



Prepared for:
U.S. General Services Administration



Government-Wide Assessment of Citizen Service Activities

Final Report

June 15, 2007

The information in this report was produced for the U.S. Government under contract number GS00F0030L by DPRA Incorporated.
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|--|
| ACSI | American Customer Satisfaction Index |
| BDR | Budget Data Request |
| CIO | Chief Information Officer |
| CS | Customer Service |
| CSR | Customer Service Representative |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| FAFSA | Free Application for Federal Student Assistance |
| FAQ | Frequently Asked Questions |
| FTE | Full-time Equivalent |
| FWS | Fish and Wildlife Service |
| GAO | Government Accountability Office |
| GSA | General Services Administration |
| GWA | Government-Wide Assessment of Citizen Service Activities |
| HRSA | Health Resources and Services Administration |
| ICMI | International Customer Management Institute |
| IRS | Internal Revenue Service |
| IVR | Interactive Voice Response |
| JOC | Joint Operations Center |
| NRC | Nuclear Regulatory Commission |
| OMB | Office of Management and Budget |
| PDF | Printed Document File |
| PIN | Personal Identification Number |
| SME | Subject Matter Expert |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| SSA | Social Security Administration |
| USPTO | United States Patent and Trademark Office |
| WOOF | Washington Office Outreach Forum |

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

USA Services is a presidential E-Government initiative residing at the General Service Administration's Office of Citizen Services and Communications. Its mission is to provide government-wide leadership to enhance citizen access to federal information and services. In June 2006, USA Services retained DPRA Incorporated (DPRA) to expand a 2004/2005 data collection in order to develop a baseline for identifying opportunities to help government agencies improve citizen service activities.

In 2004, USA Services participated in an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Budget Data Request (BDR) to survey the various processes citizens use to contact the federal government, e.g., telephones, e-mail, web-based forms, automated frequently asked question (FAQ) systems, and interactive voice response (IVR) systems. A spreadsheet template was sent to all federal entities for data collection, and over 1,800 activities were reported. In 2005, USA Services awarded a contract to follow up and expand on the OMB BDR. A follow-up survey was developed to gather in-depth information, particularly cost and performance metrics data, specific to individual types of activities. Data from the 2004 and 2005 surveys were entered in a database. One hundred sixty-one (161) follow-up, web-based surveys were completed in 2005.

The objectives of the 2006-2007 Government-Wide Assessment of Citizen Service Activities survey (GWA Survey) are to:

- Gather information from departments and agencies across the federal government on where and how citizen-facing activities are provided, maintained, and measured;
- Analyze department and agency input and help USA Services identify opportunities to help federal agencies improve the quality of service they provide to citizens; and
- Benchmark results of the 2006-2007 GWA Survey with those of the 2004 BDR and 2005 follow-up survey.

PROCESS

DPRA, in collaboration with the USA Services project team, drafted the survey instrument and benchmarking questions from the 2004 BDR and 2005 follow-up survey. Pre-testing was conducted to ensure that any problems with the survey, such as sequence or wording of questions, were identified and corrected. The result of pre-testing and subsequent modifications was a survey that was as user-friendly as possible for respondents.

Based on current population statistics on federal government entities that interact with citizens – approximately 400 – DPRA and USA Services decided every member of the population was targeted to participate in the survey in order to provide the most thorough, accurate, and informative results possible. This goal was pursued in a cost-effective manner by administering the survey on line.

DPRA and USA Services contacted over 250 executive, legislative, and judicial branch departments, agencies, and bureaus via telephone and/or e-mail to inform them of the survey and confirm contact coordinates in an effort to maximize participation. An initial e-mail containing specific instructions, a link to the survey website, and default log-in information was sent to all federal entity points of contact, such as CIOs, communications officers, and webmasters.

The GWA Survey was initially voluntary, but in January 2007 OMB made it mandatory for departments

and agencies participating in E-Government initiatives. Efforts to encourage participation of the legislative and judicial branches were unavailing. Respondents submitted a total of 882 surveys reporting 6,500 citizen-facing activities as shown in Table A.

Table A. Number of survey received in 2006/2007 GWA Survey

| Activity Type | Number of Activities | Number of Surveys |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Telephone Activities | 2,843 | 337 |
| E-mail and Web-based Forms | 597 | 343 |
| IVR Systems | 101 | 48 |
| FAQ Systems | 57 | 47 |
| Interactive Web Pages | 57 | 46 |
| Walk-in Facilities | 2,283 | 29 |
| Kiosks | 74 | 5 |
| Other Activities | 488 | 27 |
| Total | 6,500 | 882 |

In addition to the on-line survey, DPRA and the USA Services project team conducted over 30 follow-up interviews with willing and available respondents. Participation in the follow-up interviews was entirely voluntary. The purpose of the interviews was to explore responses provided on the survey questionnaires in greater depth and to assess the level of confidence USA Services should have in the survey results. Interviews confirmed that respondents had taken great pains to check and verify the quantitative data they reported, and generally had completed survey questionnaires with especial diligence. Moreover, interviews corroborated important relationships indicated by the survey data. The results of the follow-up interview process suggest that the survey results may be viewed with a high degree of confidence.

KEY FINDINGS

The GWA Survey's key findings consist of trends and challenges that are based on both survey and post-survey interview responses. Recommendations speak to these trends and challenges in light of those actions identified by survey respondents as most likely to improve customer service.

Benchmarking

One of the objectives in the GWA Survey is to create a baseline for benchmarking results with the 2004 OMB BDR. In 2004, agencies were asked if performance and cost metrics were being collected for their activities. Similarly, the GWA Survey participants were asked to identify if their channel activities are collecting specific service-level metrics (Question 10a). Table B shows the percentages of reported activities that have service-level metrics in place.

Table B. Percentage of service-level metrics collected by activity type in 2006/2007

| Activity Type | Performance (%) | Cost (%) | Information Quality (%) | Customer Satisfaction (%) |
|----------------------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Telephone Activities | 10.2 | 8.3 | 55.8 | 56.8 |
| E-mail and Web-based Forms | 31.7 | 17.8 | 22.3 | 23.5 |
| IVR Systems | 33.7 | 21.8 | 65.3 | 65.3 |
| FAQ Systems | 59.6 | 21.1 | 36.8 | 70.2 |
| Interactive Web Pages | 42.1 | 24.6 | 21.1 | 52.6 |
| Walk-in Facilities | 90.3 | 90.1 | 90.5 | 68.6 |
| Kiosks | 62.2 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 62.2 |
| Other Activities | 97.5 | 94.5 | 94.5 | 94.3 |

- All activity types collect the service-level metrics in varying degrees.
- Telephone activity has the lowest percentage (10.2) for collecting performance metrics.
- Ninety percent of walk-in facilities collect performance, cost, and information quality metrics
- A majority of kiosks collect performance and customer satisfaction metrics, while less than two percent collect cost and information quality metrics.
- In general, more activities collect information quality and customer satisfaction metrics than performance and cost metrics.

When comparing percentages of service-level metrics collected in 2004 and 2006/2007, the only activity type that shows a decline is telephone activities, as shown in Table C. The 2004 survey, however, collected data only on toll-free telephone numbers whereas the 2006/2007 survey collected data on both toll and toll-free numbers. Some of the decline may be attributable to this difference as toll-free numbers are more likely to be part of call answering systems that incorporate performance and cost metrics collection. Otherwise, all activity types clearly have increased metrics collection.

Table C. Comparison of performance and cost metrics collected by activity type (2006/2007 vs. 2004)

| Activity Type | Performance Metrics (%) 2006/2007 | Performance Metrics (%) 2004 | Cost Metrics (%) 2006/2007 | Cost Metrics (%) 2004 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Telephone Activities | 10.2 | 39.0 ¹ | 8.3 | 32.5 ² |
| E-mail/Web-based Forms | 31.7 | 23.0 ³ | 17.8 | 9.0 ⁴ |
| IVR Systems | 33.7 | 29.0 | 21.8 | 16.0 |
| FAQ Systems | 59.6 | 22.0 | 21.1 | 8.0 |
| Interactive Web Pages | 42.1 | 39.0 | 24.6 | 22.0 |

In addition to identifying whether customer satisfaction was measured, survey respondents were asked what tools were used to evaluate such metrics (Question 10b). Table D describes the most commonly cited methods of measuring customer satisfaction in the 2005 follow-up survey and 2006/2007 GWA Survey.

Table D. Most cited customer satisfaction measures by activity type (2006/2007 vs. 2005)

| Activity Type | Most Cited Customer Satisfaction Measures by Activities (2006/2007) | Most Cited Customer Satisfaction Measures by Activities (2005) ⁵ |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Telephone Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 94.2% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure number of complaints received – 44% (<i>Call or Contact Centers</i>) Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 36% (<i>Toll-free Numbers</i>) |
| E-mail and Web-based Forms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal survey but invite customer to give feedback some other way – 40% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal survey but invite customer to give feedback some other way – 38% (<i>Web-based E-mail Forms</i>) Measure number of complaints received – 28% (<i>Dedicated Public E-mail Address</i>) |
| IVR Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 92.4% | |
| FAQ Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 40.0% | |

¹ The 2004 performance metrics is the average of “Call or Contact Center” (41%) and “Toll –free Number” (37%).

² The 2004 cost metrics is the average of “Call or Contact Center” (22%) and “Toll –free Number” (43%).

³ The 2004 performance metrics is the average of “Web-based E-mail Address” (27%) and “Dedicated Public E-mail Address” (19%)

⁴ The 2004 cost metrics is the average of “Web-based E-mail Address” (8%) and “Dedicated Public E-mail Address” (10%)

⁵ Information available only for “Call or Contact Centers”, “Toll-free Numbers”, “Web-based E-mail Forms” and “Dedicated Public E-mail Address” in 2005 survey report.

| Activity Type | Most Cited Customer Satisfaction Measures by Activities (2006/2007) | Most Cited Customer Satisfaction Measures by Activities (2005) ⁵ |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Interactive Web Pages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 46.7% | |
| Walk-in Facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 96.0% | |
| Kiosks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 97.8% Measure increased of new customers – 97.8% | |
| Other Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the American Customer Satisfaction Index – 98.9% | |

Major Trends in Customer Service

1. *Professionalization.* Customer service has evolved into a recognized and respected profession with its own specialized publications, organizations, terminology, standardized practices, and professional certifications. Federal employees who provide citizen services are part of this trend and often refer to the services they provide as “customer” services.⁶
2. *Technological development.* Increasingly sophisticated tools are available to customer service providers, e.g., web-based and other interactive systems, as well as software applications that facilitate training, performance evaluation, work flow management, and consolidation and integration of information sources.
3. *Growth of self-service.* Technological development has made an array of self-service channels available to customers, e.g., FAQ and IVR systems. These tools have been widely adopted within the federal government and relied on by customers (*see* Section 3.1.1). The availability of self-service channels tends to route the most sophisticated and challenging inquiries to customer service representatives (CSRs), reinforcing the trend toward professionalization.

Major Challenges to Providing Quality Customer Service

1. *Availability of funding.* Funding constraints directly affect the level of customer service government is able to provide by slowing the adoption of new technologies and the hiring and training of customer service staff.
2. *Creating awareness of services.* Customers cannot be served well if they are not served at all. Federal departments and agencies are challenged to make potential customers aware of available services and find that they often pay private entities for services available free from the government.
3. *Consolidating data sources and service activities.* Federal departments and agencies are challenged to develop comprehensive “knowledge bases” as the sole sources of the information they provide, regardless of the channel customers use to access it, in order to improve accuracy and maximize the benefit of technologies that allow service activities to be combined.

⁶ This usage also reflects the fact that federal employees provide services to non-citizens. Accordingly, this report uses the terms “citizen” and “customer” interchangeably.

Recommendations

Customer service has evolved significantly in recent years and there is little reason to believe the pace of change will slow in the future. The trends noted in this report present challenges to the government as it seeks to improve citizen service. These recommendations identify the most compelling opportunities it has for addressing them.

1. ***Establish a Customer Service Work Group.*** Survey respondents identified more networking with other agencies performing similar activities as the action that would improve customer service most.
2. ***Develop customer service guidance.*** Repair the lack of federal guidance, performance measures, and standards on the conduct of customer service activities.
3. ***Foster increased awareness of service availability.*** Provide a forum for sharing information and experience about successful outreach programs and practices.
4. ***Promote consolidation of citizen service activities.*** Provide a forum for sharing information and experience about eliminating organizational, legal, and jurisdictional barriers to providing timely and effective customer service.
5. ***Promote consolidation of data sources.*** Provide a forum for sharing information and experience about consolidating data sources in different service environments.
6. ***Promote professionalization of customer service.*** Work with other agencies, OMB, and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to determine how best to enhance customer service as a professional track within the federal government.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The goals of the Government-Wide Assessment of Citizen Service Activities (GWA Survey) are to expand on the previous data collection and develop a baseline that captures the state of citizen service activities performed by the federal government. This baseline will be used to help USA Services, one of the president's 24 E-Government initiatives, identify opportunities for helping other agencies improve the quality of the services and information they provide to citizens, especially via electronic channels, and determine which opportunities promise the greatest return on investment of its resources.

1.2 BACKGROUND

In 2004, USA Services, Office of Citizen Services in the General Services Administration participated in an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Budget Data Request (BDR) to survey the various processes citizens use to contact the federal government. These processes include telephones, call centers, e-mail, web-based forms, automated frequently asked questions (FAQ) systems, and others. In 2005, USA Services awarded a contract to follow up and expand on the OMB BDR. This activity resulted in development of a Microsoft Access[®] database application to hold the results of the BDR and facilitate production of reports.

