



CITY OF WILMINGTON

Customer Service Citywide

Internal Audit Review

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City Auditor's Office

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Highlights

Why We Did This Audit

The Internal Audit Department (IAD) performed a scheduled audit of Customer Service. The audit was in accordance with the 2019 Internal Audit Plan.

Methodology

The objectives were met by conducting interviews with management and detailed testing of calls for Constituent Services (CS), the Mayor's Office, Public Works (DPW) and Licenses and Inspections (L&I). A review of existing policies and procedures and research on best practices for customer service was also conducted.

Audit Review Committee:

Robert C. Johnson, Chair

Ciro Adams
Marchelle Basnight
Angelique Dennis
Bud Freel
Ronald Pinkett
Tanya Washington

Objective and Scope

Internal Audit (IA) conducted a Performance Audit of the City of Wilmington's (CoW) Customer Service Process. The audit objective of this engagement was to determine whether customer service efforts throughout the city were efficient and effective. The scope of the audit was to review activity from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. This review and analysis focused on monitoring activity for three departments: Constituent Services (CS), Department of Public Works (DPW), as well as Licenses and Inspections (L&I). During the audit timeframe, these departments received over 12.5K complaints or Service Requests (SRs) combined. IA intends on performing a follow-up review for departments that were excluded from this engagement.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards ("GAGAS"). These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Customer service requires multiple steps that must be performed to ensure that our citizens are satisfied with the product or services being provided by city staff. While all departments service customers whether internal or external, this audit focused on the departments that were most established in dealing with customer service.

CS is a small subdivision of the Mayor's Office, consisting of six employees. The goal of the department is to "improve the quality of life at the neighborhood level." This is performed by responding to citizen complaints, questions, and/or concerns in the order they are received by phone, email or via walk ins. Additionally, CS has a Civil Appeals Office for individuals who wish to appeal citations. The department tries to address all complaints that are received. However, if the constituent needs more detailed assistance then the caller is transferred to an applicable department for support services.

The DPW has an established call center consisting of five employees which processed 62% of the complaints/SRs that were obtained from reports provided by sales force and the city's website. This department has several ways to categorize call types, such as, public property, sanitation, sewer, street cleaning, streets, transportation, trees, and water. Residents can call in and request service from 6 AM until 4:30 PM during the work week.

L&I has front office staff consisting of four to six employees. Their incoming calls consists of the following: Building issues, Building Permits, Building License, Exterior Violations, Fecal Matter, High Grass/Weeds, Interior, Interior Violation, Over-Crowdedness, Plumbing/Mechanical, Sanitation, Shrubbery/Bushes, Tenant Complaints, Trees, Vacant, and Vacant Structure. In addition, the front office staff also assists with walk-ins for Permits and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. From time to time citizens specifically request to speak with the Commissioner, Management or Inspection staff.

Key Statistics

For FY19, there was a total of 12,505 Complaints entered by all departments. Table 1 shows the percentage of complaints processed by each department.

