



cooperative governance
and traditional affairs

Department of Cooperative Governance
and Traditional Affairs
FREE STATE PROVINCE

FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITION AFFAIRS CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

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Description	This document defines the Department's position on taking care of its customers.
Coverage	This policy applies to all customers (internal & external) of Free State Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs



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2.DEFINITION OF TERMS	DESCRIPTION
Customer Care	<p>The work of looking after customers and ensuring their satisfaction with services offered by the organization.</p> <p>Is an act of providing and delivering professional, helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met.</p>
Customers/ clients or consumers	People receiving services of the department
Internal Customers	<p>An employee who receives goods or services produced elsewhere in an organization as inputs to his or her work.</p> <p>(directly connected to an organization)</p>
External Customers	<p>An external customer is someone who uses/receives services but is not part of your organization</p> <p>(not directly connected to that organization)</p>
Municipality	A city, town or other district possessing corporate existence and usually its own local government. All offices where the department is rendering/ providing services
Service Standards	A reasonable and measurable agreed expectation from the side of the recipient and an honest commitment by the service provider, to meet or exceed that expectation
Department	It refers to the Free State Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

3. PREAMBLE

Customer care is a process of interacting with both internal and external clients and how the interaction affects both the receiver and the provider of the service. The interaction between the community and the Department must be satisfying to consumers of services provided by the Department.

Free State Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs is committed to ensuring that customer service excellence is integral to planning, resourcing and delivery of all services. The Customer Care Policy aims to ensure that all sections of the community - including those with special needs - are not excluded from any area of service delivery.

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Vision: integrated, responsive and developmental local governance in the Free State Province.

In order to achieve this Vision of being the most caring department, a Customer Care Policy has been adopted to develop structures to ensure that in its dealing with customers it demonstrate these values. The Department strives to achieve total customer satisfaction in all dealings with both internal and external stakeholders.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Internal and External customers

GOOD CUSTOMER CARE

It is the Department's aim that every time the customer comes to the various offices and Municipalities, the client will be able to do so conveniently and that they will be treated courteously, promptly and fairly. The Department will aim to ensure that the client/customer/ consumer/ service beneficiaries will receive a clear response to any service request or enquiry within a stated period of time as defined in the Customer Service Charter and that will be done right the first time.

Customer care is a way of looking after customers and ensuring their satisfaction with services offered by the organization. Taking care of their needs by providing and delivering professional, helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met.

In practice, good Customer Care includes:

Keeping the customer informed of progress in addressing their complaints/requests or enquiries.

- Giving people the information, they need and providing an explanation if the service is not available.
- Treating people with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- Treating people according to Batho Pele Principles under Good Customer Care
- Ensuring customer satisfaction when providing services to them within the limits of committed standards.

- Dressing presentably to project a good image about the Department
- Treating people in accordance with Batho Pele Principles.
- Treating people in their language of preference.
- Providing a good quality service in a friendly, efficient and helpful manner.

4. BACKGROUND

In ensuring effective and efficient service delivery and a good customer care, there is a need to develop a policy which will guide the treatment of customers as previously there was none in place.

5. PURPOSE

- 4.1 To provide framework within which Customer Care will be managed within the Department.
- 4.2 Ensuring that service standards are applied across programmes and can be adopted by partners where services are delivered jointly.
- 4.3 To describe how customer care policy will be implemented and monitored.

6. THE AIM OF THE POLICY:

- 5.1 Services can be tailored to the needs of customers - internal and external based on their feedback (Survey reports).
- 5.2 Ensure that both the public and members of staff feel valued.
- 5.3 Staff workloads are managed effectively resulting in efficient service delivery.
- 5.4 Provide greater customer choice by using electronic service delivery to allow people to access Departmental services at times that suit their lifestyle, while also maintaining existing channels for members of the public who may not have access to technology(Rural areas, farm areas).

7. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to all customers (internal & external) of Free State Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Satellite offices of the Department and Municipalities that renders service on behalf of the Department.

8. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is guided by, and is established in compliance with the constitution and applicable legislation and government directives that includes the following:

8.1The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, 1997(WPTPS):

In 1997 the Government adopted it as a policy framework for the provision of services. "The purpose of Batho Pele White Paper is to provide a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery. It focuses on how public services are provided, rather than "which" services are provided and its main intent is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the way in which the services are delivery.

The following are some of the key objectives of the WPTPS

- Institution building and management
- Representivity
- Enhanced accountability
- Human resources development (to improve quality of service provision)
- Conditions of service and labour relations
- Professional services and ethos

8.2The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No 108 of 1996:

- Section 195 of the Constitution: nine principles governing the public service insist that public services should be publicized and that the public servants should commit to provide services of a standard that meet the needs of the customers.
- The Constitution, through the Bill of Right, gives every citizen the right to take action against the state, if they believe their constitutional rights have been infringed, and the right to have access to information held by the state. These rights are echoed in the eight principles, which are listed below, and it set out the foundation of our Government's approach to guide all interaction between Government institutions and the public.

8.3Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000: This Act has as its aim to 'give effect to the constitutional right of access to any information held by the state...". The Act aims that customers must have access to information.

8.4The Public Service Regulations, 2001: Part III, paragraph C of the Public Service Regulations also advance the implementation of Batho Pele principles by providing regulations for the development of Service Delivery Improvement Programmes (SDIPs) by all departments.

Part III.C.1 – an executing authority shall establish and sustain a service delivery improvement programme for his/her department; and

Part III.C.2 – an executing authority shall publish an annual statement of public service commitment which will set out the department’s service standards that citizens and customers can expect and which will serve to explain how the department will meet each of the standards.

