

# Sturgeon County's Customer Service Standards

## History

Customer service is everyone's responsibility, not just those who staff the front counters. Every time we interact with an individual, answer the telephone, send an email, write a letter, or attend a meeting, we are making an impression on our customers – whether they are residents, visitors, people working with our staff on a project, or county employees.

In November of 2001, all county employees participated in a Service Best Training session. This initiative was developed to be corporate wide and on going with one-day workshops being held annually or as needed to ensure new employees receive the service skills and techniques to deliver exceptional customer service.

To further enhance the Service Best Training, a Task Force was established in January, 2007, to develop countywide customer service standards that would be specific, measurable, and reasonable. These customer service standards were created for employees to follow to ensure that the quality of service to all of our customers meets or exceeds their expectations.

All new employees will be introduced to these standards as part of their orientation program. The county will continue to provide customer service training opportunities for employees so that all staff members understand the value of customer service as well as the importance of following the county's approved standards.

## Guiding Principles

The Task Force worked to ensure that the customer service standards were consistent with the Sturgeon County's Mission Statement:

*“To provide a variety of municipal programs and services in an efficient and cost effective manner.”*

Accordingly, the Task Force has identified the importance of recognizing and respecting standards of customer service:

### *Customer Service Statement*

“Sturgeon County is committed to service excellence. We strive for the highest standards of professionalism, respect and service to all our residents, external clients and co-workers. To show our commitment towards outstanding service, our employees have been trained and practice the *Service Best* philosophy. Service Best is based on a positive attitude and the belief that each one of us can and must make a positive difference.”

## Telephone/Voicemail

*"Customers have a right to expect that..."*

- The phone will be answered promptly.
- Their call will be answered in a courteous manner.
- The staff member answering the call will make a reasonable effort to provide information about the county and, as appropriate and reasonable, other outside agencies related to their department's function.
- Any staff member required to transfer a call will inform the caller where they are being transferred to, and provide them with the phone number of the person to whom they are being transferred.
- When calling a direct line, their call will be answered with a consistent greeting "[their name] speaking."
- When receiving a voicemail message it will be kept current, and will be changed on days the staff member is absent.
- When receiving a voicemail message it will give an option for further assistance.
- They will receive acknowledgements of their voicemail messages within 24 hours.
- County staff will leave their full name, department, phone number and availability when leaving messages for customers.
- There will always be telephone coverage at the main office switchboard during business hours.
- All incoming phone calls to the main office switchboard, coming from external sources will be answered with a consistent greeting "Sturgeon County, where may I direct your call?"
- When multiple calls are received at the main office switchboard, calls will be answered in order.
- If there is a person at the counter and the phone rings, the employee will acknowledge the customer at the counter, allowing the phone call to go to voicemail.

## In Person

### *"Customers have a right to expect that..."*

- A timely, courteous acknowledgement, if the staff member is on the phone or with another customer.
- The county employee will listen to their requests/questions and ask for clarification if needed.
- Courtesy and respect.
- Helpful, knowledgeable and accurate information.
- That each informational counter will be staffed during business hours or, if staff members are unavailable, appropriate signage will be posted.

### *"Customers have a right to expect that..."*

- A timely response to their requests (three day turnaround), or an interim communication explaining the delay, if necessary.
- Complete, accurate and precise information regarding their inquiries.
- That written correspondence is formatted to county standards and has been edited for accuracy.

- A signature line when receiving an email from county staff that identifies the individuals full name, title, department and phone number and fax number
- A reply message that will advise if the individual is absent and when their email will be answered and also the option of emailing an alternate person if urgent.

- That a fax cover sheet includes full name, telephone number and department of the sender.

## Public Meetings and Open Houses

### *"Customers have a right to expect that..."*

- They will be given reasonable advance notice of meetings which can be found both in the FYI advertisement in the local paper and on the county's web, or when appropriate, by invitation as determined by the department manager, or as legislated.
- Meeting notifications contain accurate and necessary information (date, time, place and address, point of contact and phone number).
- They will be informed of schedule changes or cancellations prior to the meeting.
- Agendas will be available in advance of meetings.
- Meetings will start on time and end on time.
- Meetings will be organized, run efficiently (proper equipment and handouts), and conducted in a professional manner.

## Financial Transactions

### *"Customers have a right to expect that..."*

- User-friendly bills/statements.
- That the county is prepared to handle daily monetary transactions.
- Accuracy in financial transactions.
- That they will receive receipts or verifications of transactions.