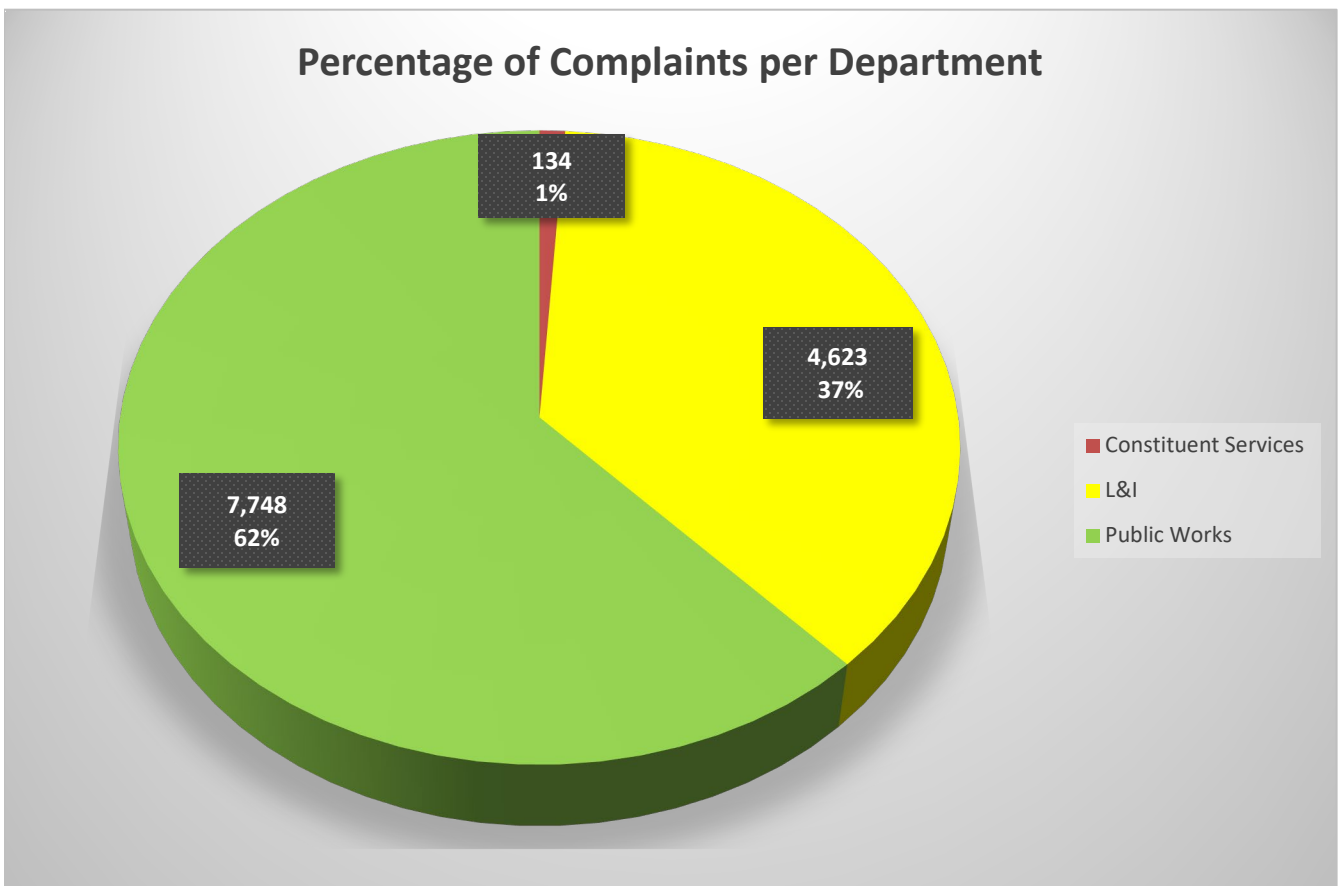


Table 1

What we found

Key Findings

Following are key issues that resulted in a process/area to be risk rated a three or four. See **Attachment A** for the detail of these and all comments identified during the review.

Risk Ranking:		(See Attachment B for full rating definitions)			
Process / Area	Process / Area Owner	1 Strong Controls	2 Controlled Effectively	3 Controlled - Improvement Required	4 Significant Improvement Required
Business Operations	Jennifer Prado, Derek Akbar, Jeff Starkey				✓ CS, DPW, & L&I
Governance	Jennifer Prado				✓ CS
Policies and Procedures	Jennifer Prado, Derek Akbar, Jeff Starkey			✓ DPW, L&I	✓ CS
Reconciliation	Derek Akbar			✓ DPW	

Business Operations

- No controls exist to determine whether Quality Assurance (QA) monitoring was being performed with regards to citizen complaints, although an Internal Control Questionnaire stated it was supposed to occur for both L&I and DPW.
 - For instance, during interviews with L&I staff, it was communicated there were no systems in place to conduct QA Monitoring of front office staff complaints received via phone calls or in person, although reports were run monthly to monitor the productivity of staff.
 - On the contrary, Public Works has systems in place to perform QA Monitoring, but at the time of fieldwork there were no documented processes in place to verify how the monitoring was being conducted.
 - Based on a review of CS processes, it was confirmed that QA Monitoring was not being performed, due to a lack of policies and procedures (P&Ps) and system not being in place.

2. Controls need strengthening with regards to answering, closing or following up on outstanding SRs for DPW and L&I Complaints to improve timeliness of departmental resolutions.
 - DPW does have a time frame to close out SRs based on call types and they prioritize issues based on severity. Monitoring is performed for general categories on a biweekly basis for CitiStat. However, based on individual response times they do not monitor whether there is compliance with their established time frame.
 - L&I's inspectors are noncompliant with their internal policy which states they are required to answer complaints within 48 hours. It was noted this requirement was only being met at a 58 % rate.

