

DHHS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section III:	Communications
Title:	Customer Service
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Purpose

The work of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) is customer centered. DHHS staff often serve more than one customer group. Customers may include but are not limited to direct service clients, family members, advocates for clients, other agencies or staff (either internal or external).

Customer service is about the way any organization or business, including DHHS, responds to needs and requests from its internal and external customers. DHHS employees shall make it a priority to anticipate customer needs and provide effective, resourceful and caring services while inspiring the highest level of customer trust.

The purpose of this policy is to establish the principles and guidelines that promote customer service excellence throughout (DHHS) and to establish guidelines for the collection of data for assessing customer service and satisfaction.

Policy

It is the policy of DHHS that each departmental entity and employee shall strive to deliver services and products that meet or exceed customer expectations and needs and strive to meet the goals for promoting customer service excellence. Each division, facility and school shall establish and implement methods to assess customer service and satisfaction with the services and products, and shall obtain data on customer satisfaction at least annually. As noted, DHHS staff often serve more than one customer group. At a minimum, entities should survey their primary customers who are in receipt of their goods and services.

The goals for promoting customer service excellence are:

1. To seek and establish ways to recognize employees for providing top-notch customer service.
2. To equip employees with the tools, training and authority to respond to customer needs.
3. To monitor national trends and will modify delivery methods based on evolving health and human service needs of customers.
4. To maximize resources by encouraging employees to collaborate across division lines.
5. To involve partners and customers in setting best practices/benchmarks for both internal and external business activities.
6. To encourage a culture where customer complaints are accepted and viewed as opportunities for improvement.
7. To provide information in alternate formats and make every reasonable effort to communicate information using appropriate modes of communication as used by our

customers and a manner that is user-friendly for our customers with disabilities or language and cultural differences.

The goals for assessing customer service and satisfaction are:

1. To improve the effectiveness of the programs and services we provide to our clients by applying customer feedback and corrective actions as needed.
2. To provide more comprehensive information on the impact we are having on our customers.
3. To assist in the identification of customer service gaps that may need to be addressed.
4. To develop a coordinated system for measuring, summarizing, and comparing customer service and satisfaction across DHHS where possible.
5. To increase the capacity of DHHS staff in providing efficient and effective services to our customers that is consistent with our organizational values.
6. To include the customer's perspective in our efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of our products and services as one of our key organizational values.

Implementation

1. All DHHS employees shall do their part to identify requirements with customers, seek out and eliminate potential problems in their work processes and resolve problems in a way that prevents them from recurring.
2. Each employee shall maintain a work environment that is conducive to efficiency and good business practices.
3. Each employee shall accept shared accountability for the success or failure of programs and services in their office or division.
4. Each employee shall anticipate and respond to customer needs as a high priority. We shall strive to meet and exceed customer expectations when we deliver products or services.
5. Each division, facility and school shall have and implement a plan that specifies the methods and procedures to be used for assessing customer service and satisfaction; and describes the process to be used for evaluating and applying the results obtained to improve the quality and effectiveness of services and products provided.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. A customer satisfaction survey is defined as one that attempts to gauge the level of satisfaction that customers have regarding the employees, products or services of a DHHS entity, as well as the entity itself. Satisfaction is multidimensional; therefore customer satisfaction surveys need to be carefully designed so that they measure key satisfaction dimensions. In addition, these surveys should collect information to assure that important differences in our customers are taken into account.

2. An employee satisfaction survey is defined as one that attempts to gauge the level of satisfaction that employees have working for DHHS, including, but not limited to satisfaction with DHHS and divisional/office/institutional leadership, satisfaction with one's job, working environment, salary and benefits, and any other aspect of working for DHHS.

Data Collection and Reporting

1. Divisions, facilities and schools shall gather data utilizing one or more modes of data collection as appropriate and accessible for the customers being assessed and report results that will clearly measure whether the individual or entity is meeting, exceeding or failing to meet customer expectations. At a minimum, customer satisfaction data collection and reporting shall address the customer satisfaction performance standards outlined in the [Procedures for Conducting Customer Satisfaction Surveys](#).
2. All data collection regardless of the method used shall adhere to accepted ethical and privacy standards.

For questions or clarification on any of the information contained in this policy, please contact the [Office of Citizen Services](#). For general questions about department-wide policies and procedures, contact the [Office of Policy & Planning](#).