



City of Arlington

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Customer service is everyone’s responsibility, not just those who staff the front information desk. Every time we interact with an individual, answer the telephone, send an e-mail, write a letter, or attend a meeting, we are making an impression on our customers – whether they are citizens, visitors, people working in Arlington, people working with our staff on a project, or even City employees. 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, and the City will continue to provide customer service training opportunities for employees so that all staff understand the value of customer service as well as the importance of following the City’s approved standards.

Guiding Principles

“Customer Service is the reason for our existence as a city government. Our customers have the right to respect, safety, appropriate assistance, honesty, and competency, regardless of age, ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, national origin, presence of children, race, gender, or sexual orientation.”

Standards Covering All Customer Interactions

“Customers have a right to expect...”

- Courtesy, respect, honesty and professionalism.
- That the staff person will listen to their request/question, ask for clarification if necessary, and provide complete, knowledgeable, accurate, precise information regarding their inquiry.
- The staff person will make a reasonable effort to provide information about the City and, as appropriate, other outside agencies related to their department’s/division’s function.

City of Arlington’s Customer Service Standards

Telephone/Voicemail

“Customers have a right to expect that...”

- Telephones will be answered promptly (within three rings) whenever possible.
- Calls will be answered in a courteous manner (with a smile).
- A person, not voicemail, will answer the main number at each answering station during business hours.
- Staff will listen and understand the nature of requests before transferring a call; inform callers to whom they are being transferred; and provide callers with the telephone number and division of the person to whom they are being transferred. (Each department is responsible for making arrangements to ensure the telephone is answered during business hours.) If a call comes during interdepartmental coverage, staff will explain that they are covering for a different division and offer to take a message or transfer the call to voicemail.
- Staff will, before transferring a call, provide the caller with the option to go to voicemail or leave a message.
- Callers will receive acknowledgements of their voicemail messages within 24 hours on regular business days.
- Outgoing voicemail messages will be kept current and voicemail messages at answering stations will be changed on days that the City is closed.
- Voicemail messages give at least one optional telephone number to call.
- Calls will be answered and returned in the order received. Callers may be given the option to be put on hold or called back.
- If a caller is on hold for an extended period of time, periodic updates will be provided.
- All incoming telephone calls from external sources will be answered with a consistent greeting such as “City of Arlington, [division], may I help you?”
- Staff will leave their full name, department, telephone number, and time available when leaving a message.

Meetings and Open Houses

“Customers have a right to expect that...”

- They will be given reasonable advance notice of meetings.
- Meeting notifications contain accurate information (date, time, place, point of contact, telephone number, and directions).

- They will be informed of schedule changes or cancellations prior to the meeting.
- Agendas will be available and distributed in advance of the 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.
- Security will be provided at meetings involving sensitive issues as determined by the department head and/or facilitator.
- Meeting notices will be removed after a meeting has been completed.

Public Amenities

“Customers have a right to expect...”

- Properly maintained facilities, which are sanitary, completely operational, fully stocked and supplied, accessible adequate to need, and compliant with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards.
- Appropriate and timely responses to identified problems at a facility.
- Hours of regular operation to be posted and observed.

Money/Currency Exchange

“Customers have a right to expect...”

- User-friendly bills/statements.
- That bills and permits may be paid via cash, check or credit card.
- That the City is prepared to handle the daily monetary exchanges.
- Accurate financial transactions.
- A receipt or verification of transaction, if requested.

Written Correspondence

(Includes Letters, Memoranda, E-mails & Faxes)

“Customers have a right to expect...”

- Information regarding their inquiries is complete, accurate and precise.
- A timely response to their request or an interim communication explaining the delay. A timely response for e-mail is within 24 hours on a regular business day and for letters is within five business days.

- All e-mails to contain a subject line, and a signature block including: the staff person's name, title, department, City of Arlington, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address.
- E-mails sent to a large group of people will be blind carbon copied to citizens.
- Fax cover sheets are legible, includes name, telephone number and department of the sender and the name and fax number of the receiver.

In Person

"Customers have a right to expect..."

- A timely, courteous acknowledgement, such as eye contact or a positive indication that the staff person knows they are there, especially if the staff person is on the telephone or with another customer.
- If there is a person at a counter and the phone rings, the staff person will excuse themselves, answer the telephone, ask the caller if they prefer to be put on hold or have their call returned, and continue to help the customer.
- That each main informational counter will be staffed during business hours or, if staff is unavailable, will have signage referring them to the appropriate department.

In Person Contacts with Field Personnel

"Customers have a right to expect..."

- When a resident approaches a City employee who is doing work in the field, whenever possible, staff will attempt to answer the question if it pertains to the employee's duties, or if the employee knows the answer.
- If a question pertains to an area outside of the employee's scope of duties or department, the employee will explain it is outside of the scope of their duties, and will provide the resident with a helpful numbers to call card. This will provide the resident with the correct information they need to contact the department that can answer their question.