

CUSTOMER SERVICE

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 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 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09	% Change
Personnel	2,070,510	2,150,783	2,238,720	2,275,580	2%
Operating	444,247	435,170	543,900	565,620	4%
Internal Services	454,908	426,017	499,560	455,300	-9%
Capital	36	-	-	-	
Debt	6,454	9,247	12,390	11,170	-10%
Transfers	127,500	100,000	100,000	100,000	0%
Total Customer Service	3,103,655	3,121,217	3,394,570	3,407,670	0%

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DEPARTMENT FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS				
	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09
Customer Service	44.0	45.0	45.0	45.0
Total Customer Service	44.0	45.0	45.0	45.0

Program Highlights

- ❖ The Customer Service program is an internal service function supporting all City utility operations. All costs of the Customer Service program are passed back to the City's utility departments based upon services provided. This program supports all customer service functions, including billing, collection, accounting, meter reading, administration, and customer service for approximately 50,000 monthly billable accounts. For fiscal year 2007/08, Customer Service billed revenues of over \$125 million.
- ❖ The Customer Service program is supported by forty-five full time equivalent positions, the same as the 2007/08 budget.
- ❖ Other Operating costs reflect an increase of 4% primarily due to anticipated increased costs for postage.
- ❖ Internal Services reflects a 9% decrease based on reduced costs for several internal services including document reproduction and printing as well as information technology.
- ❖ Transfers include \$100,000 to fund a capital improvement project for Customer Information System Upgrades and Replacements, which provides funding for future enhancements and maintenance of the customer service information system. This is the same funding level as the 2007/08 budget.
- ❖ There have been no other significant changes in the Customer Service Department in the approved budget. The budget for this program reflects approximately the same level as the 2007/08 budget.