

## 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 Customers 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](http://www.myclearwater.com/services/customer_service).

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY					
	Actual 2006/07	Actual 2007/08	Budget 2008/09	Budget 2009/10	% Change
Personnel	2,150,783	2,136,231	2,275,580	2,342,430	3%
Operating	435,170	490,674	565,620	621,650	10%
Internal Services	426,017	454,396	455,300	433,290	-5%
Capital	-	345	-		
Debt	9,247	11,172	11,170	11,170	0%
Transfers	100,000	100,000	100,000	50,000	-50%
<b>Total Customer Service</b>	<b>3,121,217</b>	<b>3,192,818</b>	<b>3,407,670</b>	<b>3,458,540</b>	<b>1%</b>

# CUSTOMER SERVICE

DEPARTMENT FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS				
	Actual 2006/07	Actual 2007/08	Budget 2008/09	Budget 2009/10
Customer Service	44.0	45.0	45.0	45.0
<b>Total Customer Service</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>45.0</b>

## 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 2008/09, 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 2008/09 budget.
- ❖ Other Operating costs reflect an increase of 10% as a result of the planned use of outside vendor services for the printing of utility bills, rather than the City's graphic operation in previous years.
- ❖ Internal Services reflects a 5% decrease primarily as a result of a reduction in reproduction and printing charges as a result of the elimination of the graphics operation.
- ❖ Transfers include \$50,000 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 50% reduction from the 2008/09 budget.
- ❖ There have been no other significant changes in the Customer Service Department in the approved budget. The budget for this program reflects an increase of 1% over the 2008/09 budget.