As part of its mission to help federal agencies improve service to citizens, USA Services awarded a contract in June 2006 to conduct the GWA Survey. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) alluded to the upcoming survey in its February 2006 report, *Federal Contact Centers: Mechanism for Sharing Metrics and Oversight Practices along with Improved Data Needed* (GAO-06-270), anticipating that it would result in a more "representative view of activities across the government" than did the previous surveys.

1.3 REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report includes data from surveys received (on-line, mail-back, e-mailed) between August 2006 and March 2007. Results presented are calculations and analysis of all quantitative (closed-ended) questions. Responses from qualitative (open-ended) questions and post-survey follow-up interview are presented in Section 5 Observations and Recommendations and in Appendices.

This report is organized as follows:

- Section 1 provides a general introduction and overview of the *2006/2007 Government-Wide Assessment of Citizen Service Activities*;
- Section 2 summarizes the survey methodology of the *2006/2007 Government-Wide Assessment of Citizen Service Activities*;
- Section 3 provides detailed survey findings;
- Section 4 provides a comparison of the results from 2004/2005 and 2006/2007 on benchmarking questions; and
- Section 5 provides key observations from the post-survey follow-up interviews and recommendations, derived from this survey process, that address major challenges and improvement actions in order to assist federal agencies in enhancing customer service.

Appendix A includes a copy of the 2007 survey questionnaire.

Appendix B includes a list of “Other Activities”.

Appendix C includes a list of reported “Call or Contact Centers”.

Appendix D includes lists of major software applications used to support citizen service

Appendix E includes a list of “Other” methods used to measure customer satisfaction.

Appendix F includes a list of “Other” challenges in providing quality service.

Appendix G includes a copy of the Federal Customer Service Enhancement Act (H.R. 404).

2 METHODOLOGY AND STATISTICAL APPROACH

The following section provides a description of the methodologies used for the development and implementation of the survey instrument and statistical analyses.

2.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In an ongoing commitment and effort to assist agencies across the federal system improve service to citizens, USA Services expanded and enhanced the previous data collections in response to the 2004 OMB BDR and the 2005 follow-up survey conducted by SiloSmashers in order to develop a more comprehensive baseline that better captures the state of citizen service activities government-wide. This baseline will be used to help the government identify opportunities to help agencies improve the quality of service delivery to citizens.

In collaboration with the USA Services project team, DPRA drafted the survey instrument and benchmarking questions from past data calls. The survey instrument was designed and structured to gather information for qualitative and quantitative analysis with respect to current citizen-facing service delivery. The results will provide answers to the list of questions/items⁷ (Section 3.1.1) outlined in the Statement of Work.

Pre-testing of the survey was also conducted to ensure that any problems with the survey, such as sequence or wording of questions, were identified and corrected. The final product of the pre-testing and modification was the production of a survey that was as user-friendly as possible for the respondents. Since USA Services preferred electronic surveys to paper surveys, the questionnaire was implemented on the Internet. A hard-copy survey in PDF format was also available on the website for participants to download if they preferred.

In addition, DPRA administered and maintained a toll-free telephone help line and a dedicated e-mail address (gwasurvey@dpra.com) to provide support to participants in successfully completing their survey.

It is important to generate a baseline that is statistically relevant to the actual makeup of the government. Typically, survey research is targeted to a sample in an effort to represent a particular population. To report statistically significant results for any survey, scientific research standards suggest using a sample that offers a 95% confidence level, and a margin of error of +/- 5% (i.e., if the survey were replicated 20 times, the results would be within +/- 5% nineteen times). If greater confidence and/or a lower margin of error are desired, a larger sample is required.

Similarly, smaller populations require larger samples to reflect them accurately. Based on the current population statistics for federal government entities that interact with citizens – approximately 400 – DPRA and USA Services decided not to sample the population. Rather, every entity in the population

⁷ One of the questions listed in Section 3.1.1 was not included in the survey -- “costs per citizen transaction by channel by agency”. DPRA and the USA Services team discussed the level of effort required for survey respondents to accurately obtain this information from their agencies. They concluded that this information is too specific and not widely available/accessible for the respondents. In addition, depending on the agency, comparable activities are already performed in house and through contractors. Therefore, such question could yield a high ratio of “No Response” or “Don’t Know” responses, which provide limited value in determining an estimated “costs per citizen transaction by channel by agency”. DPRA and USA Services suggest pursuing this topic as a subject of an entire separate study that involves agency, finance, budget and contracting staff.

was targeted to participate in the process to offer more informative and accurate results as compared to the 2004 and 2005 processes. This was achieved in a cost-effective manner through the use of an on-line survey.

In 2006, DPRA and USA Services contacted over 250 executive, legislative, and judicial branch offices, agencies, and bureaus via telephone and/or e-mail to confirm contact coordinates for participants and to inform them of the *voluntary* survey process to increase participation. The survey was administered on line, with individual user names and passwords generated for each survey respondent. An initial e-mail containing specific instructions, a link to the survey website, and default log-in information was sent to all federal entity points of contact, such as CIOs, department/agency communications officers, and webmasters.

While the 2006 GWA Survey received adequate and valid responses of 320 submissions with 727 activities reported, OMB issued a new, *mandatory* requirement in January 2007 directing executive departments and agencies participating in E-Government initiatives to fully comply with the instructions of the GWA Survey. This directive allowed the survey process to continue until March 2007. The extension offered additional opportunities to departments/agencies to provide inputs about the status of their citizen service delivery. In order to streamline internal data collection, USA Services recommended that the departments/agencies give priority to submitting information on activities with estimated monthly volume of 1,500 or more. As a result of the OMB requirement, respondents submitted an additional 562 surveys which accounted for 5,773 more activities. A total of **882** surveys reporting **6,500** activities were collected by the GWA Survey process. DPRA and USA Services strove for broad participation across federal entities, and made considerable effort to follow up with non-responders via telephone calls and e-mails. These efforts, however, were mostly unsuccessful.

Based on observations, comments, and suggestions from the 2006 study, DPRA and USA Services revised the questionnaire and the existing web survey portal with added functionality, such as “Save”, “Review/Edit Surveys”, and “Print”, in an effort to provide a simple and user-friendly product to maximize participation.

While each federal entity had equal opportunity to provide input to the survey process, DPRA kept track of survey responses. Weekly survey status reports provided to USA Services reflected the current response rate. Based on the response rate of any particular agency/department and discussion with agency/department representatives, USA Services endeavoured to follow up with the associated contact and encourage their participation (even though it was mandatory).

After the survey submission closed on March 31, 2007, USA Services sent out a “Notice of Completion of OMB E-Government Milestone Data Request - USA Services Government-Wide Assessment” via e-mail to each agency that participated.

2.2 OPTION 1 – POST SURVEY INTERVIEWS METHODOLOGY

DPRA was mandated to carry out follow-up action with survey participants to engage them in detailed discussion regarding the approach taken in preparing the survey responses, major trends occurring in their service delivery practice, and issues faced by federal entities. In order to carry out this process, a question about post-survey interviews was asked in the on-line survey:

- Q20. Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up survey to help us better understand how your organization provides service, how it works to improve its quality and what trends you are experiencing related to providing service?”

All survey respondents who expressed an interest in participating in a post-survey interview (i.e., answered “Yes” in Q20) were contacted by DPRA via telephone. The DPRA and USA Services project team conducted face-to-face interviews with those who responded to the invitation where possible, and telephone interviews with those who were not available for an in-person meeting. In addition, DPRA continued to follow up with those who did not respond to the initial invitation.

Prior to an interview, DPRA and the USA Services project team reviewed survey responses submitted by the interviewee in order to gain a better understanding of the services provided and to formulate interview questions that would be most relevant and in context to the interviewee.

The interview responses indicated that federal entities have gone to great lengths to gather inventory information and current status data to complete the on-line survey. As a result, DPRA and USA Services are confident that the data have been collected and results reported with a high degree of accuracy with one exception. Post-survey interviews revealed that some respondents interpreted the term “FTE” as including any employee engaged in an activity, whether engaged full-time or not. Errors that were identified through the interview process were corrected, but FTE figures may still be slightly inflated. DPRA and USA Services remain confident, however, that the relative magnitudes of those figures are reliable.

Comments made by interviewees provided a comprehensive look at the current state of citizen service delivery, trends, and major challenges that federal entities are facing. This information will assist the government to identify priorities for improvements.

2.3 STATISTICAL APPROACH

Prior to receiving the completed surveys, the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) was used to create a data entry file. The completed surveys were collected and stored in Microsoft Access[®] database tables. The entries were cleansed based on activity type. For instance, “Telephone” survey should provide the actual phone numbers used to access the activity. In addition, the agency information was verified for spelling and inconsistency.

After survey responses were validated, they were imported to their corresponding SPSS files for data analysis. Closed-ended responses (quantitative) were grouped by activity types for statistical calculations such as aggregate frequency tables. Open-ended responses (qualitative), which asked respondents for comments and other textual information, were assessed and grouped into general themes, which were created based on review of the survey responses.

As a common survey practice to validate data for reliability of results, a 5% random sample was removed from the original data set. The output from the new data set was then compared to output from the original to assess whether there is a statistically significant difference between the two sets. No statistical significant difference was observed; hence the data are valid and reliable.

3 DETAILED FINDINGS (2006-2007 SURVEY DATA)

The following section presents detailed survey results by key quantitative (closed-ended) questions.

3.1 ACTIVITY TYPES

The 2006-2007 GWA Survey was organized around key activity types in order to facilitate comparison of results with those of OMB’s 2004 BDR. Activity types can also be understood as channels of communication with the federal government.

3.1.1 ACTIVITY PROFILE

Table 1 presents profiles of each activity type surveyed. It shows the number of activities of a given type and their percentage of the total 6,500 citizen service activities reported in the survey. Telephone activities, for example, accounted for a total of 2,843 activities, or 43.73 percent of all citizen service activities reported. The activity profile also presents comparisons of the estimated monthly volume of citizen contacts accounted for by the activity type and the number of FTEs supporting the activity type. These comparisons place the gross number of activities in perspective from the point of view of the major objective of the survey, which is to assess the magnitude of the impacts of different customer service activities. Estimated monthly volume shows the magnitude of the activity’s impact on customers and FTEs show the magnitude of the activity’s impact on the government. Interactive voice response (IVR) systems, while accounting for 1.55 percent of all citizen service activities, make up 12 percent of the total volume of citizen contacts but require less than 6 percent of all FTEs to achieve those contacts.

Table 1. Activities, volume and FTEs reported by activity type

| Activity Profile | Number of Activities by Activity Type | | | | | | | | Totals |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------|------------------|------------|
| | Telephone | E-mail/Web-based Forms | IVR | FAQ | Interactive Web Pages | Walk-in Facilities | Kiosks | Other Activities | |
| Number of Reported Activities | 2,843 | 597 | 101 | 57 | 57 | 2,283 | 74 | 488 | 6,500 |
| Percentage of All Reported Activities | 43.73% | 9.20% | 1.55% | 0.88% | 0.88% | 35.11% | 1.14% | 7.50% | |
| Estimated Monthly Volume | 28,407,430 | 18,250,104 | 10,850,921 | 10,518,891 | 13,229,796 | 3,808,019 | 32,233 | 5,558,972 | 90,656,366 |
| Percentage of Total Estimated Monthly Volume | 31.34% | 20.13% | 11.97% | 11.60% | 14.59% | 4.20% | 0.04% | 6.13% | |
| FTEs Supporting Reported Activities | 27,159.57 | 5,442.61 | 4,628.06 | 378.2 | 820.30 | 40,498.73 | 7.7 | 1,132.85 | 80,068.02 |
| Percentage of Total FTEs Supporting Reported Activities | 33.92% | 6.80% | 5.78% | 0.47% | 1.02% | 50.58% | 0.01% | 1.41% | |

In addition, Table 1 supports a number of generalizations. One of the noticeable findings is that traditional (face-to-face, in-person) channels are the most numerous. Telephone activities and walk-in facilities account for 5,126 or nearly 79 percent of the total 6,500 activities identified by the survey. This is in sharp contrast to their share of estimated monthly volume (32,215,449 or 35.5 percent). Modern electronic (“high-tech”) channels – e-mail and web-based forms, IVR and FAQ systems, and interactive web pages – account for over 52 million of the approximately 91 million estimated monthly customer contacts made via 812 activities (12.5 percent) reported in the survey. Telephone activities and walk-in facilities account for almost 79 percent of all reported activities but less than 36 percent of estimated monthly volume. On the other hand, electronic interactions (i.e. e-mail, IVR, FAQ and interactive web pages) account for less than 13 percent of total reported activities but over 58 percent of estimated monthly volume.

This inverse relationship indicates both the operational efficiency of high-tech channels and the extent to which citizens rely on them to access government information and services. This operational efficiency can also be seen through FTE comparisons. The percentage of total FTEs (14.07 percent) devoted to supporting high-tech activities is a relatively small fraction of the estimated volume of citizen contacts (58.29 percent) made through those channels. This result contrasts with walk-in facilities, for example, which absorb 50 percent of FTEs while accounting for less than 36 percent of estimated citizen contact volume.

