
 <p style="text-align: center;">ALLEGHENY COUNTY BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS</p>	APPLICABILITY: All Authorized Personnel	
	POLICY NUMBER: #640	EFFECTIVE: 7/14/14 REVIEWED: 9/19/23
	TITLE: Customer Service	
	AUTHORIZED BY: ORLANDO L. HARPER	
	SIGNATURE:	

POLICY

It is the policy of the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections to ensure that customer service is prompt, professional, and courteous and that information provided is accurate. For the purpose of this directive, customers are defined in the following manner:

- a. External customers are persons outside of the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections who depend upon employees to deliver services. They include, but are not limited to Allegheny County citizens and constituents (to include visitors, and attorneys), other county personnel and persons acting in the interest of incarcerated persons.
- b. Internal Customers are persons inside the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections to include co-workers within and external to the employee’s unit, managers, supervisors and inmates.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this directive is to ensure that the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections employees provide courteous and professional customer service.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The reputation and image of the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections and the customer’s experience is shaped by the quality of service given and the messages’ conveyed through each contact. The expected results of this directive are:

- a. Employees shall render prompt, accurate and courteous service to all customers and constituents who conduct business with the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections.
- b. Employees shall meet established standards to answering and responding to customer telephone calls and inquiries.

- c. Ensure a positive customer service experience for all external and internal customers and that each customer is satisfied with the services rendered.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS CUSTOMER SERVICE PROGRAM:

Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections shall offer quality customer service in the following manner:

- a. Managers and Supervisors shall:
 - 1) Exercise the highest level of professional courtesy towards all persons who contact their unit.
 - 2) Observe staff performance, solicit customer / caller feedback and investigate customer complaints of employee telephone assistance, service and / or conduct.
 - 3) Positively and publicly recognize employees who render outstanding customer service.
 - 4) Initiate appropriate disciplinary action against employees who fail to meet customer service standards.
- b. Employees shall:
 - 1) Treat customers with enthusiasm, courtesy and respect and use language that is easily understandable.
 - 2) Promptly answer customers' questions with accurate information, but do so only on matters within their purview and in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and policies.

INCOMING TELEPHONE CALLS:

- 1) All telephone calls should be answered within 5 rings.
- 2) Employees shall be courteous to customers and *shall not*:
 - a. Use speakerphone when talking with customers except when engaging in a conference call.
 - b. Chew food or gum while talking with a customer.
 - c. Hold secondary conversations with individuals other than the caller while the caller is on the phone.
- d. Become confrontational.
- 3) Each employee shall state his/ her name and the service area, e.g., "Good Morning or Good Afternoon, You have reached the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections, John Doe speaking. How may I assist you?", and provide the requested information, "May I be of further assistance?" "Thank you for calling the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections, have a nice day or evening." The person calling should be thanked.

- 4) Callers shall be given the opportunity to identify themselves and briefly state their business prior to being placed on hold.
- 5) Employees shall ensure that callers are not kept waiting for extended periods. If the wait period is expected to be more than thirty (30) seconds, the employee shall give the customer the options of continuing to hold, call back, leave a message, or to be transferred to another employee who will provide the appropriate assistance.
- 6) The employee shall frequently check back with the caller who has been placed on hold.
- 7) Each employee shall attentively listen to the caller's request and may repeat the caller's message to ensure that the request is understood.
- 8) Customer assistance shall be provided at the first line of authority as is deemed appropriate. Each employee shall provide an appropriate resolution if it is within the employee's purview.
- 9) If the employee is not able to resolve the issue and is not reasonably certain of the appropriate unit or staff to handle the matter, the employee shall first attempt to locate and make contact with proper party or service area prior to transferring the caller.
- 10) If it becomes apparent the identification of the appropriate staff will take more than a few minutes, the employee will give the caller the opportunity to continue to hold; to call back; or to leave his / her phone number so the appropriate individual may return the phone call.
- 11) Employees shall minimize the number of times a caller is transferred to resolve an issue by taking the message and delivering it to the appropriate staff person for resolution. The goal is one transfer per caller and that transfer will be to another person, not voicemail. Therefore, the employee shall first contact the appropriate employee prior to transferring the caller. If the intended employee is not available the caller shall be given the party's name, telephone number and a recommended time to contact them.
- 12) Each employee shall use empathy and exercise professional courtesy toward all callers.

RETURNING PHONE CALLS:

Calls made to all numbers at every level of the county shall be returned within twenty-four (24) hours or the next business day.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS:

Customers shall be treated with respect and empathy and employees shall handle complaints using the following guidelines:

- 1) Avoid personal responses to professional matters presented.
- 2) Remain calm and listen carefully to the complaint.
- 3) Focus on the problem, not the person.
- 4) Repeat the complaint and request acknowledgement that it was correctly received.
- 5) Apologize that the problem has occurred.
- 6) Acknowledge the customer's feelings of anger, frustration, disappointment, etc.
- 7) Explain what action will be taken to correct the problem expeditiously.
- 8) Thank the customer for bringing the problem to your attention.
- 9) Request assistance if the problem resolution is not reached.

VOICE MAIL:

A voice mail greeting for all main numbers shall be utilized as an "after hours" greeting. At a minimum this greeting will convey the following information:

- a. Thank the caller for contacting the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections.
- b. Explain that their call is important to the Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections.
- c. Identify the name of the agency, the organizational unit and office.
- d. Identify the service that is provided through this organizational unit of office.
- e. Provide normal hours of business including days and hours of operations.
- f. Provide the information items the caller is requested to leave for returns calls during normal business hours, or when appropriate, ask the caller to call back during stated business hours.
- g. A number to call for immediate assistance.
- h. When recording desk voice mail messages, the employee shall eliminate unnecessary background noises, speak in a clear, distinctive voice and reflect the same professionalism that would be provided during a face-to face business conversation with the customer.
- i. Each employee shall respond within twenty-four hours or on the next business day to requests for assistance left by customers on automated answering devices, to either verify receipt of the call or whenever possible to immediately provide the appropriate assistance.
- j. Voice mailboxes shall be checked throughout the work day.
- k. Voice mail greetings that apply to specific time periods shall be promptly updated.

VISITORS:

Employees shall treat visitors with dignity and respect. Employees shall conduct themselves as follows:

- a. Employees shall maintain a professional image and demeanor at all times and shall not engage in boisterous conversations and discussion of Allegheny County Bureau of Corrections operational issues while in the presence of visitors.
- b. Employees shall immediately acknowledge the presence of visitors.
- c. When language barrier exists, the employee shall attempt to find another employee who can act as an interpreter.
- d. Employees shall make eye contact when talking and listening and remain attentive when interacting with visitors.
- e. Employees are responsible to contact a supervisor immediately if a customer is dissatisfied in any way and document the incident at his/her earliest convenience.
- f. A supervisor is expected to respond to the visiting area promptly to deal with customer complaints and concerns and document the resolution or recommendation.