CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SATISFACTION (CSS) STANDARDS

PURPOSE OF STANDARDS:

The following is a set of uniform standards for customer service for all staff of County departments, agencies, and community partner/contractor organizations. The CSS Standards, unless specified as highly recommended goals, describe acceptable performance levels.

NOTE: Nothing in the CSS Standards is intended to reduce or modify existing Federal, State, or local regulations or statutes.

DEFINITIONS:

Customer: A customer includes any person with whom employees of an organization interact during the course of their work duties. They include both external contacts, e.g., clients, caregivers, patients, children, and parents; and internal contacts, e.g., community partners, court personnel, volunteers, vendors, and staff at all levels in the organization.

Customer Service Excellence: Customer service excellence encompasses the manner in which one performs the work, as well as the effectiveness of that effort. It includes a variety of elements, including “personal service delivery,” the way service delivery team members, including volunteers, interact with customers while providing services; “service access,” the promotion of available services and the ease and simplicity of utilizing them; and the “service environment,” the internal and external surroundings in which the services are provided.

Customer Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is the customer’s perception of the three elements—personal service delivery, service access, and service environment.

Measurement: Measurement is the assessment, based on the CSS Standards, of customers’ perceptions of the way services were provided, their timeliness, and the quality of those services. Such assessment must be performed continuously to assure the service delivery system and the services are as responsive, effective, and efficient as possible.

Recognition: Recognition is the method by which service delivery team members, including volunteers, are acknowledged for outstanding performance related to these customer service standards. Such
recognition serves to model and encourage positive performance in others.

**STANDARDS:**

**Service Delivery:** Individuals who provide County service should treat all customers with courtesy, dignity, and respect by:

- Listening carefully and patiently to customers, being responsive to the customers’ unique cultural and linguistic needs, and demonstrating an interest in successfully serving them in person or via telecommunications systems.
- Providing services in a timely manner and notifying and updating customers of unavoidable time delays for service.
- Introducing themselves by name and title, wearing clearly visible name badges, as appropriate and in accordance with County policies, and addressing adult customers formally or according to their preferences.
- Knowing their job duties and how they function within their organization’s system, and knowing the mission, vision, and values of their organization.
- Explaining the services provided and how to access these services in a way that assures the customer is informed of what to expect.
- Understanding of County organizational structure and various programs and services provided within their own department and related County agencies.

**Service Access:** Service providers work to facilitate customer access to services by:

- Locating facilities in the neighborhoods where customers live and in multi-agency service delivery-centers and bringing services to customers in their residences, when necessary and appropriate.
- Meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for access.
- Providing user-friendly and accurate service information, and directions to service facilities.
- Ensuring automated telephone answering systems are user-friendly, available in the threshold language(s) approved by the County Board of Supervisors and of the community being served, and having ready access to live personnel during normal business hours.
- Varying days and hours of operation to accommodate customers’ schedules.
- Providing information regarding transportation and parking.
- Limiting waiting time to obtain appointments, both while waiting to be seen in an organization’s office/clinic, and in scheduling specific service appointment times.¹
- Simplifying forms and application processes.
- Providing customers with language translators, when needed.
- Providing customers with advocates and ombudsmen, when needed and feasible.
- Conducting community outreach efforts and promoting available services utilizing local and ethnic media sources, along with formal and informal social networks, when needed.
- Ensuring service delivery team members, including volunteers, have a general knowledge of services provided through other programs within their own organizations and in other agencies where families may be eligible for services.
- Offering customers appropriate and timely service referrals, and assistance coordinating services, as appropriate.

**Service Environment:** County services are provided in a clean, safe, and welcoming environment, which is conducive to the effective delivery of services, including:

- A professional, welcoming appearance, with clear, easy-to-read signage in threshold language(s), as appropriate.
- Posted County and Department mission, vision, and values statements, and the Customer Service and Satisfaction Standards.
- Posted listing of Department main mission services.
- Posted procedures for On-the-Spot Recognition and complaint and appeal processes.
- Adequate and comfortable seating, as necessary.
- Restrooms, which should be clean and in working order, with sufficient supplies.
- Access to public pay telephones.
- Private rooms/spaces that ensure confidentiality for customer interviews, and include adequate service-related supplies, as appropriate.

¹ This is a minimum performance level for all organizations that provide services by appointment.
- Environments with adequate lighting, proper indoor air quality, and comfortable noise levels.

- Workspaces designed to safely accommodate staff and customers.

- Adequate security systems.

**Measurement:** Service providers will:

- Assess customer satisfaction with department’s main mission services, based on these standards, on an ongoing or annual basis.

- Participate in periodic Countywide customer satisfaction surveys to assess the public’s perception of the quality and effectiveness of County services.

- Utilize customer satisfaction results data to establish baseline and monitor improvement over time.

- Utilize customer satisfaction results to guide and support responsive, effective, and efficient service delivery.

**Recognition:** Service providers regularly recognize individuals and/or teams for outstanding performance related to the CSS Standards, by

- Participating in the County and/or departmental on-the-spot recognition programs.

- Allocating resources to formal departmental recognition programs.

- Supporting completion of thorough and timely performance evaluation.