3.1.2 SERVICE-LEVEL METRICS

Service-level metrics (i.e. performance, cost, informational quality, and customer satisfaction metrics) were evaluated by comparing the number of activities for which these metrics are collected with the total number of each activity type, as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Number of activities collecting service-level metrics by activity type

| Service-level Metrics | Number of Activities by Type | | | | | | | | Totals |
|---|------------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------|
| | Telephone (2,843) | E-mail/ Web-based Forms (597) | IVR System (101) | FAQ System (57) | Interactive Web Pages (57) | Walk-in Facilities (2,283) | Kiosks (74) | Other Activities (488) | |
| Activities with Performance Metrics | 290 | 189 | 34 | 34 | 24 | 2,061 | 46 | 476 | 3,154 |
| Activities with Cost Metrics | 235 | 106 | 22 | 12 | 14 | 2,058 | 1 | 461 | 2,909 |
| Activities with Informational Quality Metrics | 1,587 | 133 | 66 | 21 | 12 | 2,066 | 1 | 461 | 4,347 |
| Activities with Customer Satisfaction Metrics | 1,616 | 140 | 66 | 40 | 30 | 1,566 | 46 | 460 | 3,964 |

Survey results indicate that 66.9 percent of all activities collect informational quality metrics, while 61 percent measure customer satisfaction (noted in Table 3). On the other hand, less than 45 percent of all activities reported having cost metrics in place. Data also show that over 50 percent of all activity types collect at least two service-level metrics, with the exception of e-mail/web-based forms and interactive web pages. In the case of automated FAQ systems, for instance, 34 collect performance metrics and 40 have customer satisfaction metrics in place, which

translates to 59.6 percent and 52.6 percent respectively. Other examples include informational quality and customer satisfaction for telephone activities and IVR systems, performance and customer satisfaction for kiosks, and all four metrics for walk-in facilities and “Other” activities. It is interesting to note that only 30 percent or less of the e-mail/web-based form activities collect one or more service-level metrics.

Data also indicate that performance and cost metrics are collected for relatively few telephone activities compared to the total number of citizen service activities for which such metrics are collected. By contrast, informational quality and customer satisfaction metrics are collected for a proportion of total activities collecting such metrics that is closer to this activity’s share of total activities. In an extreme case, cost and informational quality metrics are collected for only one of the 74 reported kiosk activities. (The table does not reveal whether or not this is the same kiosk.) Cost metrics clearly are the least likely of the four to be collected. Only for walk-in facilities and “Other” activities are cost metrics better represented than some of the others. Results for the other metrics are fairly consistent, with a few exceptions. As noted above, collection of informational quality metrics for kiosks is rare, and is not common for interactive web pages. Collection of performance metrics on telephone activities is also relatively rare.

In order to obtain a better understanding of the extent of service-level metrics being measured by each activity type, the percentages were calculated and presented in Table 3 below. The figures were derived from the number of activities with the specific metrics divided by the total number of activities of the specific type (noted in Table 2). Ten percent of telephone activities, for example, are collecting performance metrics based on this formula (290 / 2,843).

Table 3. Percentage of service-level metrics measured by activity type

| Service-level Metrics | Percentage by Type (%) | | | | | | | | % of All Activities |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Telephone | E-mail/ Web-based Forms | IVR System | FAQ System | Interactive Web Pages | Walk-in Facilities | Kiosks | Other Activities | |
| Activities with Performance Metrics | 10.2 | 31.7 | 33.7 | 59.6 | 42.1 | 90.3 | 62.2 | 97.5 | 48.5 |
| Activities with Cost Metrics | 8.3 | 17.8 | 21.8 | 21.1 | 24.6 | 90.1 | 1.4 | 94.5 | 44.6 |
| Activities with Informational Quality Metrics | 55.8 | 22.3 | 65.3 | 36.8 | 21.1 | 90.5 | 1.4 | 94.5 | 66.9 |
| Activities with Customer Satisfaction Metrics | 56.8 | 23.5 | 65.3 | 70.2 | 52.6 | 68.6 | 62.2 | 94.3 | 61.0 |

3.1.3 OTHER ACTIVITY ATTRIBUTES

Table 4 presents data of other attributes by activity type. Survey respondents were asked to identify if their activities are subject to a customer service strategy/methodology or quality control procedures. Data illustrate that 54 out of 74 kiosk activities are subject to quality control procedures. Only 150 of 598 e-mail/web-based form activities and 23 of 57 FAQ system activities are subject to a customer service strategy/methodology. Telephone activities are more likely to be subject to a customer service strategy/methodology than to quality control procedures, but the reverse is true for e-mail and web-based form activities. The survey also gathered information as to what extent the federal government is using formal shared services arrangements between agencies. It appears that traditional activities – telephone, walk-in facilities, and especially “Other” activities, which include mail and fax -- are more likely than high-tech activities to participate in shared service arrangements.

Table 4. Activity attributes by activity type

| Topics | Number of Activities by Type | | | | | | | | Totals |
|---|------------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------|
| | Telephone (2,843) | E-mail/ Web-based Forms (597) | IVR System (101) | FAQ System (57) | Interactive Web Pages (57) | Walk-in Facilities (2,283) | Kiosks (74) | Other Activities (488) | |
| Activities in a Shared Service Arrangement | 127 | 38 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 51 | 0 | 452 | 685 |
| Activities with CS Strategy/Methodology | 2,370 | 150 | 64 | 23 | 32 | 1,453 | 47 | 476 | 4,615 |
| Activities with Quality Control Procedures | 1,745 | 298 | 82 | 45 | 48 | 1,427 | 54 | 478 | 4,177 |
| Activities That Are Part of a Contact Center | 406 | 124 | 76 | 15 | 9 | 14 | 46 | 468 | 1,158 |
| Activities That Are Contracted or Out-sourced | 293 | 163 | 25 | 21 | 32 | 60 | 45 | 458 | 1,097 |

Table 4 also compares activities that are part of contact centers and those that are contracted/out-sourced. Telephone activities, e-mail/web-based forms, and IVR systems constitute a majority (606) of the 1,158 activities that are part of contact centers, and most of the remainder is accounted for by “Other” activities (468). Based on the variety of “Other” activities (see Appendix B), it may be reasonable to surmise that contact centers commonly include both standardized applications and customized activities that support the sponsoring agency’s unique service functions. These data and this conjecture are consistent with the fact that the majority of all IVR systems and “Other” activities are part of contact centers. Of interest, majority of kiosks (46 out of 74) are part of contact centers, while a relatively few walk-in facilities (14 out of 2,283) are. Additional effort is required to further mine the data to determine how and where kiosks function as parts of contact centers.

Data suggest a similar but not identical story with regard to contracted or out-sourced activities. Telephone activities, e-mail/web-based forms, and “Other” activities constitute a majority (948) of the total 1,097 contracted/out-sourced activities. Interactive web pages (56.1 percent) and kiosks (62.2 percent) have high levels of contracting/out-sourcing, while IVR systems are the least likely of the high-tech activities to be contracted/out-sourced (24.7 percent). A majority of kiosks (60.8 percent) and “Other” activities (77.9 percent) are contracted/out-sourced, while contracting/out-sourcing of walk-in centers (2.6 percent) is infrequent relative to the number of reported activities.

3.2 CONTACT CENTER AND NON-CONTACT CENTER ACTIVITIES

Table 5 compares activities that are part of contact centers with those that are not. **Contact Center**⁸ is a single call or contact center that may provide many types of services to the public, including managing e-mail responses and/or conducting web chats. While nearly 18 percent of all activities are part of a contact center, those activities account for over 46 percent of total estimated monthly volume and absorb only 20.6 percent of the FTEs used to support all reported activities. Contact center activities account for a high proportion of all activities that are part of shared service arrangements (499 out of 685). Each of the four metric types is collected for over 50 percent of contact center activities, a better showing than for non-contact center activities. Eighty percent of the contact center activities collect customer satisfaction metrics (927 out of 1,158), while 56 percent of non-contact center activities indicated the same. Seventy percent of all contact center activities are contracted or out-sourced.

Call or Contact Centers identified by respondents on Question 4a are listed in Appendix C.

Table 5. Contact Center vs. Non-contact Center Activities

| Topic | # of Contact Center Activities | # of Non-Contact Center Activities | Totals |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| Number of Reported Activities | 1,158 | 5,342 | 6,500 |
| Percentage of All Reported Activities | 17.81% | 82.19% | |
| Estimated Monthly Volume | 41,916,846 | 48,739,520 | 90,656,366 |
| Percentage of Total Estimated Monthly Volume | 46.24% | 53.76% | |
| FTEs Supporting Reported Activities | 16,455.38 | 63,612.64 | 80,068.02 |
| Percentage of Total FTEs Supporting Reported Activities | 20.55% | 79.45% | |
| Activities in a Shared Service Arrangement | 499 | 186 | 685 |
| Activities with Performance Metrics | 859 | 2,295 | 3,154 |
| Activities with Cost Metrics | 615 | 2,294 | 2,909 |
| Activities with Informational Quality Metrics | 864 | 3,483 | 4,347 |
| Activities with Customer Satisfaction Metrics | 927 | 3,037 | 3,964 |
| Activities with CS Strategy/Methodology | 943 | 3,672 | 4,615 |
| Activities with Quality Control Procedures | 1,051 | 3,126 | 4,177 |
| Activities That Are Contracted or Out-sourced | 775 | 322 | 1,097 |

⁸ Definition of "Contact Center" is based on the GWA Survey Glossary for Question 4a.

3.3 CONTRACTED/OUT-SOURCED AND NOT CONTRACTED/OUT-SOURCED ACTIVITIES

Table 6 compares activities that are contracted/out-sourced with those that are not. While less than 17 percent of all activities are contracted/out-sourced, those activities account for 46 percent of total estimated monthly volume and absorb only about 14 percent of the FTEs used to support all reported activities. Contracted/out-sourced activities account for a very high proportion of all activities that are part of shared service arrangements (668 out of 685). Each of the four types of metric are collected for over 50 percent of contracted/out-sourced activities, a better showing than for activities not contracted/out-sourced. Seventy percent of all contracted/out-sourced activities are part of a contact center. Contracted/out-sourced activities account for an almost identical percentage of all contact center activities.

Table 6. Contracted/Out-sourced vs. Not Contracted/Out-sourced Activities

| Topic | # of Contracted/ Out-sourced Activities | # of Not Contracted/ Out-sourced Activities | Totals |
|---|---|---|------------|
| Number of Reported Activities | 1,097 | 5,403 | 6,500 |
| Percentage of All Reported Activities | 16.88% | 83.12% | |
| Estimated Monthly Volume | 41,772,417 | 48,883,949 | 90,656,366 |
| Percentage of Total Estimated Monthly Volume | 46.08% | 53.92% | |
| FTEs Supporting Reported Activities | 10,799.54 | 69,268.48 | 80,068.02 |
| Percentage of Total FTEs Supporting Reported Activities | 13.49% | 86.51% | |
| Activities in a Shared Service Arrangement | 668 | 17 | 685 |
| Activities with Performance Metrics | 793 | 2,361 | 3,154 |
| Activities with Cost Metrics | 731 | 2,178 | 2,909 |
| Activities with Informational Quality Metrics | 650 | 3,697 | 4,347 |
| Activities with Customer Satisfaction Metrics | 783 | 3,181 | 3,964 |
| Activities with CS Strategy/Methodology | 734 | 3,881 | 4,615 |
| Activities with Quality Control Procedures | 933 | 3,244 | 4,177 |
| Activities That Are Part of a Contact Center | 775 | 383 | 1,158 |

3.4 CITIZEN SERVICE DELIVERY

The GWA Survey asked respondents three questions related to citizen service delivery. Question 10b asked them to identify any and all methods used by their agencies to measure customer satisfaction. Question 16 asked them to identify the five greatest challenges their agencies face in providing quality customer service. Question 17 asked them to identify any of the listed actions that would help their agency improve the level of service provided to customers.

Responses to these questions are presented in Tables 7 through 9, respectively. For each question, the responses are ranked according to the estimated monthly volume represented by the survey that provided the response. The estimated monthly volumes for each response are subsequently broken down by activity type and whether or not they are attributable to activities that are part of a contact center or contracted/out-sourced. Since not all surveys provided responses to these three questions, Tables 7 through 9 account for less than the total activities (6,500) and estimated monthly volume (90,656,366) reported for the entire survey. The column “# of All Reported Activities” totals fewer activities than reported for the entire survey, and the column “% of All Reported Activities” is based on this lower total. Each question has an “Other” option that allows survey respondents to provide inputs that are not described by the options presented.

3.4.1 METHODS USED TO MEASURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Table 7 shows that the method of measuring customer satisfaction affecting the largest number of customers is a providing a satisfaction survey to a sample of customers. The breakdown by activity type indicates this is the main process for most activity types, although only marginally so for interactive web pages and “Other” activities, and not for e-mail/web-based form activities. The most or second-most frequently used method for these three activity types is also the second most frequently used method overall, i.e., use of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ranking of the two leading methods prevails whether or not the activities that account for them are part of contact centers or contracted/out-sourced. Moreover, while the methods have been ranked by estimated monthly volume, the two leading methods would be the same if they were ranked by number of activities instead.

Methods identified by respondents as “Other” are listed in Appendix D.

