

Department of the Interior

Departmental Manual

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Part 368: Citizen-Centered Customer Service

Chapter 1: Policy and Procedures

Originating Office: Office of Planning and Performance Management

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1.1 General. This chapter provides the citizen-centered customer service policy for the Department of the Interior (DOI). The Department's citizen-centered customer service policy complements Interior's Public Participation in Decision-making Policy (301 DM 2). The policy in 301 DM 2 states that the Department will offer the public meaningful opportunities for participation in decision-making processes leading to actions and policies which may significantly affect or interest them. The citizen-centered customer service policy outlines responsibilities within the Department for obtaining citizen and customer feedback and for integrating the feedback into program planning and business practices. The policy in this chapter:

- A. Reaffirms DOI's commitment to creating a citizen-centered government;
- B. States the Department's responsibility to communicate, consult, and cooperate with customers to find out what they need, and to deliver the products and services they need;
- C. Serves as a reminder to all DOI employees to interact with customers, partners, and citizens in a courteous, professional manner; respond to their identified needs; and integrate the needs into DOI's program planning and implementation; and
- D. Establishes a framework for complying with the authorities described in paragraph 1.3 below.

1.2 Definitions.

- A. General.
 - (1) Customer. Anyone who uses DOI resources, products, or services. This includes internal customers (anyone within DOI) as well as external customers (e.g., the American public, representatives of the private sector, academia, and other government agencies). Depending upon their role in specific situations and interactions, citizens and DOI partners may also be considered customers.
 - (2) Partner. Those groups, individuals, and agencies who have an interest in and

are formally engaged in helping DOI accomplish its mission.

(3) Citizen-Centered Service. Meeting the needs of citizens by delivering high quality information, products, and services that are timely, cost effective, and useful, for DOI core missions.

(4) One-Stop. A single point for accessing information, products, or services.

B. DOI General Customer Segments. Interior's customers range from members of special interest groups to State and local government agencies and tribal governments. The following is an illustrative list that provides DOI's major customer segments. This should not be considered an all-inclusive list, nor should this list be considered the prescriptive basis for customer satisfaction information collection activities. DOI offices and bureaus have the flexibility to define respondent universes of information collection efforts in many ways, including by the DOI products that they use. (The following items are not in any priority order.)

- (1) American public
- (2) State governments
- (3) Local governments
- (4) Indian tribal governments
- (5) Individual Indians/Alaska Natives/Native Americans
- (6) Local communities
- (7) Contractors/Vendors
- (8) Non-profit organizations (e.g., natural resource, citizen, and conservation groups)
- (9) News media
- (10) Businesses and trade associations
- (11) Congress
- (12) Other Federal agencies
- (13) Academic institutions
- (14) Zoo, aquarium, and botanical garden organizations and associations
- (15) Law enforcement authorities, customer brokers, and brokers' associations

(16) Scientific data users and technical assistance recipients

(17) Private and public land owners, users (e.g., hunters, anglers, farmers, bankers, real estate representatives, and land trust operators)

(18) Volunteers

(19) Foreign entities (e.g., governments, companies, organizations, groups)

1.3 Authority. The DOI citizen-centered customer service policy complies with the following:

A. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular No. A-11, APreparation and Submission of Budget Estimates.@ OMB Circular A-11 encourages agencies to reflect a commitment to providing the highest quality service possible to the American people within budget estimates. It does the following:

(1) Restates the goal of Executive Order 12862 Ato make all aspects of the Executive Branch’s management practices and operations equal to or better than the best service in the private sector;@

(2) Encourages agencies to consider ways to enhance customer service to both Federal and non-Federal clients based upon information obtained from customer service surveys and other sources; and

(3) Suggests that budget estimates reflect implementation of customer service plans, including training and information collection needed to achieve customer service standards.

B. Executive Order 12862, ASetting Customer Service Standards.@

C. Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). The policy in this chapter also supports provisions of the GPRA that require Federal agencies to set performance goals and measures with an emphasis on outcomes. In developing goals and measures Federal agencies are required to seek input from customers. Customer input should be incorporated into GPRA plans, as appropriate.

1.4 Policy. It is the policy of the Department to provide the best customer service possible, and make products, information, and services citizen-centered. This includes:

A. Effectively managing programs to support conservation through cooperation, consultation, and communication;

B. Responding to customer needs with the intent to advance public participation and public information access;

- C. Using technology to help further electronic, one-stop government to better serve the public;
- D. Finding ways to efficiently and effectively implement policy;
- E. Being committed to make customer and citizen feedback an integral part of strategic plans, training programs, personnel systems, and other approaches that impact citizen and customer satisfaction with DOI products and services; and
- F. Measuring citizen and customer satisfaction levels associated with services, products, and information through periodic surveys, face-to-face meetings, and frequent communication with customers. (Data obtained from the customer interactions will be used to identify opportunities for improvement.)

