



Development Services Customer Service Policy Standards

The purpose of this document is to establish customer service standards for employees of the City of Austin Development Services Department (DSD). DSD employees are knowledgeable in our work, accessible to customers, responsive to needs, fair and consistent in our practices, flexible and creative in our problem solving, and informative to our customers as we help them navigate processes.

Our commitment to these service standards enables our customers to have a positive experience when interacting with our department. The goal is to reinforce an organizational culture which focuses on the needs of customers and to codify our shared values.

Definition of Customer

A Customer is someone affected, directly or indirectly, by the services we provide. This includes customers who are internal or external, new or repeat – *everyone* who is impacted by the work we do. We aim to treat all our customers with the same excellent service.

Staffing for Customer Needs

We aim to be fully staffed to meet our customers' demands. We strive to be at our work areas when expected and communicate in a timely manner when we have to be away for any reason.

Time Commitments

Time is valuable. When we agree to a time commitment, we uphold our responsibility. If we cannot, we proactively reschedule, send a delegate, or otherwise notify our customer, as appropriate.

Etiquette

We aim to make our work with customers pleasant. We acknowledge and respond to customers in a polite and timely manner by whatever means of communication they deem most appropriate.

- In-person Etiquette
We dress appropriately and are professional. We identify ourselves and focus on the customer by using appropriate eye contact and body language.
- Telephone Etiquette
We present a helpful attitude while efficiently taking care of all the business and the procedural requests of the customer. We listen to the customer fully and strive to meet all needs.
- Voicemail Etiquette
We aim to quickly retrieve our messages and respond to the customers in as timely a manner as possible, using the most appropriate means of interaction for the situation. We keep our outgoing greetings updated. When leaving messages on others' voicemail, we aim for brevity while giving complete information about who, how, and what is required.
- Email Etiquette
We respond to emails in a timely manner. We aim to use proper grammar with clear and professional language. We follow our Brand Use Guidelines for consistency in communication style and content.

- Web Etiquette
We aim to make web services efficient, timely, and an effective means of communication. We publish our availability and keep online resources current.
- Cell Phone Etiquette
We acknowledge that a cell phone may be the primary means of conducting business. We encourage appropriate cell phone usage to facilitate effective and efficient business transactions. We focus on our customers and ask them for the same courtesy.

Web-based Tools & Resources

We make our online resources available, functional, and intuitive. We create and maintain useful departmental web-based tools and technological resources that enable customer self-service wherever feasible. This includes such things as informational resources on our website, technology portals, digital communication methods, and other future tools.

Training for All

We provide employee development programs to refresh our knowledge and to enhance and improve efficiency and production. Training is available to all DSD employees (including temporary, seasonal, and contract employees) and our customers.

Controlled Escalation

We empower all employees to handle potentially difficult situations without the need to escalate every one. We recognize that sometimes we need to involve someone with more experience or latitude who can consider a different outcome. We provide employees and customers with the resources to escalate the issue to a supervisor when necessary.

Safety

Safety is important to us. Emergency and crisis training is provided for and practiced by every employee in case of possible threat.

Navigation

We prioritize assisting our customers in their journey through the development process. We maximize technology resources to assist in self-service. Communications are available in understandable formats.

Collecting & Processing Feedback

Because we want our customers to have positive experiences, we invite input and collect suggestions for improvements. We recognize employees who provide quality customer experiences and use all feedback as training opportunities.

Closing the Customer Service Experience

As we complete the interaction with each customer, we ensure that they have received the service or information they need from us.

This document provides the framework for the design of service delivery procedures that ensure DSD employees consistently demonstrate exceptional customer service in their behaviors and interactions with all customers, while meeting or exceeding City of Austin policies.