Table 7. Methods used to measure customer satisfaction (ranked by estimated monthly volume)

| Methods Used to Measure Customer Satisfaction (Q10b) | Estimated Monthly Volume | Estimated Monthly Volume by Activity Type | | | | | | | | # of Activities Reported | % of All Reported Activities | Contact Center | Non-Contact Center | Contracted/Out-sourced | Not Contracted/Out-sourced | #of Activities Where Sole Response | Estimated Monthly Volume Where Sole Response |
|---|--------------------------|---|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | Telephone | E-mail/Web-based Forms | IVR Systems | FAQ Systems | Interactive Web Pages | Walk-in Facilities | Kiosks | Other Activities | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers | 64,509,249 | 22,426,143 | 7,512,683 | 6,551,925 | 7,684,323 | 11,180,712 | 3,681,330 | 833 | 5,471,300 | 3,652 | 56.18% | 33,011,435 | 31,497,814 | 26,108,986 | 38,400,263 | 2,754 | 28,376,731 |
| 2. Use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) | 25,684,605 | 1,388,800 | 7,855,525 | 146,500 | 138,790 | 10,584,990 | 100,000 | | 5,470,000 | 507 | 7.80% | 8,415,050 | 17,269,555 | 8,903,193 | 16,781,412 | 7 | 182,693 |
| 3. Measure increase usage by customers | 9,090,788 | 5,212,230 | 529,643 | 2,641,450 | 665,722 | 36,385 | 3,725 | 1,233 | 400 | 153 | 2.35% | 8,168,004 | 922,784 | 8,151,826 | 938,962 | 3 | 3,320 |
| 4. Measure number of complaints received | 8,780,898 | 5,267,073 | 576,484 | 2,390,000 | 368,540 | 50,000 | 112,750 | 400 | 15,651 | 324 | 4.98% | 7,764,509 | 1,016,389 | 8,124,564 | 656,334 | 14 | 126,011 |
| 5. Measure increase of new customers | 6,329,889 | 5,156,134 | 510,050 | | 647,072 | 15,000 | 400 | 833 | 400 | 100 | 1.54% | 5,758,755 | 571,134 | 5,755,099 | 574,790 | 1 | 3,250 |
| 6. Measure repeat visits by customers | 2,706,999 | 136,368 | 67,620 | 2,337,500 | 134,628 | 20,000 | 9,650 | 833 | 400 | 114 | 1.75% | 2,574,559 | 132,440 | 2,608,809 | 98,190 | | |
| 7. Satisfaction survey provided by every customer | 2,331,678 | 2,017,724 | 40,928 | | 69,584 | 202,692 | | | 750 | 35 | 0.54% | 23,302 | 2,308,376 | 88,896 | 2,242,782 | 5 | 2,051,550 |
| 8. No formal survey but invite customer to give feedback some other way | 1,327,856 | 197,940 | 515,217 | 39,000 | 415,564 | 49,315 | 107,170 | 400 | 3250 | 356 | 5.48% | 318,132 | 1,009,724 | 801,842 | 526,014 | 39 | 57,351 |
| 9. Other | 8,443,570 | 566,540 | 1,716,776 | 602,000 | 2,807,670 | 174,330 | 109,903 | | 2,466,351 | 888 | 13.66% | 1,406,908 | 7,036,662 | 4,945,834 | 3,497,736 | 46 | 2,207,101 |

Providing a survey to a sample of customers is the only method that is widely used as the sole method of measuring customer satisfaction. In fact, a large majority of the activities that report using this method use it exclusively. These activities represent a substantially smaller proportion of estimated monthly volume, however, indicating that small-volume activities are most likely to restrict customer satisfaction measurement to this method. The only other sole method that accounts for a substantial volume of contacts is “Other”. Forty-six of 888 reported activities account for over 25 percent of the contact volume affected by sole “Other” methods. The prominence of “Other” as a sole method may lead to the inference that agencies develop and rely on unique methods to assess equally unique customer relationships, but further research would be necessary to understand the relationship of those methods to the activities for which they are used.

The measurement methods that ranked two through nine vary considerably from the overall ranking when broken down by activity type and the other activity-related attributes. For example, while use of the ACSI ranks second overall, it plays a relatively minor role in the way customer satisfaction with telephone activities, IVR systems, FAQ systems, and walk-in facilities is measured. Likewise, measuring increase in new customers ranks higher for e-mail and web-based forms, FAQ systems, and “Other” activities than it does overall, and accounts for a higher proportion of the estimated monthly volume attributable to those activities. Also, telephone activities and IVR system activities rely much more heavily on measuring number of complaints received than do other activities. Determining the factors that influence selection of measurement methods by activity type is beyond the scope of this study. The variations seen in Table 7 may be inherent in the nature of the activities themselves, but further research would be needed to confirm that theory. The data do, however, indicate that activity type is an important variable in the choice of measurement methods. Knowing this should help guide future efforts to gather information necessary to establish appropriate customer service standards and performance measures.

3.4.2 GREATEST CHALLENGE TO PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE

Table 8 shows that survey responses identified “Having inadequate funds” as the greatest challenge to providing quality customer service, followed closely by “Creating awareness of this service with customers” and “Consolidating data sources”. “Having inadequate funds” would also qualify as the greatest challenge if challenges were ranked by number of activities instead of estimated monthly volume.

Variations from the overall rankings are also noticeable among the activity-related attributes. “Consolidating data sources”, “Ability to attract/retain staff”, and “Managing contracts/contractors” are the greatest challenges for contact center activities, while “Consolidating citizen services activities” is one of the three greatest challenges for non-contact center activities. “Inadequate funds” are a lesser challenge for contracted/out-sourced activities than for activities not contracted/out-sourced, but “Staying current with industry best practices” is a greater one. “Compliance with laws/regulations” and “Consolidating citizen service activities” rank higher for activities that are not contracted/out-sourced than they do overall.

Challenges identified by respondents as “Other” are listed in Appendix E.

Table 8. Greatest challenge in providing quality service (ranked by estimated monthly volume)

| Challenges (Q16) | Estimated Monthly Volume | Estimated Monthly Volume by Activity Type | | | | | | | | # of Activities Reported | % of All Reported Activities | Contact Center | Non-Contact Center | Contracted/Out-sourced | Not Contracted/Out-sourced | # of Activities Where Sole Response | Estimated Monthly Volume Where Sole Response |
|--|--------------------------|---|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| | | Telephone | E-mail/ Web Forms | IVR Systems | FAQ Systems | Interactive Web Pages | Walk-in Facilities | Kiosks | Other Activities | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Having adequate funds | 35,136,429 | 12,393,087 | 645,134 | 2,734,950 | 3,091,679 | 12,261,884 | 3,707,757 | 30,400 | 271,538 | 3,880 | 59.68% | 15,529,608 | 19,606,821 | 12,851,742 | 22,284,687 | 24 | 87,138 |
| 2. Creating awareness of this service with customers | 33,938,201 | 5,339,440 | 589,388 | 5,112,120 | 4,954,376 | 12,172,907 | 3,502,767 | 650 | 2,266,553 | 1,732 | 26.64% | 10,598,021 | 23,340,180 | 14,548,327 | 19,389,874 | 9 | 1,995 |
| 3. Consolidating data sources | 28,085,483 | 14,840,412 | 7,423,809 | 2,099,206 | 2,436,235 | 868,492 | 204,115 | 833 | 212,381 | 1,010 | 15.54% | 26,751,447 | 1,334,036 | 19,648,383 | 8,437,100 | 4 | 500 |
| 4. Ability to attract/retain staff | 19,820,688 | 7,700,950 | 7,866,969 | 4,022,071 | 7,625 | 52,985 | 106,208 | 30,650 | 33,230 | 1,729 | 26.60% | 18,647,801 | 1,172,887 | 17,604,680 | 2,216,008 | 2 | 125 |
| 5. Managing contracts/contractors | 17,338,659 | 8,248,314 | 1,226,309 | 5,008,950 | 2,025,810 | 521,434 | 103,387 | | 204,455 | 2,133 | 32.81% | 15,702,498 | 1,636,161 | 9,531,242 | 7,807,417 | 1 | 12 |
| 6. Compliance with laws/regulations | 13,654,251 | 6,802,015 | 746,288 | 134,701 | 2,409,780 | 22,470 | 3,500,050 | | 38,947 | 2,910 | 44.76% | 7,038,582 | 6,615,669 | 287,506 | 13,366,745 | | |
| 7. Ability to train staff | 11,983,346 | 6,693,278 | 78,229 | 2,609,250 | 1,638,194 | 751,300 | 206,458 | 400 | 6,237 | 404 | 6.21% | 10,873,815 | 1,109,531 | 5,106,905 | 6,876,441 | | |
| 8. Consolidating citizen service activities | 11,943,215 | 435,480 | 496,596 | 246,470 | 4,881,464 | 31,010 | 3,602,130 | | 2,250,065 | 1,412 | 21.72% | 629,962 | 11,313,253 | 3,078,939 | 8,864,276 | | |
| 9. Staying current with industry best practices | 10,917,815 | 645,821 | 899,190 | 5,254,936 | 3,291,423 | 789,674 | 2,955 | 400 | 33,416 | 360 | 5.54% | 7,446,204 | 3,471,611 | 9,295,204 | 1,622,611 | 1 | 20 |
| 10. Technology not a good fit for the application for which it is used | 9,771,623 | 2,093,913 | 141,441 | 1,732,735 | 2,283,435 | 7,967 | 3,501,990 | | 10,142 | 1,503 | 23.12% | 6,113,648 | 3,657,975 | 5,341,955 | 4,429,668 | | |
| 11. Educating agency leadership | 9,384,643 | 214,024 | 60,612 | 1,547,250 | 4,790,287 | 502,750 | 2,950 | 833 | 2,265,937 | 285 | 4.38% | 1,787,458 | 7,597,185 | 4,657,059 | 4,727,584 | | |
| 12. Having management support to make changes | 4,643,840 | 213,508 | 58,315 | 1,479,200 | 120,879 | 517,070 | 3,930 | 250 | 2,250,688 | 219 | 3.37% | 1,665,705 | 2,978,135 | 2,203,089 | 2,440,751 | | |
| 13. Technology too old | 3,716,192 | 2,751,384 | 138,700 | 542,805 | 265,185 | 8,417 | 4,400 | | 5,301 | 1,620 | 24.92% | 2,914,676 | 801,516 | 2,459,984 | 1,256,208 | 1 | 250 |
| 14. Bad data quality | 1,824,931 | 1,727,557 | 23,540 | 7,200 | 3,634 | 60,000 | | | 3,000 | 46 | 0.71% | 1,748,925 | 76,006 | 1,649,359 | 175,572 | | |
| 15. Other | 9,707,616 | 5,228,771 | 101,003 | 4,115 | 1,633,874 | 179,530 | 101,537 | | 2,458,786 | 590 | 9.08% | 6,984,736 | 2,722,880 | 6,948,135 | 2,759,481 | 32 | 24,090 |

Another interpretation of the data is to break these results down by activity type and other activity-related attributes reveals greater variation from the overall ranking as shown in Table 9. Based on the nature of the activity, they each faces different challenges, for example, while the “Ability to attract/retain staff “ is a major issue with e-mail and kiosks activities, “Staying current with the industry best practices” is IVR system’s greatest challenge.

Table 9. Top greatest challenge by type

| Greatest Challenge | Type |
|---|--|
| Having inadequate funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive Web Pages • Walk-in Facilities • Not Contracted/Out-sourced Activities |
| Creating awareness of this service with customers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ Systems • Other Activities • Non-Contact Center Activities |
| Consolidating data sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone Activities • Contact Center Activities • Contracted/Out-sourced Activities |
| Ability to attract/retain staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail/Web-based Forms • Kiosks |
| Staying current with industry best practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IVR Systems |

In addition to ranking differently among activity types and activity-related attributes, some challenges that rank low overall loom large for certain activity types and activity-related attributes. Respondents reporting on FAQ system activities say that “Educating agency leadership” and “Staying current with industry best practices” are among the more serious challenges they face. “Staying current with industry best practices” is also a major challenge for IVR service activities, and “Technology not a good fit for the application for which it is used” is a major one for walk-in facilities.

Despite these variations in rankings, it is notable that challenges related to technology, data quality, and leadership and management rank at the bottom. The follow-up interviews conducted with survey respondents confirmed the relative unimportance of these challenges, whereas interviewees often complained about inadequate funding and lack of awareness of the services available through the activities they reported on. Interviewees emphasized the relevance of budget to service levels and quality as it directly affects the ability to hire, train, and compensate staff. Interviewees also expressed frustration at potential customers’ lack of awareness of the services available from them. IRS and DHS personnel, for example, reported that many of their customers pay retail providers for tax and immigration forms and information that are available free of charge from their agencies.

3.4.3 ACTIONS THAT WOULD MOST IMPROVE LEVEL OF SERVICE

Question 17 asked respondents to identify actions they thought would most improve the level of service they provide to customers. Respondents were not limited in the number of actions they could choose, and the figures presented in Table 10 suggest that many respondents chose many or most of the listed actions. Hence, there is considerably less variation in the estimated monthly volume of contacts in Table 10 when compared to Tables 7 and 8. Rankings would be even less distinguishable if they were based on the number of activities reported.

