647 new followers, reflecting a 23% audience increase. Similar to its Facebook response, DHS fields Twitter inquiries from customers, upholding a 100% response rate and connecting with customers over 20 times within the span of reporting.

The DHS LinkedIn account serves as a recruitment tool for the business community. Our audience is primarily stationed within Maryland, New York, Philadelphia, Delaware, District of Columbia, and Massachusetts. On this platform, DHS also highlights organizational events, initiatives, and the accomplishments of DHS staff. At the time of reporting, the Department LinkedIn account had 3,030 followers and more than 4,400 page views. The account gained 546 new followers since FY 18, reflecting a 21.98% audience increase.

DHS slowly incorporated Instagram within its spectrum of social media platforms during FY 19 and now has 566 followers spanning two countries and the cities of Baltimore, Silver Spring, Hagerstown, Waldorf, and District of Columbia.

For FY 20, DHS will continue to make customer service online a top priority. The Department plans to implement the use of notable Instagram features such as Instagram Stories, Instagram Live, IGTV, Story Highlights, direct-messaging, and video editing features to engage with constituents through various angles. DHS is committed to being present and available across the many platforms customers use, and it is our goal to have every customer positively associate DHS with the personality they connect and interact with online.





CHANGING  
*Maryland*  
*for the Better*

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF  
**HUMAN SERVICES CUSTOMER SERVICE**  
ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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Lt. Governor



**Larry Hogan**  
Governor



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Secretary