1.5 DOI Citizen-Centered Standards. DOI customers can expect the following:

- A. Courteous and respectful treatment;
- B. Prompt and accurate information in response to inquiries and complaints;
- C. Response to requests for information in a specified time-period through a single point of contact whenever possible;
- D. Consultation and consideration of input in DOI plans, programs, and services;
- E. Integrated delivery of services, information, and products through one-stop service delivery mechanisms, where possible and as appropriate, such as web-based transactional systems, on-line forms, cross-agency call centers, and office or service centers;
- F. Prompt attention to issues, concerns, and problems identified.

1.6 Responsibilities. Providing good service is the responsibility of all DOI employees.

- A. Assistant Secretaries and heads of bureaus and offices are responsible for ensuring that:

- (1) Bureau and office principals regularly engage the American public to obtain feedback regarding programs, products, and services.

- (2) A means for addressing customer and citizen feedback, complaints, and inquiries in a systematic manner is evaluated, established, and maintained. This would include the ability to report, verify, analyze, and integrate customer feedback into program plans and activities.

- (3) Opportunities for improving citizen-centered and customer service are identified and addressed by each bureau and office.

(4) Customer service goals and performance measures are developed within the context of GPRA's annual performance planning process.

(5) Progress in meeting goals and performance measures is tracked and evaluated, and summary reports regarding progress are made available to customers and employees through Annual Performance Planning and Annual Performance Reporting.

(6) A Customer Service Coordinator is designated to represent each bureau and office on the DOI Customer Forum and to fulfill responsibilities as described within paragraph 1.6C.

(7) Bureaus and offices make effective use of the Department's Programmatic Clearance for Customer Satisfaction Surveys.

(8) Bureaus are strongly encouraged to, on an annual basis, collect customer satisfaction information pertaining to mission areas and administrative services by using quantitative or qualitative tools (including focus groups, FACA groups, special meetings, workshops, surveys, questionnaires). Bureaus should summarize respondent data and identify opportunities for improving programs, services, and information in response to customer and citizen feedback. To the extent feasible, bureaus and DOI will use the information collected to evaluate progress in meeting GPRA goals and performance measures. Bureaus will provide copies of reports summarizing feedback obtained from customers and efforts and actions identified in response to that feedback to the Office of Planning and Performance Management Chair of the DOI Customer Forum on an ongoing basis as soon as this information becomes available.

B. Office of Planning and Performance Management. The Office of Planning and Performance Management is responsible for the following:

(1) Chairing the DOI Customer Forum and appointing a co-chair from a bureau, as appropriate;

(2) Coordinating the development of citizen-centered customer service policies, guidance, and other activities on behalf of the Department of the Interior;

(3) Managing the Department's Programmatic Clearance for Customer Satisfaction Surveys (Generic Clearance). This includes serving as a liaison with bureau and office principals and coordinating requests for survey approvals under the Generic Clearance with the Office of Management and Budget;

(4) Integrating customer satisfaction data obtained from information collection devices into Departmental strategic planning and performance reporting;

(5) Establishing a unified citizen-centered customer relationship management policy that ensures bureaus and offices are following common data standards, sharing

information as appropriate, and addressing customer concerns in a systematic, comprehensive, and credible manner.

C. Customer Service Coordinator. Heads of bureaus and offices will designate a Customer Service Coordinator responsible for:

(1) Serving as the bureau or office representative to the DOI Customer Service Forum;

(2) Ensuring that information, measures, and benchmarking data regarding customer service activities, goals, and requirements are synthesized and communicated appropriately within their respective bureau or office;

(3) Providing advice and guidance to program managers on ways to conduct information collection efforts on customer satisfaction. This includes providing assistance in reviewing survey reports and developing recommendations based on data obtained from customers of the respective bureau or office; and

(4) Assisting Departmental managers with the development and management of a comprehensive citizen and customer relationship management program to address customer concerns in a systematic manner that can be reported, verified, analyzed and integrated into program plans and activities.

D. DOI Customer Service Forum. The DOI Customer Service Forum is a means through which bureaus and offices share citizen and customer service experiences, ideas, and lessons learned. The forum serves as an advisory group to Departmental managers regarding tools, techniques, and best practices. It is also a resource to the Department's program and management teams, particularly in helping to realize goals of the President's Management Agenda in creating a citizen-centered government. It is responsible for:

(1) Coordinating customer data and providing advice for customer relationship management, particularly in the area of electronic government and in attaining GPRA goals.

(2) Reviewing and providing advice to program managers on ways to effectively and efficiently implement the DOI Programmatic Clearance for Customer Satisfaction Surveys. Members of the Customer Service Forum will work to identify opportunities for coordinating customer satisfaction surveys across the Department's bureaus and offices with a view toward minimizing the burden on customers while optimizing resources needed to deploy survey tools.

(3) Assisting senior management officials in developing plans and implementing measures related to citizen centered government.

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