Table 10. Actions that would most improve level of service (ranked by estimated monthly volume)

| Actions that would Most Improve Level of Service (Q17) | Estimated Monthly Volume | Estimated Monthly Volume by Activity Type | | | | | | | | # of Activities Reported | % of All Reported Activities | Contact Center | Non-Contact Center | Contracted/Out-sourced | Not Contracted/Out-sourced | #of Activities Where Sole Response | Estimated Monthly Volume Where Sole Response |
|--|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | Telephone calls | E-mail/ Web-based Forms | IVR Systems | FAQ Systems | Interactive Web Pages | Walk-in Facilities | Kiosks | Other Activities | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Network more with other agencies who perform similar activities | 36,886,751 | 9,293,571 | 7,315,940 | 5,710,356 | 7,117,707 | 1,450,350 | 3,502,497 | 31,483 | 2,464,847 | 3,684 | 56.67% | 23,607,966 | 13,278,785 | 26,603,261 | 10,283,490 | 14 | 8,027,862 |
| 2. Make it easier for customers to learn about the service | 35,250,498 | 7,917,753 | 663,922 | 5,358,520 | 3,322,452 | 12,173,892 | 3,503,637 | 31,483 | 2,278,839 | 3,268 | 50.27% | 13,278,125 | 21,972,373 | 16,468,950 | 18,781,548 | 38 | 10,819,527 |
| 3. Provide clearer instructions / directions | 29,734,209 | 14,310,100 | 1,372,350 | 4,328,805 | 2,419,553 | 1,373,732 | 3,606,333 | 30,000 | 2,293,336 | 3,270 | 50.30% | 21,122,309 | 8,611,900 | 14,774,380 | 14,959,829 | 6 | 57,800 |
| 4. Give customers more accurate and consistent information | 29,058,099 | 14,147,476 | 868,684 | 4,115,521 | 2,302,836 | 1,522,390 | 3,605,458 | 31,233 | 2,464,501 | 3,831 | 58.93% | 20,648,515 | 8,409,584 | 14,006,107 | 15,051,992 | 2 | 3,634 |
| 5. Collect Information Quality Metrics | 24,279,299 | 9,297,378 | 953,095 | 1,960,955 | 4,715,607 | 1,477,352 | 3,604,105 | 1,483 | 2,269,324 | 3,269 | 50.28% | 13,754,311 | 10,524,988 | 7,094,804 | 17,184,495 | | |
| 6. Collect Performance Metrics | 23,700,277 | 9,089,265 | 710,887 | 1,961,255 | 4,641,532 | 1,420,352 | 3,606,125 | 1,483 | 2,269,378 | 3,291 | 50.62% | 12,856,793 | 10,843,484 | 7,438,028 | 16,262,249 | 2 | 125 |
| 7. Collect Customer Satisfaction Surveys | 22,304,432 | 9,129,431 | 1,402,124 | 1,785,785 | 2,528,467 | 1,477,271 | 3,707,428 | 1,483 | 2,272,443 | 3,414 | 52.51% | 13,414,410 | 8,890,022 | 7,525,633 | 14,778,799 | 3 | 19,710 |
| 8. Reduce the amount staff time necessary to provide the service | 18,370,127 | 7,834,047 | 179,710 | 1,608,400 | 4,516,998 | 501,549 | 3,708,203 | | 21,220 | 3,007 | 46.25% | 5,736,555 | 12,633,572 | 5,287,272 | 13,082,855 | 2 | 5,658,200 |
| 9. Improve privacy and confidentiality | 16,016,275 | 7,467,036 | 123,764 | 1,814,020 | 765,150 | 54,825 | 3,501,680 | 30,000 | 2,259,800 | 2,865 | 44.07% | 9,241,891 | 6,774,384 | 8,255,903 | 7,760,372 | | |
| 10. Collect Operational Cost Metrics | 15,006,954 | 2,773,749 | 122,756 | 1,750,520 | 5,320,144 | 1,419,293 | 3,606,105 | 650 | 13,737 | 3,055 | 46.99% | 4,545,319 | 10,461,635 | 7,090,786 | 7,916,168 | | |

Federal service providers feel the actions that would improve service levels most overall do not involve the quality of one-on-one customer contacts, but rather communication within the community of service providers itself and outreach to potential customers. The two most frequently cited actions by estimated monthly volume are actions that do not involve direct provision of services to customers. Respondents feel that service levels can be improved more by sharing knowledge and experience with each other and better informing customers about available services than by focusing on issues such as accuracy and consistency of information and clarity of instructions/directions.

These findings reinforce the insight gained from examining responses to Question 16 (Table 8). The two challenges most frequently identified in Question 16 and the improvement action most frequently identified in Question 17 concern resource and resource utilization issues. Likewise, creating awareness of services is the challenge identified second-most frequently in Question 16, just as making it easier for customers to learn about services is the improvement action second most frequently identified in Question 17.

The breakdown by activity type shows a number of disparities in the improvement actions identified. The two leading actions overall are clearly most important for high-tech activities, i.e., e-mail/web-based forms, IVR and FAQ systems, and interactive web pages. Accuracy and consistency of information and clarity of instructions/directions are relatively more important for more traditional activity types, i.e., telephone activities, walk-in facilities, and kiosks, although they are also

important improvement actions for IVR systems. Certain anomalous results may be due to the nature of the activity type. For example, collecting information quality and performance metrics is a relatively more prominent improvement action for FAQ systems than it is overall. This is perhaps not surprising given the one-way nature of this activity. Likewise, giving customers more accurate and consistent information plays a relatively small role in improving e-mail/web-based form service, which again is perhaps not surprising given the customer is the one providing most of the information through this activity type.

Contact center and contracted/out-sourced activities are major advocates of improvement through networking with others performing similar functions. This would seem to confirm the relative importance of networking within the “high-tech” activity types. Respondents conducting activities that are part of contact centers place considerably more weight on providing clearer instructions/directions and more accurate and consistent information than do those providing non-contact center activities, and somewhat greater weight on collecting the four types of metrics. Providers of services that are not contracted/out-sourced are more likely to identify collection of metrics as important improvement actions than are providers of contracted/out-sourced services. One may speculate that this difference exists because contractors are already collecting such metrics in compliance with contractual terms, but further research would be required to determine the reason(s) for this variation as well as for others observable between different activity types and activity-related attributes.

3.5 LEVELS OF AGREEMENT AND AWARENESS ON SERVICE-RELATED ISSUES

The GWA Survey asked respondents two questions that required them to provide answers on a scale of 1 to 5. Question 14a measured their agreement with a group of statements, where “1” means “Strongly disagree” and “5 means “Strongly agree”. Question 15 asked them to rate their level of awareness of a group of subjects where “1” means “Not at all aware” and “5 means “Very aware”. Two scores are presented in each cell in Table 11 below and Table 12 (next page). The number in the top left-hand corner of the cell is the **average scores** of the statement. The number in the bottom right-hand corner of the cell is the **“mode”**. The mode refers to the ranking (1 to 5) that occurs most frequently for the statement.

The most striking feature of both tables is the consistency of the most frequent response to a statement (i.e., mode). Out of all 156 modes shown in the two tables, there are 129 “5”s 12 “4”s, four “3”s, one “2”, and 10 “1”s. Eight of the 10 “1”s were in response to the statement, “This service activity supports both English and Spanish languages.” With the exception of this solitary statement, strong agreement with the listed statements and high awareness of the listed subjects is the most common response across all activity types and activity-related attributes.

Variations in the arithmetical averages are more pronounced. The overall scores in Table 11 show high averages for statements concerning adequacy of training and currency of information, and a low average for supporting both English and Spanish. The relative low average scores for “This service activity solicits feedback from its customers” (statement 4) likely reflects activities for which customer satisfaction metrics are not collected. Viewed across activity types and activity-related attributes, the statement averages appear to be very consistent. “Information disseminated through this activity is shared across multiple types of service activities” (statement 2) receives its lowest averages from walk-in facilities, kiosks, non-contact center activities, and not contracted/out-sourced activities, i.e., traditional activity types and activity-related attributes. In contrast, statement 4 receives a high average score from respondents reporting on kiosk activities, which could be explained in part given that they provide and rely on face-to-face interaction.

“Security is a major issue for our customers” (statement 3) attracted a higher than average number of modes less than “5”. These come from respondents conducting more traditional activity types, i.e., walk-in facilities, kiosks, and “Other” activities, which include mail and fax communications. The averages, however, do not confirm that security is much less an issue for customers receiving service through those activity types than through others. The scores for “This service activity supports both English and Spanish languages” suggest that activity types that rely on oral communication are most likely to provide service in both English and Spanish. Discussion on the factors affecting provision of service in Spanish are provided in Section 5, “Observations and Recommendations”.

Activities performed as part of contact centers received higher average scores for every statement than did activities not performed as part of contact centers. The same relationship exists between contacted/out-sourced activities and not contracted/out-sourced activities, with statement 3 being the only exception. It seems clear that contact center and contracted/out-sourced activities are much more likely to provide service in both English and Spanish. We suspect that the high level of support for Spanish provided by activities with these attributes simply reflects the high volume of customer contacts handled by contact centers, most of which are contracted/out-sourced, but further research would be needed to confirm this.

Table 11. Degrees of agreement with service delivery statements

| Statements (Q14a) | Overall Scores | Degrees of Agreement by Activity Type | | | | | | | | Contact Center | Non-Contact Center | Contracted/Out-sourced | Not Contracted/Out-sourced |
|---|----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Telephone | E-mail/ Web-based Forms | IVR Systems | FAQ Systems | Interactive Web Pages | Walk-in Facilities | Kiosks | Other Activities | | | | |
| 1. Information disseminated through this activity is regularly checked for accuracy | 4.29 5 | 4.15 5 | 4.38 5 | 4.44 5 | 4.44 5 | 4.57 5 | 3.89 5 | 4.00 4 | 4.52 5 | 4.41 5 | 4.18 5 | 4.42 5 | 4.18 5 |
| 2. Information disseminated through this activity is shared across multiple types of service activities | 4.06 5 | 3.96 5 | 4.14 5 | 4.23 5 | 4.10 5 | 4.07 5 | 3.76 4 | 3.75 4 | 4.41 5 | 4.20 5 | 3.90 5 | 4.24 5 | 3.91 5 |
| 3. Security is a major issue for our customers | 3.40 5 | 3.36 5 | 3.37 5 | 3.95 5 | 3.17 5 | 3.54 5 | 3.72 4 | 3.67 4 | 3.14 2 | 3.56 5 | 3.19 5 | 3.22 5 | 3.62 5 |
| 4. This service activity solicits feedback from its customers | 3.37 5 | 3.22 5 | 3.43 5 | 3.34 5 | 3.56 5 | 3.84 5 | 3.22 5 | 4.33 5 | 3.13 5 | 3.54 5 | 3.17 5 | 3.59 5 | 3.17 5 |
| 5. Staff at this activity are adequately trained | 4.50 5 | 4.45 5 | 4.53 5 | 4.69 5 | 4.58 5 | 4.57 5 | 4.26 5 | 4.33 4 | 4.63 5 | 4.53 5 | 4.48 5 | 4.61 5 | 4.41 5 |
| 6. This service activity supports both English and Spanish languages | 2.94 1 | 3.08 5 | 2.88 1 | 3.55 5 | 2.41 1 | 2.86 1 | 2.46 1 | 3.67 5 | 2.68 1 | 3.35 5 | 2.50 1 | 3.47 5 | 2.50 1 |
| 7. The information provided through this activity is up-to-date | 4.58 5 | 4.54 5 | 4.61 5 | 4.72 5 | 4.52 5 | 4.69 5 | 4.33 5 | 5.00 5 | 4.68 5 | 4.64 5 | 4.52 5 | 4.65 5 | 4.53 5 |

Degrees of Agreement ranges from 1 to 5, where “1” means “Strongly disagree” and “5 means “Strongly agree”.

Table 12 conveys that federal service providers are much more aware of who their customers are and what services they need than they are of activities and developments in the customer service industry as a whole or in the part of the industry that performs activities similar to theirs. This disparity cuts across all activity types and activity-related attributes. Awareness of industry best practices is most widespread among respondents providing services through high-tech, contact center, and contracted/out-sourced activities. This seems consistent with the continually evolving nature of these activity types and agents, and was also echoed in our post-survey interviews.

Table 12. Level of awareness with service delivery issues

| Statements (Q15) | Overall Scores | Level of Awareness by Activity Type | | | | | | | | Contact Center | Non-Contact Center | Contracted/Out-sourced | Not Contracted/Out-sourced |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Telephone | E-mail/ Web-based Forms | IVR Systems | FAQ Systems | Interactive Web Pages | Walk-in Facilities | Kiosks | Other Activities | | | | |
| 1. Similar activities conducted in other agencies | 3.66 5 | 3.60 5 | 3.84 5 | 3.51 5 | 4.12 5 | 3.22 5 | 2.81 1 | 3.50 3 | 3.83 5 | 3.53 5 | 3.78 5 | 3.61 5 | 3.70 5 |
| 2. Trade Shows/Conferences related to your function | 3.63 5 | 3.65 5 | 3.64 5 | 3.85 5 | 3.59 5 | 3.84 5 | 3.05 3 | 2.50 1 | 3.57 4 | 3.70 5 | 3.55 5 | 3.92 5 | 3.39 5 |
| 3. Industry Best Practices for your activity | 3.76 5 | 3.69 5 | 3.81 5 | 4.03 4 | 3.92 5 | 3.94 5 | 3.04 3 | 3.50 3 | 3.82 5 | 3.87 5 | 3.65 5 | 3.99 5 | 3.57 4 |
| 4. Who your customers are (demographics) | 4.35 5 | 4.30 5 | 4.33 5 | 4.47 5 | 4.39 5 | 4.44 5 | 4.29 5 | 4.50 4 | 4.52 5 | 4.45 5 | 4.25 5 | 4.35 5 | 4.34 5 |
| 5. Your customers' greatest needs | 4.34 5 | 4.33 5 | 4.31 5 | 4.49 5 | 4.49 5 | 4.38 5 | 4.00 4 | 4.25 4 | 4.40 5 | 4.49 5 | 4.17 5 | 4.44 5 | 4.25 5 |

Level of Awareness ranges from 1 to 5, where "1" means "Not at all aware" and "5" means "Very aware".

