



**Maryland Energy Administration
Customer Service Annual Report
Fiscal 2017**



Maryland
Energy
Administration

INSIDE FRONT COVER

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Table of Contents

FY17 Highlights	4
Recognition Given to Employees	5
Leadership Analysis of FY17 and Summary of FY18 Approach.....	6
Detailed FY17 Results and FY18 Plans	7
Customer Service Survey Results	7
Status of Customer Service Training	7
Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution	7
Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries.....	7
Best Practices.....	7
Plans for Improvement.....	7
Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives	8
Making Agency Services Available Online.....	8
Processing Times for Customer Transactions	8
Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands.....	8
Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience.....	8

FY17 Highlights

- Delivered customer service training to 100% of Maryland Energy Administration full time staff.
- Offered Maryland constituents an opportunity to give feedback on Maryland Energy Administration services and initiatives by providing links to the customer service survey on the agency website, as well as in all staff email signature lines.
- Implemented an internal recognition process for Maryland Energy Administration employees identified by external customers for providing great customer service.
- Focused on making process improvements to the residential Clean Energy Grant Program, Maryland Energy Administration's most popular program based on number of applicants.

Recognition Given to Employees

Recognition is given to employees that provide great customer service through the Maryland Energy Administration's Gold Star program. When Maryland Energy Administration employees are recognized by name in comments provided through a customer service survey, the employee is presented with a Gold Star to post on their office wall, highlighting the date and the reason for recognition. Gold Star recognition is given out at the same Maryland Energy Administration all-staff gathering where the Employee of the Month is recognized.

Leadership Analysis of FY17 and Summary of FY18 Approach

The Maryland Energy Administration's fiscal year 2017 efforts focused on training agency staff on the importance of customer service, as well as the key elements to providing good customer service. In parallel, Maryland Energy Administration program participants and constituents were given a vehicle, in the form of the agency-wide customer service survey, to provide direct feedback regarding their interactions with the Maryland Energy Administration. While the Maryland Energy Administration staff has primarily received positive comments through the survey process, constructive feedback was also obtained that helped the agency identify areas of for potential improvement.

Moving forward into fiscal year 2018, the Maryland Energy Administration is looking for opportunities to increase the use of online application submission while making the process associated with the Maryland Energy Administration's existing residential Clean Energy Grant Program application portal more streamlined. In addition, the Maryland Energy Administration is reviewing potential project management software options which could further improve communication between staff and grantees.

Detailed FY17 Results and FY18 Plans

Customer Service Survey Results

In fiscal year 2017, the Maryland Energy Administration had 80% of survey results returned as Very Satisfied or Satisfied. The majority of the survey questionnaires were in relation to the Clean Energy Grant Program, the MEA program with the highest rate of participation.

Status of Customer Service Training

As of the end of FY17, the Maryland Energy Administration has provided customer service training to 100% of full-time employees. As new employees join, customer service training sessions will be given as needed, most likely on a quarterly basis.

Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution

Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

Maryland Energy Administration staff are aware of the need to respond to customer inquiries as quickly as possible, balanced with providing accurate and well-informed information.

Best Practices

Many of the Maryland Energy Administration's phone calls are related to the status of residential Clean Energy Grant Program awards. The Maryland Energy Administration has started directing all phone calls for this program to the agency receptionist who can quickly answer routine questions about the program. In this way, the Clean Energy Grant Program grant administrators are freed up to answer more complex program inquiries.

Plans for Improvement

In fiscal year 2018, the Maryland Energy Administration intends to try to start leveraging application technologies that will enable applicants to apply for some of the competitive grants through an application portal, rather than having to email or mail in application packages. Additionally, the Maryland Energy Administration intends to implement IT changes that should enable signature information to be able to be collected electronically for the residential Clean Energy Grant Program.

Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

Making Agency Services Available Online

In FY17, the Maryland Energy Administration continued to accept competitive grant applications via email and in paper. In addition, residential Clean Energy Grant Applications could be submitted via an online portal; however, applicants for this program were still required to mail in an online signature sheet.

In fiscal year 2018, the Maryland Energy Administration is piloting an initiative that will have several competitive grant programs submit their application via an online portal for the first time. In addition, the Maryland Energy Administration is working to revamp the residential Clean Energy Grant Program data portal process to no longer require a signature sheet to be printed and mailed after applying online, fully automating the process.

Processing Times for Customer Transactions

Most of the Maryland Energy Administration's direct customer interactions involve the Clean Energy Grant Program. The Maryland Energy Administration has directed incoming calls for the program to the agency's receptionist who can quickly answer basic programmatic questions. In addition, the Maryland Energy Administration has focused on improving the overall Clean Energy Grant Program process, resulting in a reduction in average award processing time (from date of residential Clean Energy Grant Program application receipt by the Maryland Energy Administration to incentive approval).

Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

Unlike some state agencies, the Maryland Energy Administration does not interact with the general public through "walk-in" type transactions. Instead, the majority of MEA's interactions are handled by the subject matter expert in a given area of energy expertise, via phone or email. Information for MEA's subject matter experts is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at

<http://www.energy.maryland.gov/Pages/InsideMEA/staffdirectory.aspx>.

The Maryland Energy Administration has already implemented administrative staff schedules to answer the main phone line from 8 AM to 5 PM, typical business hours.

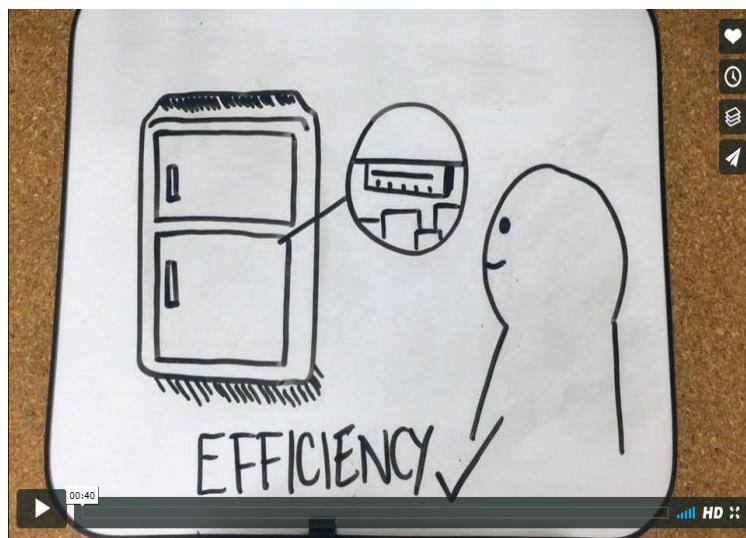
Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience

In fiscal year 2017, the Maryland Energy Administration worked to continue to increase our online presence through social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. MEA uses social media for a number of purposes including:

- Announcing Maryland Energy Administration energy programs
- Highlighting participants in Maryland Energy Administration energy programs

- Providing general tips to reduce energy usage
- Educating the public on various energy related topics.

Samples of Maryland Energy Administration social media post can be seen below:





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