Governance

3. A lack of controls exists surrounding the governance of the Customer Service function within the Division of CS.

There was no organizational structure for the facilitation of constituent complaints such as a database or system to track the history of incoming calls, walk in complaints, or monitoring team efforts, until resolution. Currently, employees save their work on either their hard drive or email and the complaints are communicated with other departments via email.

Policies and Procedures

4. Control weaknesses were identified regarding customer service P&Ps because they either do not exist or are not extensive enough.
 - CS does not have any documented standard processes for the staff to follow.
 - DPW has Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all divisions but has limited P&Ps specifically for the call center.
 - Although L&I has P&Ps, they do not have a follow up process in place to help reduce duplicate complaints.

Reconciliation

5. Inconsistent controls exist with regards to reconciling SRs created online or received via the call center.

For instance, SRs entered online show a pending status as old as 12 weeks. The workers in the field do not consistently close out SRs or notify the CSRs of completion. Currently, the call center has a significant number of SRs in an open status that may have been completed.

Additional Observation

At this time CoW does not have a process for retrieving feedback. Following up with constituents and retrieving their feedback could help boost customer satisfaction. This will allow the CoW to obtain data from our constituents, and help identify their key interest and concerns. Also, during the course of this audit the City was preparing to launch 311, as such the departments audited here will eventually be impacted by 311. Please refer to attachment C.

Management Responses to Audit Recommendations

Summary of Management Responses

Recommendation #1: Management should develop a policy on QA. The departments should conduct regular evaluations to ensure the best customer service is being provided to the constituents. The evaluations should be pulled at random, with metrics to determine if all goals were met. This is also a good way to provide training when the Customer Service Representative (CSR) may not have handled an issue properly and/or efficiently.

Management response & action plan:

Constituent Services:

- 1) Working with Alfred Lance and getting Staff signed up and trained to start using Ivanti. Ivanti will allow us to assign all calls a tracking number, track progress of complaints, and will allow us to “close out” complaints that have been completed. Ivanti will allow me to monitor all open complaints and their progress by each employee.
- 2) Creating a satisfaction survey to randomly send to constituents via email that have sent their complaint through Cityhelp@WilmingtonDE.gov

Public Works:

DPWs in the last 160 days went through a paradigm shift in Customer Management Systems. The paradigm shift resulted in a change in the day-to-day Quality Management processes. DPWs has always utilized a Quality Management Analyze Tool and will continue to develop and shape it's QMAT to deliver quality of service to the DPW's callers. DPWs Call Center employees will continue to receive a report on how they are doing at their weekly staff meetings. DPWs Call Center Supervisor will continue to monitor calls and submit outcomes with the weekly report.

L&I:

There needs to be a citywide system that has the capability to monitor with consistency all customer service departments.

The department is developing a policy and procedure for the front administrative staff.

Unfortunately, we don't have the capability to access and/or monitor calls while in progress.

Completion Date: Completed (CS, DPW)

Recommendation #2 When meeting with staff for QA monitoring this is a good time for both parties to provide feedback. The feedback between management and staff could be used for training purposes. In addition, this is also the time for the agent to provide suggestions and ways to improve their work processes.

Management response & action plan:

Constituent Services:

Brian Berry is looking to see if Shortel phone system has the ability to record phone calls to be randomly listened to for quality control.

L&I:

It is our opinion the quality assurance regarding complaints intake is being achieved by monitoring the input of data correctly.

Completion Date: Completed (CS)

Recommendation #3 QA Monitoring should be performed on a weekly or biweekly basis. Monitoring is not only for phone calls but should also be performed on face to face interactions

Management response & action plan:**L&I:**

From an administrative perspective Q & A context is in place because complaints are being reviewed on a regular basis. Monitoring of all reports are done regularly and reviewed for data clarity. As explained earlier we don't have the capability to monitor real time.

The administrative staff is not responsible for resolution of the complaints.

Completion Date:

Recommendation #4: DPW Management should develop standard guidelines for closing SRs.

Management response & action plan:**Public Works:**

DPWs has a dedicated employee to monitor SRs and WOs, and communicate with Supervisors and Managers, as needed. This dedicated employee prepares a biweekly report for DPW's Commissioners and collect Data for CitiStat meetings. If the aging report show, there is an outstanding amount of time the WO and SR has been open the dedicated employee reports to the Commissioners why it's over the allotted time. The justification for SRs remaining open beyond the allotted time is because of budgetary issues. E.g. Street Paving. DPWs will continue using SR/CW to track work orders and continue requesting funds to close SRs timely. DPWs has a process in-place for complaints and will continue with the customer follow up to ensure customer satisfaction. Presently, DPWs is exploring the best data collecting practice to ensure customer's satisfaction.

a. DPWs has documented WO standards for closure times, as demonstrated in CitiStat.

b. SRs are not relevant to the Customer Service. They are for internal use only, related to items that require budgets or engineering.