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4 BENCHMARKING RESULTS COMPARISON BETWEEN 2004/2005 & 2006/2007

The following section provides a brief overview and comparison of the key benchmarking questions between the 2004 OMB BDR/2005 follow-up survey and the 2006/2007 GWA Survey. For benchmarking purposes, questions and activity types closely follow their counterparts in 2004 and 2005 surveys. Some activities type, however, differs lightly between the two rounds of data collection as described in Table 13.

Table 13. Classification of activity types (2006/2007 vs. 2004)

| Activity Type (2006/2007) | Activity Type (2004) |
|---|---|
| Telephone Activities (includes all customer-devoted telephone numbers) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call / Contact Centers • Toll-Free Number |
| E-mail and Web-based Forms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-based E-mail Address • Dedicated Public E-mail Address |
| IVR Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IVR Systems |
| FAQ Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ Systems |
| Interactive Web Pages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive Web Pages |
| Walk-in Facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data not collected |
| Kiosks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data not collected |
| Other Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Activities |

4.1 REPORTED ACTIVITIES

In the 2004 OMB BDR, over 1,800 government citizen contact activities were reported across federal agencies, with the highest percentage concentrated in the areas of call/contact centers and dedicated public e-mail addresses (Table 14). In the 2006/2007 GWA Survey results, 6,500 activities were reported by 882 surveys. Similar to the 2004 results, inbound/outbound call activity comprises over 43 percent of the total reported activities. Walk-in facilities are the second-most reported citizen-facing service type, however; this activity was not accounted for in the 2004 OMB BDR.

Table 14. Number of reported activities in 2004 and 2006/2007

| Activity Type | 2004 | 2006/2007 |
|--|-------------------|--------------|
| Telephone Activities | 849 ⁹ | 2,843 |
| E-mail and Web-based Forms | 842 ¹⁰ | 597 |
| IVR Systems | 51 | 101 |
| FAQ Systems | 51 | 57 |
| Interactive Web Pages | 23 | 57 |
| Walk-in Facilities | N/A | 2,283 |
| Kiosks | N/A | 74 |
| Other Activities | 12 | 488 |
| Total Number of Reported Activities | 1,828 | 6,500 |

⁹ Data from the 2004 OMB BDR includes activities from "Call or Contact Center" and "Toll-Free Number".

¹⁰ Data from the 2004 OMB BDR include activities of "Web-based E-mail Address" and "Dedicated Public E-mail Address".

This tabular information is also illustrated in Figure 1 below.

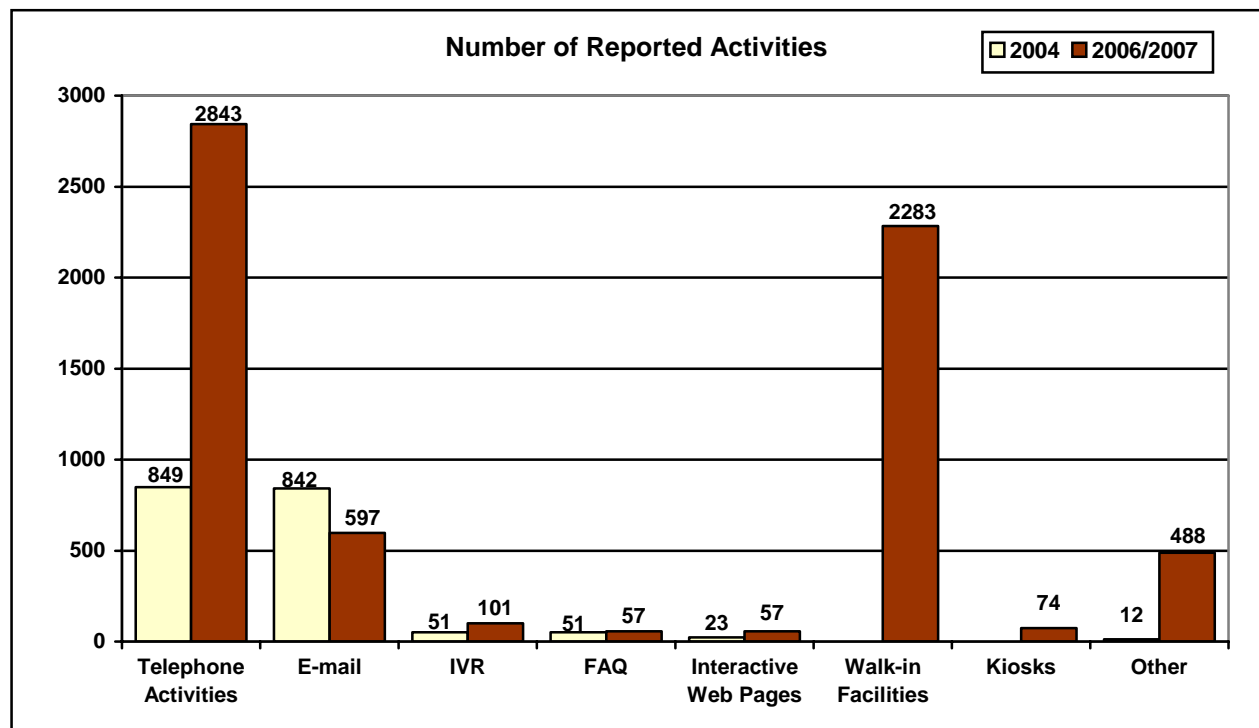


Figure 1. Number of reported activities in 2004 and 2006/2007

4.2 SERVICE-LEVEL METRICS

In the 2004 OMB BDR, agencies were asked if performance and cost metrics were collected for the individual activity types. Similarly, GWA Survey participants were asked to indicate whether their channels of citizen service collect specific service-level metrics (Question 10a).

Table 15. Comparison of performance and cost metrics collected by activity (2006/2007 vs. 2004)

| Activity Type | Performance Metrics (%) 2006/2007 | Performance Metrics (%) 2004 | Cost Metrics (%) 2006/2007 | Cost Metrics (%) 2004 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Telephone Activities | 10.2 | 39.0 ¹¹ | 8.3 | 32.5 ¹² |
| E-mail/Web-based Forms | 31.7 | 23.0 ¹³ | 17.8 | 9.0 ¹⁴ |
| IVR Systems | 33.7 | 29.0 | 21.8 | 16.0 |
| FAQ Systems | 59.6 | 22.0 | 21.1 | 8.0 |
| Interactive Web Pages | 42.1 | 39.0 | 24.6 | 22.0 |

¹¹ The 2004 performance metrics is the average of “Call or Contact Center” (41%) and “Toll –free Number” (37%).

¹² The 2004 cost metrics is the average of “Call or Contact Center” (22%) and “Toll –free Number” (43%).

¹³ The 2004 performance metrics is the average of “Web-based E-mail Address” (27%) and “Dedicated Public E-mail Address” (19%)

¹⁴ The 2004 cost metrics is the average of “Web-based E-mail Address” (8%) and “Dedicated Public E-mail Address” (10%)

When comparing the extent of service-level metrics being collected in 2005 and 2006/2007, telephone activities are showing signs of decrease in collecting both metrics (Table 14). On the contrary, automated frequently asked question systems (FAQ) shows tremendous improvements in measuring performance and cost metrics with increases of 170% and 163% respectively.

4.3 METHODS USED TO MEASURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The 2005 follow-up survey expanded on the 2004 OMB BDR inquiry on service-level metrics and asked survey respondents to categorize how they measured customer satisfaction. In order to benchmark the methods used, GWA Survey respondents were asked to identify the methods they use to measure customer satisfaction (Question 10b). Table 15 compares the methods most often cited in 2005 with those most often cited in 2006/2007.

Table 16. Comparison of methods used to measure customer satisfaction (2006/2007 vs. 2005)

| Activity Type | Most Cited Customer Satisfaction Measures by Activities (2006/2007) | Most Cited Customer Satisfaction Measures by Activities (2005) ¹⁵ |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Telephone Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 94.2% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure number of complaints received – 44% (<i>Call or Contact Centers</i>) Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 36% (<i>Toll-free Numbers</i>) |
| E-mail and Web-based Forms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal survey but invite customer to give feedback some other way – 40% | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal survey but invite customer to give feedback some other way – 38% (<i>Web-based E-mail Forms</i>) Measure number of complaints received – 28% (<i>Dedicated Public E-mail Address</i>) |
| IVR Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 92.4% | |
| FAQ Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 40.0% | |
| Interactive Web Pages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 46.7% | |
| Walk-in Facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 96.0% | |
| Kiosks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers – 97.8% Measure increased of new customers – 97.8% | |
| Other Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the American Customer Satisfaction Index – 98.9% | |

¹⁵ Information available only for “Call or Contact Centers”, “Toll-free Numbers”, “Web-based E-mail Forms” and “Dedicated Public E-mail Address” in 2005 survey report.

5 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to using an on-line questionnaire to gather data on citizen-service activities, the GWA Survey included follow-up interviews with agency contact persons. The questionnaire asked these persons if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to assist in better understanding how their organizations provide service, how they work to improve quality, and what trends they are experiencing related to providing citizen service. DPRA contacted each person who responded positively, and interviewed available participants. Follow-up interviews were conducted with 35 persons at 26 different departments, agencies, or offices, either in person or by telephone. The observations and experience shared by interviewees proved to be an invaluable supplement to the data gathered on line, amplifying survey responses and clarifying the picture of citizen service activities that emerges from the survey data.

5.1 OBSERVATIONS

The observations described below are based on quantitative data analysis of the GWA Survey results and responses from the post-survey follow-up interviews.

5.1.1 FUNDING AND STAFFING

The concern voiced most consistently by interviewees was that lack of adequate funds was their major challenge in providing quality customer service. This confirmed the results of survey Question 16 discussed in Section 3.4.2 of this report, and indicated that those results can be viewed with a high degree of confidence. The point that most interviewees stressed was that inadequate funds translate directly into a lower quality, not merely a lower quantity, of service. Several interviewees described aspects of a vicious circle in which inadequate funding lead to cutbacks in hiring and training, which can place more demands on inadequately trained and compensated customer service representatives (CSRs), leading to high turnover among CSRs, which often reduces management's willingness to invest resources to training, resulting in chronically sub-par customer service.

The view is fairly widespread among customer service managers that the government has not always kept pace with the professionalization of customer service that has taken place in the private sector. "Professionalization" refers to the evolution of customer service into a respected and standardized profession, not to "professionalism" in any judgmental sense. The process of professionalization has seen the development of much of the apparatus familiar to other established professions, e.g., professional publications, organizations, training and certification, new technologies, accepted management practices, regular conferences and symposia, and a growing research literature.¹⁶ Some customer service managers complained that their senior management still views customer service as a low-level function, but lack of management support did not rate very highly among responses to Question 16 (Table 8). Those responses indicated that educating leadership is a bigger challenge than lack of support, especially in non-contact center environments. Anecdotally, an interviewee suggested that "management is hesitant to fund what it does not understand".

Responses to Question 16 also indicate that attracting and retaining staff are bigger challenges for contact center than for non-contact center activities. Interviewees at the Internal Revenue Service's Joint Operations Center (JOC) reported that some of their staff turnover is a result of the seasonal nature of income tax return filing, and several interviewees advised that some recruits lack the aptitudes or fail to develop the skills necessary to perform adequately and must be replaced. Further research would be

¹⁶ See Brad Cleveland, *Call Center Management On Fast Forward: Succeeding in Today's Dynamic Customer Contact Environment*. ICMI Press (Annapolis, 2006).

needed to identify and evaluate the factors contributing to this difference between contact center and non-contact center activities. Contracting and out-sourcing appear to do little to improve attraction and retention of staff; while the ability to train them is a lesser challenge for contracted/out-sourced activities, attracting and retaining staff are bigger ones than for activities that are not contracted/out-sourced. This is illustrated in Table 5 as 775 out of 1,097 or over 70 percent of contracted/outsourced activities are performed by contact centers.

High turnover imposes additional costs, such as recruitment and curtails customer service through loss of experience and institutional knowledge. One of the recruitment costs is the time required to obtain security clearances for new hires. Several interviewees characterized this as a bottleneck. According to one interviewee, GSA's Federal Acquisition Center waited five weeks for a clearance for its most recent hire. Several interviewees thought that recruitment and retention could be improved if there were a definite "career path" for customer service professionals within the federal government. According to some, providing customer service is too often perceived and treated as a dead-end job offering little chance for promotion, and the skills required to do it well are not seen as qualifications for doing anything else. Exceptions to this situation certainly exist. CSRs at the Customs and Border Protection's Customer Service Center may advance from GS-9 to GS-11. Those working at the IRS's JOC may advance from GS-5 to GS-8. Beyond GS-8, advancement would involve transitioning to management or analyst positions, or seeking opportunities outside the customer service world. It was not clear, however, what value experience as a CSR might have in competing for such positions.

Interviewees did not indicate that turnover is related to the stressfulness of CSRs' jobs. Customs and Border Protection and the IRS, for example, reported low turnover given the stress CSRs apparently endure at these agencies. Instead, several interviewees commended the dedication of on-site CSRs, some of whom have been instrumental in developing outreach strategies for their agencies. Such anecdotes may suggest that one or more aspects of professional satisfaction, including compensation, training, recognition, and the hope of career advancement, could play significant roles in reducing turnover, and may even enhance customer service. (One interviewee said that since there is no career path for CSRs within most federal agencies, the customer's first contact with the agency is often with the least knowledgeable person in it). An instance of a de facto CSR career path is demonstrated at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's (USPTO) Trademark Assistance Center, which reported that thanks to its CSRs' comprehensive knowledge of trademark issues, they are sometimes recruited by other offices within USPTO for non-CSR positions. While this does not improve staff retention for the Trademark Assistance Center, the CSR's knowledge and experience are not lost to USPTO.