9. DEPARTMENTAL VALUES

In order to achieve Customer Service Excellence, it is necessary that our front-line staff have a common set of values that will guide their interaction with customers. As an organization, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs will remind staff members that there must be commitment to the following Values that will guide interactions with customers:

DEPARTMENTAL CORE VALUES
Results-driven
Professionalism and Integrity
Responsive
Accountable and Transparent
Collaborative Leadership

10. BATHO PELE PRINCIPLES

The name Batho Pele means “People First” and the eight principles set out in it are the foundation of our Government’s approach to guide all interaction between Government institutions and the public.

10.1 Consultation

Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of the public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice about the services that are offered.

10.2 Service Standards

Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect.

10.3 Access

All citizens should have equitable access to the services to which they are entitled.

10.4 Courtesy

Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.

10.5 Information

Citizens shall be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.

10.6 Openness and Transparency

Citizens should be told how the Clusters and Service Units of the Department are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge.

10.7 Redress

If the promised standard of service is not delivered citizens should be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy; and when complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response.

10.8 Value for Money

Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

11. WHO ARE CUSTOMERS?

- Communities within Municipalities
- Children and families
- Youth
- Women
- Men
- People with Disabilities
- Older persons

The targeted group of our clients is the poorest of the poor who sometimes never have literacy to understand what the Department is all about. It is the department's duty and responsibility to treat clients with respect and fairness as their servants. Our purpose is to render impartial and quality services to all not discriminating them (race, religious affiliation, gender or age). In this sense we have both

external and internal customers. The same standards must apply to our internal customers (colleagues) as to our external customers.

12. HOW WILL SUCCESS BE MEASURED/ PILLARS OF SUCCESS?

This Customer Care Policy is supported by Customer Service Charter which includes Service Standards that will define deliverables for each service delivery unit and will serve as the municipality's promise of delivery to customers.

12.1 Customer Service Charter

- The Department shall display Service Charters in all service sites. Charters will be translated into the dominating language of the area (Setswana, Sesotho, English, Afrikaans).
- Monitoring reports to be compiled and submitted

12.2 Satisfaction Surveys

- The Department shall develop methods of receiving customer feedback to find out whether customers are satisfied with the standard of service they have received.
- These will be through Customer Satisfaction surveys which will be conducted every 2 years
- Reports to be compiled and submitted

12.3 Unannounced visits:

- The Department shall implement the unannounced visits programme where Senior Managers will be deployed to different service sites to assess service delivery. Commonly known as the Khaedu deployment Programme
- Reports will be compiled and submitted annually.

12.4 Departmental Website:

- The Department shall display all information (Departmental News, Documents, Projects and Tenders) in the Departmental website – www.cogta.fs.gov.za
- The Department shall publish a contacts numbers where customers can report poor service, enquire and compliment the department - Tel: +27(51) 405 4399

12.5 Complaints and Compliments Management:

- The department shall place complaints registers and suggestion boxes in all service points and satellite offices for public use.
- Complaints process flow shall be displayed in all service sites

12.6 Signage and name tags

- The department shall put up signage boards and directions to all its offices and satellite offices where department's name, address, telephone and operating hours will be displayed.
- The department shall ensure that all officials always wear name tags during working hours.
- Monitoring reports to be compiled and submitted on an annual basis.

12.7 Imbizo's and other public participation programmes

- The department shall ensure that there is exhibition of departmental services and Information sharing in all public events (Departmental and Provincial)

13. SERVICE STANDARDS

Service Standards are specific, service-oriented actions incorporated in the Customer Service Charter as a means of continually measure and improve service to customers. At its core, the Standards aim to manage queries and complaints across all programmes in a timeous, efficient and effective manner– incorporating the Batho pele principles discussed above. All employees in the Departments should adhere to the following customer service standards:

All District Offices/Municipalities

- Project a customer-friendly gesture always whether you are able to provide the necessary service standards to the client or not
- Provide information about services in Setswana, Sesotho, English, Afrikaans, and sign language if needs be.
- Show empathy when addressing clients with special needs.
- Acknowledge receipt of enquiries and complains and ensure feedback is provided.
- Ensure accessibility on services rendered to people with disability and older persons
- Aim to provide a service in a manner that treats people fairly.

14. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

14.1 Departmental Management Committee

- Discuss Customer Care Services at strategic planning session
- Institutionalizing Customer Care.

14.2 Batho Pele Coordinator

- Ensure that customer issues are solved in accurate and timely manner.
- Ensure that the customer service team is up to date with knowledge of department's services.
- Provide training and lead customer service team to deliver high class customer services.
- Plan and schedule training opportunities for customer service staff.
- Identify and share best practices with the customer service teams.
- Handle escalated customer complaints in a professional manner.
- Schedule team meetings to answer employee questions, explain policies and procedures and share information to ensure open and complete communication.
- Assist in process improvements for providing outstanding customer service.

14.3 Batho Pele Forums (Provincial, Districts, Service Points and Institutions)

- Make recommendation on improving customer satisfaction in the Department.
- Branding and signage (appearance of staff and corporate image).
- 100% of complaints are addressed within 21 working days. The office specific standards will differ according to unique situations).
- Management of suggestion boxes/ complaints registers.
- Develop process flow charts with timelines.
- Improve customer experience (queue management and correct information)
- Monitor and manage implementation of Batho Pele and Customer Care.

15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Implementation of the policy shall be monitored on annual basis for compliance
- Feedback will be communicated during annual review and further emphasized upon completion of the analysis of the provincial report
- Feedback will ultimately be done in writing for record purposes

16. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed every three years.

17. POLICY APPROVAL

COMPILED BY:

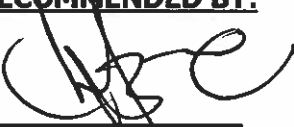


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