Completion Date: Completed (DPW)

Recommendation #5: CoW Management should also establish uniformity in its customer service efforts to ensure the same level of service in every city interaction. A general time frame to close out SRs/complaints should be within 48-72hrs. The departments should also prioritize the SRs/complaints based on severity.

Management response & action plan:**Constituent Services:**

- 1) Will meet with Department Heads to establish an agreement that all complaints from Constituent Services should be responded to in a timely manner

L&I:

It is our opinion there are two separate and distinct issues associated with the response. (1) The input of complaints coming into the office from constituent and (2) the follow-up on the complaint by the responsible division within the department.

The administrative staff receives the complaints and inputs them into the complaint system. Once the complaints are inputted into the system all complaints are forwarded to the responsible division for follow-up. That completes the administrative staff's process for entering the complaint. It is my understanding that this is an administrative audit.

Completion Date:

Recommendation #6: In addition, completed SRs and complaints should receive follow up to confirm completeness. Starting this process will help decrease the number of callbacks and duplicates on the same issues. This change in process along with obtaining customer feedback should help improve the customer experience with the CoW.

Management response & action plan:

Constituent Services:

- 1) Working on SOP's that staff will follow for every complaint/concern that is received.

L&I:

The follow-up is conducted by the inspection staff and is prioritized based on severity. The 48-hour response is an internal process that we strive to achieve however it is based on priority. A structural issue or a no heat complaint will be a priority over any sanitation related issue for example high grass and weeds.

The percentage listed is misleading due to the system's inability to track complaints based on business days. If a complaint comes in on a Thursday or Friday, the complaint may not reach inspector until Monday at which time it has exceeded the 48 hours.

The department is working with our I.T. department to develop a solution.

Completion Date:

Recommendation #7: Management should have a centralized location such as a shared drive to view complaints received within the department. Creating a shared drive would allow staff members to be able to assist a constituent or follow up on any previously logged complaint.

Management response & action plan: Ivanti tracking system is being setup. Training should be scheduled within the next week or so and I am anticipating the start date to be within 2 weeks.

Completion Date Completed

Recommendation #8: CS should implement a CRM system such as SalesForce, to assist with internal resolutions and communicate with other departments using a similar system. Furthermore, a CRM system would assist management in performing QA Monitoring, reporting and reconciliation of incoming complaints.

Management response & action plan: Ivanti Tracking System will allow me to monitor all complaints that come through the office and will also allow me to track which employee is handling and the timeframe that it takes to resolve.

Completion Date Completed

Recommendation #9: Management should ensure that employees have access to P&Ps, in order to provide structure and guidelines within the department. This will help hold employees accountable for adhering to established rules within the department

Management response & action plan:

Constituent Services:

Creating SOP's for staff to follow

Public Works:

As of 10/21/2019: DPWs will continue to add new Policies and Procedures as the department continue to learn DPWs new Customer Management Systems. DPWs will continue reviewing new Policies and Procedures with employees

L&I:

The administrative staff should not be responsible for deciding whether it is a duplicate complaint. There are occasions when a tenant has made several of the same types of complaints because the landlord has failed to correct the issue. We feel that it is critical that the history of these complaints is documented. The risk comes if we don't have the various complaints logged and we have to file criminal charges against the property owner for failing to correct the violations.

Completion Date Completed (CS)

Recommendation #10: Management should define how often to reconcile SRs in the P&Ps for both online and City Works. SR cleanup should also be performed on a weekly or monthly basis, then monitored thereafter.

Management response & action plan:

Public Works:

DPWs is in development of a new online/web base platform that will resolve many of the issues identified within the current online process. DPWs anticipate the new online/web base platform will be operational within 190 days from 10/21/2019. With the implementation of the DPWs CMS, the Call Center do not duplicate SR when the calls directly come into the Call Center. Regarding SRs, DPWs Call Center will continue with its present practice, and monitor the SRs to ensure there is no duplication. DPWs will continue closing SRs and reviewing the process to close SR. DPWs will develop a formal Policy and Procedure for Closing SRs after the new online/web base system is operational

Completion Date Completed (DPW)

Audit Team

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