5.1.2 TECHNOLOGY

Technological advances have made more sophisticated tools available to customer service providers. These include IVR and FAQ systems, e-mail, web-based forms, and interactive web pages, to name only the most prominent, as well as software applications that facilitate training, performance evaluation, work flow management, and consolidation and integration of information sources. Adoption of these tools imposes some new costs on service providers, but also reduces costs by reducing the number of FTEs required to provide a given level of service. Post-survey interviews suggest that federal agencies are aware of this trade-off. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), for example, found that introduction of FAQs reduced e-mail enquiries from approximately 900 a month to approximately 500, permanently reducing staff time and other resources devoted to answering questions. HRSA takes maximum advantage of this innovation by configuring its website so that every page links to the FAQs, which must be consulted before the system will allow the user to send an e-mail. Moreover, the trend in customer service most frequently identified by interviewees was toward self-service through websites, IVR and FAQ systems, and web-based forms. Applicants for federal student aid, for example, can fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) on line at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. While

doing so, the applicant can access live help either on line (“web chat”) or at (800) 4FEDAID. This trend is likely to accelerate as new technologies emerge and customers become more familiar with them, particularly as self-service is cost-efficient and there is some evidence that it increases customer satisfaction.

Interviewees pointed out that the trend toward use of self-service methods of conducting business with the government means that CSRs are required to handle increasingly sophisticated questions and transactions that are not covered by FAQs, standard IVR options, or straightforward web-based forms. Greater reliance on self-service channels places a premium on professionalization of customer service functions. Professionalization in turn maximizes agencies’ ability to exploit self-service channels. This trend is already well advanced at some agencies. For example, all calls to USPTO’s Inventor Assistance Center that cannot be handled through the initial (“Tier 1”) contact channel are handled at the Tier 2 level by retired patent examiners and supervisors. Other agencies lack the Tier 2 CSRs to provide services that citizens need. The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) of the Department of the Interior reported that although permit applications are available on their website, they do not offer help with them through their call center simply because they lack CSRs with the expertise needed to help citizens complete them. Professionalization increasingly involves mastery of complex subject matter as well as sophisticated communication systems.

5.1.3 DATA SOURCE AND SERVICE CONSOLIDATION

Survey responses and interviewees identified other major challenges for respondents. These include consolidating dispersed data sources and disjointed citizen service activities (the “stovepipe” problem). As noted in Section 3.5, this response echoes the low average scores of 3.66, 3.63, and 3.76 received by the first three topics in Question 15 (“Similar activities conducted in other agencies”, “Trade Shows/Conferences related to your function”, and “Industry Best Practices for your activity”).

Nevertheless, agencies are working on the problem. EPA’s Office of Environmental Information is seeking to establish a pan-EPA knowledge base accessible to all the agency’s offices and regions, and the Federal Acquisition Service’s Vendor Support Center plans to implement an in-house knowledge base in 2007. An interesting example of data consolidation and integration is FAFSA. This application is designed to interact with other federal programs. If a student applies for federal based on estimated income, the application will be updated with the applicant’s actual income once an income tax return is filed. A USPTO interviewee suggested that efforts should be made to use the United States’ 85 patent and trademark libraries as USPTO’s Tier 1 customer service contacts. The private sector is an active participant in these efforts through product support, conferences, and initiatives such as Right Now Technologies’ Federal User Group.

Interviewees also indicated that the barriers to consolidating data sources tend to be organizational rather than technical. The Department of Education, for example, experienced problems with the personal identification numbers (PINs) established to enable federal student aid applicants to track their FAFSAs because the applicant’s social security number is also necessary to access the FAFSA and the Social Security Administration’s security procedures made it difficult to check one number against the other. This “stovepipe” problem, however, is also being addressed in innovative ways. In 2004, for example, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Forest Service, FWS, and Army Corps of Engineers established a Federal Land Management Agency Head Roundtable. This body works to eliminate barriers between each agency’s functions and procedures so citizens feel that they are interacting with a “seamless” federal land program. This initiative grew out of the perception that citizens do not distinguish among these agencies, and find the differences between their functions and jurisdictions arbitrary and confusing.

5.1.4 CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

Interviewees identified the absence of customer service guidance, standards, and definitions as an impediment to improving service. Suggestions for addressing this perceived shortcoming included:

- GSA should evaluate survey instruments used to examine call center performance;
- GSA should define and disseminate best customer service practices, perhaps in the form of a web manager's "toolkit";
- OMB should establish a common definition of "web manager" and issue standard operating procedures for managing websites;
- GSA should devise a model call center, either in the form of guidance or in some other format;
- OMB should require an annual report on call center activities and performance;
- OMB should develop a standard job description for CSRs to be used in USA-JOBS postings.

Some of these suggestions coincide with H.R. 404, the Federal Customer Service Enhancement Act, January 11, 2007,¹⁷ which is both a manifestation and a driver of further professionalization of customer service activities. This proposed legislation directly raises the issue of customer satisfaction as Section 2(b) directs the head of each federal agency to "collect information from its customers regarding the quality" of its customer services. The GWA Survey has gathered much information about how agencies are currently measuring customer satisfaction, and this information may provide some insights in helping agencies comply with Section 2, if enacted.

Post-survey interviewees, however, expressed scepticism about measuring customer satisfaction with services and information provided by federal departments and agencies. Their main concern was that unfair comparisons of customer satisfaction scores, regardless of the method used to compute them, could be made between agencies that perform qualitatively different functions. Some interviewees believe there is a natural bias in favor of being satisfied with the services provided by disbursers of funds, e.g., the Social Security Administration (SSA), and against being satisfied with those provided by collectors, e.g., the IRS. Some interviewees also identified a problem that might be characterized as weighting. They pointed out that customers may be dissatisfied with service simply because they did not get what they wanted from the agency, e.g., if an application was denied or a permit was revoked. One might also note that service is just as slippery a concept as satisfaction. The idea of service suggests receiving something valuable or pleasant, e.g., information, but many contacts between citizens and government require citizens to submit information about themselves or their businesses. One may ask whether federal employees or contractors collecting this information are providing a "service" that should be evaluated in the same way as those provided by disbursers of funds. Some federal agencies do not rely on ACSI scores to assess customer satisfaction because they believe those scores do not take considerations such as these into account.

5.1.5 OTHER

Two other themes emerged from post-survey interviews that attracted attention in the survey data. One is the issue of customer awareness of services offered; the other is offering support in English and Spanish. Questions 16 and 17 capture data on the former issue as a challenge and improvement action, respectively. While lack of information may exact a toll on the government as well as customers in terms of misdirected calls, confusion and delay in resolving issues, and increased stress on CSRs, post-survey interviews indicated that respondents interpreted these questions literally and altruistically. The responses they provided literally mean that many potential customers are unaware of available services and that addressing that unawareness would do more than almost any other action to improve the service they

¹⁷ See Appendix G.

receive. One networking effort is under way within the government is the Washington Office Outreach Forum (WOOF), which includes outreach staff from a variety of federal departments and agencies. Some agencies, e.g., FWS, have developed their own outreach strategies.

The statement “This service activity supports both English and Spanish languages” received low mode and average scores (Table 11). Interviews with respondents who gave low scores to this statement indicated that low activity support in Spanish is a result of either low demand for the agency’s information or service on the part of Spanish speakers or irrelevance. Surveys returned from the Social Security Administration assign high scores to Spanish support, for example, while those from USPTO and the Environmental Protection Agency generally fall in the range of averages seen for Question 14a. The conclusion that SSA service activities support Spanish because SSA receives a high volume of contacts from Spanish-speaking customers is consistent with these interviews, but further research would be necessary to characterize factors affecting the relationship between demand for and supply of Spanish language service. Service support in Spanish is irrelevant to some federal agencies. USA-JOBS, for example, does not support Spanish as applications for U.S. government jobs must be submitted in English.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations seek to address the major challenges and improvement actions identified by participants in the GWA Survey data, both in their survey responses and through post-survey, follow-up interviews. GWA Survey respondents have provided useful guidance to USA Services as it seeks to fulfill its mission to help federal agencies improve customer service.

1. ***Establish a Customer Service Work Group.*** Survey respondents reported that networking with other agencies that perform similar activities is the most important action to take to improve customer service. They also report that their awareness of those activities, industry best practices, and professional development opportunities in customer service lags their awareness of customers and their needs. A Customer Service Work Group would facilitate networking among federal agencies, other customer service providers, and the customer service industry by commissioning research on and organizing venues for the exchange, evaluation, and development of information about customer service trends, innovations, experience, and best practices.
2. ***Develop customer service guidance.*** Survey respondents complained of minimal federal guidance, performance measures, and standards on the conduct of customer service activities, leading to uncertainty, inconsistency, and delay in providing service. USA Services would seek to evaluate how best to provide guidance and establish measures and standards in consultation with other federal agencies and under the guidance of OMB and GAO.
3. ***Foster increased awareness of service availability.*** Survey respondents identified creating awareness of services as a major challenge, and making it easier to learn about services as a major improvement action. USA Services could provide a forum where agencies can identify opportunities and share information and experience about successful customer outreach programs both inside and outside government with a view to identifying best practices and integrating customer outreach into agency strategic planning.
4. ***Promote consolidation of citizen service activities.*** Survey respondents identified consolidating citizen service activities as an important challenge. Post-survey interviews indicated it would contribute to conserving agency resources and likely increase customer satisfaction by improving accuracy, consistency, and completeness of information. By helping agencies speak with one voice, consolidating service activities also can play an important role in increasing awareness of

service availability. USA Services should provide a forum where agencies can identify opportunities and share information and experience about eliminating organizational, legal, and jurisdictional barriers to providing timely and effective customer service.

5. ***Promote consolidation of data sources.*** Survey respondents placed giving accurate and consistent information and providing clear instructions and directions among the most important improvement actions to take. Ensuring cross-channel accuracy, consistency, clarity, and availability of information would conserve agency resources and increase customer satisfaction. USA Services should provide a forum where agencies can identify opportunities and share information about consolidating data sources in different service environments.
6. ***Promote professionalization of customer service.*** Survey respondents reported that attracting and retaining staff is a major challenge for many service activities. Taking such measures as establishing or standardizing job descriptions, education and experience requirements, GS levels, and promotion schedules for federal customer service professionals would help address this challenge. USA Services should work with other federal agencies under the guidance of OPM and OMB to determine whether career paths for customer service professionals are feasible, whether they would help address staff recruitment and retention challenges, and what kinds of professional development are necessary to take advantage of them (e.g., computer-based customer service training).

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APPENDIX A – 2007 GWA SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

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Citizen Service Activities Survey

GSA's USA Services is an E-Government initiative that exists to help other Federal Government organizations improve the quality of service they provide to their constituents and the public. As part of GSA's mission, and with the encouragement of the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), GSA is conducting a survey to learn how and where people interact with the Federal Government and how to support agencies who may want assistance in improving their customer service functions. This survey is also an OMB E-Government Milestone Data Request for Q2 FY07.

In 2004, USA Services participated in an OMB Budget Data Request (BDR) to survey agencies on the methods citizens use to contact the Federal Government. In 2005, USA Services conducted a follow-up survey on the OMB BDR. This year (2007), USA Services, with support from DPRA Inc - a neutral third party, is continuing this survey as an OMB E-Government Milestone requirement. The goal of this survey is to:

1. Update the inventory of the types of citizen service activities that are available in each federal agency
2. Identify the types of metrics and measurements that support these activities
3. Identify challenges and opportunities where additional support for agencies will result in greater quality service to citizens
4. Identify any trends, changes and improvements from the 2004 survey

Throughout this survey the term "Citizen Service Activity" is used to mean any function within the Federal Government agency that interacts directly with constituents and the public. A few examples include call centers, walk-in customer service centers and kiosks.

Your participation in this survey will help bring attention to the issues you and your agency deal with in disseminating information and providing services. Additionally, your participation will help the Federal Government have a complete and meaningful baseline of how people interact with it so Federal organizations like USA Services can leverage their investments to best support agencies like yours!

As a token of thanks for your participation in this survey, the first 500 respondents will receive their choice of book related to their area of practice¹⁸.

If you encounter technical difficulties while filling out the survey, please contact the survey administrator at DPRA Inc., who is administering this survey on behalf of GSA at **1.800.864.2780** or email gwasurvey@dpra.com.

Thank you for your participation!

Please submit the following survey no later than March 31, 2007.

¹⁸ Several federal agencies including the Department of Justice and the General Services Administration have reviewed the incentives offered and determined them to be ethical.

Agency Information / Activity Type Selection

What is the name of your department, agency/bureau and office?
(Please spell out your information and avoid acronyms)

Department Name: _____

Agency/Bureau Name: _____

Office Name: _____

What is your citizen service activity? (Check only one – please complete one survey for each type of citizen service activity so that information can be collected by each type of activity)

- Inbound / Outbound Calls
 - Inbound / Outbound Email and Web-based Forms
 - Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Systems
(Show call volume only for usage completed wholly within the IVR Systems)
 - Automated Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) Systems
(Regardless of what activities use the FAQ system)
 - Interactive Citizen-serving Web Pages (such as Web Chat pages)
 - Walk-in Facilities (such as offices that interact with citizens in person – only one survey is necessary for all walk-in facilities of a specific purpose)
 - Kiosks (Only one survey is necessary for all kiosks of a specific purpose)
 - Other, please specify: _____
-

Q1a. Will you be providing a summary of multiple instances of this activity type?
(e.g. walk-in facilities, toll free numbers, inbound/outbound emails, etc.)

