



POLICY MANUAL

POLICY NUMBER: CORPORATE-018

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

POLICY STATEMENT:

The City of Brantford is dedicated to providing an accessible, welcoming and comfortable environment that respects all customers, elected officials, visitors and City staff. This Customer Service Standard outlines the City's commitment to providing outstanding customer service to all residents, businesses, and visitors within our community. We believe that exceptional customer service is fundamental to fostering a strong relationship with members of our community and ensuring a positive experience for everyone interacting with the City of Brantford's programming and services.

CUSTOMER SERVICE VISION:

Our vision is to be a customer-centric municipality that consistently delivers efficient, respectful, and accessible services that reflect our dedication to the well-being and satisfaction of our community.

OBJECTIVES:

The primary objectives of the City of Brantford Customer Service Standard are as follows:

- a) **Customer Satisfaction:** We are committed to meeting and exceeding the expectations of our customers by providing prompt, reliable, and high-quality services during all interactions with customers.
- b) **Accessibility:** We strive to ensure that all our services and facilities are accessible to all individuals, accommodating diverse needs and ensuring inclusivity.
- c) **Communication:** We aim to establish transparent and open lines of communication with our customers, providing accurate and timely information.
- d) **Empathy and Respect:** Our staff is dedicated to treating all customers with empathy, courtesy, and respect, acknowledging the value of every individual's perspective.
- e) **Continuous Improvement:** We are committed to continuously improving our services based on customer feedback and ongoing evaluation.

SCOPE:

This Standard applies to all interactions between City of Brantford staff and external customers. It outlines expected service standards when responding to customers in person, via telephone, via email, or through written correspondence. With respect to inquiries made via social media, Communications and Community Engagement (C&CE) staff will advise social media users that social media is not an official channel to report service requests of the City. However, C&CE will endeavour to answer inquiries that can be answered easily by referral to information on the City's websites and/or to subject expert staff when applicable.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Brantford City Council is responsible for considering and endorsing the content and implementation of this Standard and subsequent updates.
- The CAO, City Commissioners and Directors are responsible for taking measures to help their staff act in compliance with this Standard.
- Managers and Supervisors must ensure that their staff are aware of and understand this Standard.
- All City employees are required to comply with the Standard requirements and share responsibility for execution.
- Together with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Communications, Community Engagement and Customer Service staff are responsible for the enforcement of this Standard.

CUSTOMER SERVICE PRINCIPLES:

To uphold our commitment to exceptional customer service, we adhere to the following principles:

- **Response Times:** We will acknowledge all external customer inquiries and service requests within three (3) business days and provide a final resolution or status update within seven (7) business days, depending on the complexity of the request.
- **Service Quality:** Our services will meet or exceed established quality standards, tailored to address the specific needs and preferences of our customers.
- **Multi-Channel Support:** To cater to diverse customer preferences, we offer multiple communication channels, including in-person assistance, telephone support, email, and letters/public notices.
- **Accessibility:** We will ensure that all City facilities, services, and information are in compliance with applicable AODA accessibility laws and guidelines, making our services accessible and inclusive to all individuals. All efforts will be made to provide accommodations for those who request an alternate form of communication.
- **Empathy & Respect:** City employees will use empathy and respect in all customer interactions, ensuring all individuals are treated with courtesy and dignity.

Frontline Customer Service

Customers can contact frontline customer service staff through the City of Brantford's main phone number 519-759-4150 or through various City locations.

The City's frontline customer service staff are available to:

- Provide information regarding the City's services and programs.
- Respond to questions or concerns and/or redirect customers to "Knowledge Owners"/Subject Expert staff to provide additional information.
- Record and/or facilitate customer service requests, compliments and complaints.
- Facilitate bookings for City services/programs.
- Accept payments and program registrations.

Customer Service Requests

Any requests that cannot be resolved by front line Customer Service staff are assigned to departmental staff. Customers can submit service requests through various channels, including phone, email, in-person and by completing service request forms on the City of Brantford's website.

