

Executive Summary

 **EPA Customer Service Plan**

EPA AND CUSTOMER SERVICE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission

The people who work at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are dedicated to improving and preserving the environment in this country and around the globe. Highly skilled and culturally diverse, we work with our partners to protect human health, ecosystems, and the beauty of our environment using the best available science. We value and promote innovative and effective solutions to environmental problems. We strive to protect and sustain the productivity of the natural resources on which all life and human activity depend.

Our Primary Customer

Our primary customer is the general public – all of us who live and breathe and share the earth's environment.

Serving Our Intermediary Customers

Our ultimate success depends on how effectively we work with and influence the actions of many other parties – including international, federal, state, tribal and local governments, industry, agriculture, small business and other non-government organizations and individuals – that deliver environmental protection.

To build a cooperative and supportive relationship with these customers our goals are to handle all interactions in a fair, courteous and professional manner and to provide a clear understanding of the reasons for our actions.

Vision

We envision a world in which:

- All individuals and institutions value the environment and choose to act in a manner that ensures achievement of sustainable environmental and economic goals.
- The natural balance of all living things is no longer threatened, and all individuals – rich and poor, young and old – share in the benefits of a healthy environment.

EPA will strive to become an Agency recognized for:

- Leadership in environmental protection and environmental science – domestically and worldwide.
- Strong and effective working relationships with our partners in environmental protection.
- Integrity in the stewardship of our resources and the management of our programs.

Customer Service Policy

We are committed to achieving customer service equal to the best in business. We carry out our mission through increased public participation, increased public access to information and increased public access to decision-makers.

Customer Service Approach

Our approach to improving customer service is through the following:

Public Access. We are committed to increasing the participation of our customers in the policy and decision-making processes of the Agency.

Listening to our Customers. We will listen to what our customers tell us about the quality and value of the products and services we provide and adjust our activities and resource allocation decisions accordingly.

Outreach and Communicating with our Customers. We must communicate with our customers so that those who need environmental information know where they can obtain the information they need in a form they can use.

Reinventing EPA: Customer Service Moves Ahead

Our reinvention efforts are designed to achieve greater environmental results, improve communication with our customers and involve affected parties much more directly in shaping our decision-making processes.

Pilots 5, 6, and 7 will strengthen our intermediary customers' ability to protect the environment through improving the awarding of water grants to states, reinventing the permitting process and working with our customers to achieve greater environmental protection at less cost.

Next Steps

For these product lines, we have tentatively identified initial customer service standards. For copies of our Customer Service Plans please contact:

Office of Communications, Education and Public Affairs
U.S. EPA
401 M Street, S.W. (1701)
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 260-7963

Over the next few months we will be using focus groups with front-line employees and customers to test the validity of our standards and establish benchmarks. We will also, by December 1994, publish customer service standards and develop implementation plans for additional key Agency-wide product lines. We are committed to setting standards for our core business processes and developing an Agency-wide customer service plan that is aligned with our strategic plan and customer service approach. By September 1996, in conjunction with our other reinvention efforts, we will have published customer service standards for all of our core business processes, product and service lines.

Comments, Questions or Complaints

We want to hear from you about the quality of our service. Please contact:

Office of the Administrator
Cooperative Environmental Management
Abby Pirnie
(202) 260-7567



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These reinvention efforts include:

- The Common Sense Initiative will strengthen our ability to understand and support key intermediary customers in their delivery of environmental protection.
- The Environmental Goals Roundtables initiated dialogues with our customers across the country about our proposals for national environmental goals.
- The Ecosystem Approach to Environmental Protection will involve our customers in shaping environmental goals for their communities, developing strategies to reach these goals and measuring progress.
- Streamlining and Increasing Access to the Regulatory Development Process will reduce cycle-time for product delivery and involve affected parties early on in the development process.
- Increasing Public Access to Environmental Data and Information is the focus of our Information Resource Management strategic plan, developed with our customers.
- Increasing Emphasis on Citizen Involvement is provided for in many of our efforts and legislative proposals.
- State, Tribal, Local Advisory/Operating Committees are important forums for listening to several key intermediary customers.
- The Office of Pesticides Programs has conducted a preliminary survey of several key customers to improve the quality of services it provides.
- The Agency is undertaking several major changes to increase and institutionalize the connections with those who use our research.

- The Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance includes a new emphasis on compliance assurance to parallel strengthened enforcement capabilities which will provide greater environmental protection for the public.
- The Permits Improvement Team will identify ways to shorten the time necessary to issue a permit, improve public participation in the permitting process, and will encourage pollution prevention and the use of innovative technologies.
- EPA Region 8's Citizen Information Center in Denver, which opened in the fall of 1993, serves as a central point of contact for visitors and callers.

These activities demonstrate our commitment to work with and listen to our customers so we can deliver greater environmental protection.

Pilot Customer Service Projects

We are committed to setting clear performance standards for our products and services, assessing how well we are meeting those standards, whether they are the right ones and adjusting our activities based on what we learn from those assessments.

Pilots 1, 2, and 3 deal with how we respond to public inquiries: In the Office of Communications, Education and Public Affairs, we will test standards for handling incoming calls; in our Region 3 Office in Philadelphia, we will test standards for handling all incoming correspondence and customer assistance lines; and in our Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, we will be assessing the standards for managing our hotline.

Pilot 4 will increase public access to information to improve environmental decision-making through the Toxics Release Inventory and Community Right to Know programs. We will develop standard operating procedures for evaluating how well we are meeting our customer service standards and for using the results of those evaluations for improving what and how we provide information.