

Mission

Customer Service provides courteous, understanding, efficient service to customers of the City of Clearwater utilities, and to the internal departments that we are privileged to serve.

Department Description

Clearwater Customer Service (CCS) is responsible for providing centralized customer service functions to customers of the seven (7) City utilities: Gas, Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, Recycling, Reclaimed Water, and Stormwater. The major areas associated with this responsibility include Meter Reading, Customer Accounting, Collections, and Customer Care.

Meter Reading Representatives are responsible for securing accurate and timely readings. Metered services include: Water (potable, lawn, reclaimed), Gas and Wastewater (based on metered potable water usage). Each month Meter Reading Representatives visit each service location and record meter readings in a hand held device that interfaces with our Utility Management System. Meter reading is the first step in a billing process that optimizes "read-to-bill" time and ensures that each account is billed each month. The Field Service section also performs special readings, leak notifications, and initiates service orders based on field observations.

The Customer Accounting section is responsible for calculation and preparation of customer bills, resolving billing exceptions, processing service orders and special/final bill requests, and generating reports. Each day, the Customer Accounting section is responsible for reviewing account billing, based on the previous day's meter readings, as well as, billings for non-metered utility services. Customer Accounting reviews all utility bills before they are mailed to customers.

The Collections section is responsible for managing utility customer accounts receivable in a fiscally responsible manner that respects customers while limiting the exposure of the City of Clearwater to delinquent accounts. Active accounts with past due balances are noticed and measures are undertaken to secure payment. Services are disconnected for non-payment when necessary. The Collections area also manages inactive accounts receivable, seeking payment of final bills, performing skip-tracing and filing property liens as appropriate.

The Customer Care section is responsible for receiving and processing payments on a daily basis, responding in a timely, courteous, and professional manner to customer requests received via telephones, mail (postal or e-mail) or from walk-in customers. Accounts are opened or closed, requests for information are responded to, and inquiries are researched and resolved.

Customer Service is located on the first floor of the Municipal Services Building, 100 S. Myrtle Avenue. Customers may reach Customer Service either by phone at 727-562-4600, in person Monday thru Friday (except for observed holidays), or on the web at www.myclearwater.com/services/customer_service.

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY					
	Actual 2003/04	Actual 2004/05	Budget 2005/06	Budget 2006/07	% Change
Personnel	1,878,534	1,905,883	2,025,630	2,155,090	6.4%
Operating	435,356	436,430	581,130	553,850	-4.7%
Internal Services	419,536	396,257	468,710	468,270	-0.1%
Debt	13,908	3,329	15,190	10,510	-30.8%
Transfers			100,000	100,000	0.0%
Total Customer Service	2,747,334	2,741,899	3,190,660	3,287,720	3.0%

CUSTOMER SERVICE

DEPARTMENT FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS				
	Actual 2003/04	Actual 2004/05	Budget 2005/06	Budget 2006/07
Customer Service	44.0	44.0	44.0	45.0
Total Customer Service	44.0	44.0	44.0	45.0

Program Highlights

- ❖ The Customer Service program is an internal service function supporting all City utility functions. All costs of operation are passed back to the City utility departments based upon services provided.
- ❖ The Customer Service program is supported by forty five (45) full time equivalent (FTE) positions, an increase of one (1) Meter Reader position, over the 2005/06 budget. This position was included in the current water & sewer rate study.
- ❖ Personnel costs support all Customer Service functions, including billing, collection, accounting, and meter reading, administration and customer service, for approximately 49,000 monthly billable accounts. For fiscal year 2004/05, Customer Service billed revenues of over \$112 million.
- ❖ Operating expenditures have decreased by 4.7% primarily due to decreased costs for insurance.
- ❖ Internal Service expenditures, down by less than 1%, reflect significant increased costs for garage services, which is offset by a decrease in information technology services.
- ❖ Debt expenditures decreased due to the actual cost for the replacement of electronic meter reading equipment being less than anticipated.
- ❖ Transfers include \$100,000 to continue to fund a Capital Improvement project, Customer Information System (CIS) Upgrades and Replacements, which provides funding for future enhancements and maintenance of the computer resources.
- ❖ There have been no other significant changes to the program in this fiscal year. The 2006/07 budget for this program reflects an increase of 3% over the previous year's budget.