When an external customer submits a service request via an online City form, an email to Customer Service staff or directly to a Knowledge Owner/Subject Expert, City staff will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the customer request/inquiry back to the customer within 48 hours.
- Vacation or absence messages will be activated providing a co-worker's name and contact information as backup while out of the office
- If appropriate (i.e. a report about City infrastructure or request that can be actioned by staff), log customer requests/inquiries in the City's Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) within 24-48 hours of receiving the report/request.
- Investigate the matter thoroughly and gather all relevant information before responding to the customer.
- Provide a clear and concise response addressing the customer's request within 72 hours, and if available, provide a tracking/reference number to the customer in your response.
- Provide an estimated timeline to complete the request in accordance with this service Standard.
- Follow up with the customer periodically (within a week or weekly depending on complexity of the request) to ensure satisfaction with the resolution plan and final resolution.
- Log all applicable service requests in the CRM and outline details of the nature of the request, if the resolution was reached and any next steps if the case is still open.
- Close the case in the CRM once the request is completed with closing notes.

Complaints and Feedback

- The updated Corporate Complaints Handling Policy (Corporate-043) outlines how City staff will manage complaints efficiently, reasonably, effectively, and uniformly.
- Customers can provide feedback and make complaints through various channels, including phone, email, in-person, or by using the City's online complaint form.

Accommodations for Customers with Disabilities

- Customers with disabilities can request accommodations via their initial point of contact.
- Accommodations may include providing alternate formats for information and communication, arranging for sign language interpretation or assistive devices, or modifying facilities or services.
- The City will make reasonable efforts to provide accommodations promptly.

Customer Requests that are Unreasonable or Abusive

The City of Brantford is committed to treating all customers equally and fairly. All customers are expected to follow the [City's Customer Code of Conduct Policy](#) guidelines. The City reserves the right to terminate or restrict communication channels with unreasonable customers in accordance with that Policy.

Suspension

In the event a customer contravenes this policy and engages in unreasonable behaviours the customer may be suspended from a City facility or program for a defined period of time, before being readmitted following a declaration of willingness to comply with this policy. If a suspension includes a no trespass order, said order will be issued pursuant to HSS-061-Workplace Security.

Termination/No Trespass Order

An offending customer may be removed from a City program or facility if their unreasonable behaviour results in extreme disruption, or harm to self, others, or property. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Customer Service Availability

While the standards below represent the City of Brantford's fundamental commitment to service excellence, it is important to acknowledge that exceptions may arise based on the specific nature of the service or situation. This is particularly pertinent in instances such as incidents that may impact security, where clients may experience delays in being attended to, while an issue is being resolved. Additionally, during requested investigations, there may be circumstances in which the client or agency requests information that cannot be shared until the investigation is fully completed. There are unique scenarios in which it may not be feasible to adhere to the strict 10-minute in-person client wait time or the 10-day resolution timeline. However, it remains imperative that we maintain open communication with the client or agency involved, ensuring they are kept informed of the progress. These exceptional situations are an inherent aspect of our business operations and will be managed with utmost care and transparency as needed.

In Person

External customers can receive in-person City services at the following locations:

- **Brantford City Hall** – First Floor - 311 Counter and Second Floor Counter (Building, Planning, BRC) 58 Dalhousie Street, Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

- **Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre** - 254 N Park St, Monday – Friday 5:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Sat and Sun 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- **Brantford Transit** – 64 Darling St. Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- **Community Services and Social Development (CSSD)** – 220 Colborne St. Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. / While appointments are encouraged for Ontario Works clients at 220 Colborne, drop-in services will be provided whenever possible. Clients may be directed to the phone if their Case Worker is offsite and/or may need to wait (more than the corporate standard of 30 minutes) or will be asked to come back or make an appointment.
- **Walter Gretzky Municipal Golf Course** – April – October, 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

By Telephone

Customers can contact the City’s Customer Service staff at 519-759-4150. The hours of operations are Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. In addition, an after-hours service is provided to enable customers to contact the City outside regular business hours during evenings and weekends for non-emergency matters that will be responded to/acted upon the following business day.

By Email

Customers can contact City employees by submitting an online request form or to employees’ email. Customers can expect a response during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Date of Enactment: May 22, 1984	Related By-law Number/Staff Report Number: 162-91, 88-2001 Chapter 155 of City of Brantford Municipal Code
Review and Amendment Dates: December 31, 1991 May 22, 2001 March 2009 (Review)	Department Responsible for Review: Corporate Services
Date of Review: August 24, 2015	Department Responsible for Review: Corporate Services
Date of Review: October 24, 2023	Department Responsible for Review: Communication, Community Engagement and Customer Service