Yes No

Q1b. If yes, please provide the number of instances: _____

Q2. Please briefly describe the activity you are reporting.

Q3. List the actual phone number, URL, e-mail address, etc., used to access this citizen service activity. (For Kiosks, walk-in facilities and summary activity survey, "N/A" is an acceptable response)

Q4a. If this activity is part of a call or contact center, please give the center's name.

Q4b. If this activity is a series of walk-in facilities or kiosks, please provide the approximate number of physical locations supporting this activity.

Q5. What audience is this activity primarily intended to serve. e.g., elderly, military, students, the general public, etc

Q6. Please briefly describe any major software application(s) that support this activity.

Q7a. What is the approximate volume of public contacts **per month** for this citizen service activity?
_____ *(Please give your best estimate, not a range)*

Q7b. Please explain special considerations, if any, regarding the number you indicated above.

Q8a. Please estimate the number of people supporting this service activity on a full-time equivalents (FTEs) basis.
_____ *(Please give your best estimate, not a range)*

Q8b. Please explain special considerations, if any, regarding the number you indicated above.

Q9a. Is this activity contracted or out-sourced?
 Yes No Don't Know/Not Sure

Q9b. Is this activity a shared services arrangement with another agency?
 Yes No Don't Know/Not Sure

Q9c. Please explain special considerations for Q9a / Q9b, if any.

Q10a. Are specific service-level metrics collected for this channel activity? If so, how often are they reported?

| Metrics / Information | Collected / Measured | | | If Yes, how often reported? | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Y | N | Don't Know | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Annually | Other |
| a. Performance Metrics e.g. speed to answer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Operational Cost Metrics e.g. cost per transaction | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Information Quality Metrics e.g. accuracy rate of responses | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Customer Satisfaction (If yes, answer Q10b) e.g. formal customer surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q10b. If customer satisfaction is measured, how is it measured? (Check all that apply)

- Satisfaction survey provided to every customer
- Satisfaction survey provided to sample of customers
- No formal survey but invite customer to give feedback some other way
- Measure number of complaints received
- Measure repeat visits by customers
- Measure increase usage by customers
- Measure increase of new customers
- Use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI)
- Other, please specify: _____

Q11. Does your Agency have a documented strategy or methodology for interacting with its customers? (e.g. specific channels to use based on customer demographics)

- Yes No Don't Know/Not Sure

Q12. Do specific quality control procedures exist to ensure accurate information is disseminated through this activity?

- Yes No Don't Know/Not Sure

Q13. Who is the agency person that USA Services can contact about this activity?

Name: _____
 Title: _____
 Office: _____
 E-mail: _____
 Phone Number: _____

Q14a. Based on your experience with this survey's specific citizen service activity, please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement, where "1" means "strongly disagree" and "5" means "strongly agree" by circling the numbers.

| | AGREEMENT | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|----------------|---|---|-----|
| | Strongly disagree | | Strongly agree | | | |
| Information disseminated through this activity is regularly checked for accuracy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Information disseminated through this activity is shared across multiple types of service activities, e.g. email system uses same FAQ database as the website's self-service area | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Security is a major issue for our customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| This service activity solicits feedback from its customers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Staff at this activity are adequately trained | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| This service activity supports both English and Spanish languages | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| The information provided through this activity is up-to-date | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

Q14b. Please explain special considerations concerning Q14a, if any.

Q15. Please indicate how aware you are of the following using a scale of 1 to 5, where "1" means "Not at all aware" and "5" means "Very aware".

| | AWARENESS | | | | | |
|--|------------------|---|---|---|------------|-----|
| | Not at all aware | | | | Very aware | |
| Similar activities conducted in other agencies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Trade Shows/Conferences related to your function | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Industry Best Practices for your activity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Who your customers are (demographics) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
| Your customers' greatest needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |

Q16. Please check (✓) your **five** greatest challenges in providing quality service to customers.

- Creating awareness of this service with customers
- Having adequate funds
- Managing contracts or contractors
- Educating agency leadership
- Having management support to make changes
- Technology too old
- Technology not a good fit for the application for which it is used
- Bad data quality
- Compliance with laws/regulations
- Staying current with industry best practices
- Consolidating data sources (supporting multiple activities with a common data source)
- Consolidating citizen service activities
- Ability to train staff
- Ability to attract/retain staff
- Other, please specify: _____

Q17. Would these actions improve the level of service that you provide to customers?

| Action | Y | N | N/A |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Reduce the amount staff time necessary to provide the service | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Make it easier for customers to learn about the service | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Provide clearer instructions / directions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Give customers more accurate and consistent information | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Network more with other agencies who perform similar activities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Improve privacy and confidentiality | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Collect service-level metrics: | | | |
| • Performance Metrics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Operational Cost Metrics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Information Quality Metrics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Customer Satisfaction Surveys | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other, please specify: | | | |

Q18. Any additional comments/suggestions on the actions the Government could take to help improving the service delivery of your Activity?

Q19. Any additional comments/suggestions on the subject matter of this survey.

Q20. Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up survey to help us better understand how your organization provides service, how it works to improve its quality and what trends you are experiencing related to providing service?

- Yes No

As a token of thanks for your participation in this survey, the first 500 respondents will receive their choice of book related to their area of practice.

Choice of books:

- Be Our Guest: Perfecting The Art of Customer Service:** A book by the Disney Institute that describes many proven ways and concepts to improve an organization's customer service.
- Call Center Management on Fast Forward:** A compilation of the main points of call center management that helps people to get the big picture of call center management. It is an easy to read workbook and a source of new ideas for experienced managers.
- Don't Make Me Think: A common Sense Approach to Web Usability -** A practical Web design usability guide

Please provide your contact information, if you wish to receive the book.

Name: _____
Street Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____
Zip Code: _____
E-mail Address: _____
Phone Number: _____

Thank you for your participation. It is very much appreciated!

Please return the completed survey by March 31, 2007 to:

**GWA Survey 2007
c/o DPRA Incorporated
1655 North Fort Myer Drive
Suite 925
Arlington, VA 22209**

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APPENDIX B – OTHER ACTIVITIES

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OTHER ACTIVITIES

Survey respondents were asked to select “Other Activities” and describe such activity if it is in a category previously identified in this survey. It must exist with a defined purpose of providing service or information to the public and must be supported by and/or integrated with technologies and information provided through other channels by their agency. The list of “Other Activities” is provided below.

- Inbound/outbound mail/fax correspondence
- Fax broadcast
- Mass mailing
- Distribution of press releases
- Publications and published products
- Publication/Distribution Centers
- Department/Agency website

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APPENDIX C – CALL / CONTACT CENTERS

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Survey respondents were asked to provide the center's name (Question 4a) if the reporting activities are part of a call or contact center, as listed below.

| Department/Agency/Bureau (Number of Contact Center) | Contact Center |
|--|--|
| Department of State (2) | |
| | Emergency Overseas Citizens Services |
| | National Passport Information Center |
| Department of the Interior (1) | |
| | FWS Customer Service Center |
| Environmental Protection Agency (15) | |
| | Smoke-free Home Pledge Hotline |
| | Energy Star Hotline/Stratospheric Ozone Protection Hotline |
| | Environmental Information Service Center |
| | Methods Information Communications Exchange (MICE) Service |
| | Pollution Prevention Information Clearinghouse |
| | Public Environmental Resource Center (PERC) and Service Center |
| | Regional Call Center |
| | Superfund, TRI, EPCRA, RMP and Oil Information Center |
| | US Environmental Protection Agency - Regional Response Center |
| | US EPA Environmental Information Center (EIC) |
| | US EPA Region 3 Customer Service Hotline |
| | US EPA Region 5 Environmental Information Center / Hotline |
| | US EPA Region 6 Environmental Information Center |
| | US EPA Region 9 Environmental Information Center |
| | US EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline |
| General Services Administration (5) | |
| | FSS TechSupport Helpdesk |
| | General Services Administration, Office of Inspector General, Fraud Hotline Office |
| | Region 8 - Rocky Mountain Regional Call Center |
| | The National Contact Center |
| | Vendor Support Center (VSC) |
| National Archives and Records Administration (2) | |
| | Customer Service Center |
| | National Personnel Records Center, Core5, Customer Service Center |
| National Gallery of Art (2) | |

| Department/Agency/Bureau (Number of Contact Center) | Contact Center |
|--|---|
| | National Gallery of Art Library |
| | NGA Visitor Services line |
| National Science Foundation (2) | |
| | FastLane Technical Support |
| | Reception and Information Center |
| Office of Personnel Management (2) | |
| | Retirement Information Office |
| | Retirement Services Program |
| Small Business Administration (1) | |
| | SBA National Answer Desk |
| Social Security Administration (3) | |
| | Division of Congressional and Public Inquiries (DCPI) |
| | SSA OIG Fraud Hotline |
| | W71-SSA Liaison (House of Representatives) |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1) | |
| | The NRRS maintains a reservations call center |
| U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (1) | |
| | Systems Integration, Landover, MD |
| U.S. Department of Agriculture (13) | |
| | Agricultural Statistics Hotline |
| | Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) |
| | ERS Information Center |
| | Forest Service National Information Center |
| | FPRS Support |
| | GSACS Help Desk |
| | Insurance Services |
| | National NRCS Publications & Forms Distribution Center - LANDCARE |
| | Rural Development, Centralized Servicing Center |
| | FSIS Technical Service Center |
| | Technical Service Center |
| | USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline |
| | USDA's Information Center |
| U.S. Department of Commerce (9) | |

| Department/Agency/Bureau (Number of Contact Center) | Contact Center |
|--|--|
| | Assignment Services Branch |
| | Customer Services Center |
| | ITA Trade Information Center |
| | MCD and SSSD |
| | NOAA's National Climatic Data Center / Climate Services Div / Customer Services Branch |
| | PCT Help Desk |
| | Trade Information Center |
| | USPTO Contact Center |
| | USPTO Trademark Assistance Center |
| U.S. Department of Education (7) | |
| | Debt Collection Center |
| | Direct Collection Center |
| | Direct Loan Servicing Center |
| | ED Pubs |
| | Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC). |
| | Research and Customer Care Center |
| | RTI International Call Center Services |
| U.S. Department of Energy (7) | |
| | Center of Environmental Management Information (CEMI) |
| | Energy Information Administration Help Center for an Internet Data Collection System |
| | Energy Information Administration Help Center for Petroleum Electronic Data Reporting Option (PEDRO) |
| | FOIA Request Service Center |
| | National Energy Information Center |
| | OIG Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline |
| | WIPP Information Center |
| U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (30) | |
| | 1-800 Medicare (Vangent Contractor) |
| | Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality |
| | Call Center Contract: Alliance HealthCare Information Inc. |
| | Cancer Information Service |
| | CDC-INFO |

| Department/Agency/Bureau (Number of Contact Center) | Contact Center |
|--|---|
| | Center for Drug Evaluation and Research |
| | Child Care Aware |
| | Child Welfare Information Gateway |
| | Division of Small Manufacturers, International and Consumer Assistance (DSMICA) |
| | FDA Industry Systems Help Desk |
| | Head Start Knowledge & Information Management Services |
| | HRSA Call Center |
| | Insure Kids Now |
| | National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center |
| | National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth |
| | National Human Trafficking Resource Center |
| | National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Information Clearinghouse |
| | National Institutes of Health Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases ~ National Resource Center |
| | NCCAM Clearinghouse |
| | NHLBI Health Information Center (NHLBI HIC) |
| | NIDCD Information Clearinghouse |
| | NIDDK information clearinghouses |
| | NIH Consensus Development Program Information Center |
| | Office of Communication, Training and Manufacturers Assistance |
| | Office of Communications and Knowledge Transfer |
| | Outreach and Information Center |
| | Prior Notice Call Center |
| | SAMHSA Health Information Network |
| | The HRSA Information Center (HRSA IC) |
| | The National Domestic Violence Hotline |
| U.S. Department of Homeland Security (13) | |
| | Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP)-Emergency Management and Response - Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EMR-ISAC) |
| | Customer Service Center |
| | DHS OIG Hotline |
| | Eastern Forms Center |
| | Learning Resource Center |

| Department/Agency/Bureau (Number of Contact Center) | Contact Center |
|---|---|
| | National Customer Service Center |
| | National Emergency Training Center (NETC) |
| | National Fire Academy (NFA) Training Evaluation Center |
| | National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) Support Center |
| | National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center |
| | NFIRS Support Center |
| | TSA Contact Center |
| | United States Fire Administration (USFA) Publications Center |
| U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (8) | |
| | ComCon |
| | Title V |
| | Customer Service Center |
| | FHA Resource Center |
| | HUD Headquarters Office of Departmental Grants Management and Oversight (SuperNOVA Clearinghouse) |
| | HUD National Servicing Call Center |
| | Multifamily Clearinghouse Call Center |
| | REAC Technical Assistance Center |
| U.S. Department of Justice (9) | |
| | Customer Service Center |
| | FBI Major Case Contact Center |
| | FBIHQ Telephone Center |
| | IISS Communications Contact Group; Communications Research Group; Correspondence Group; and Monetary Instruments Handling |
| | IISS Customer Service |
| | Joint Support and Operations Center |
| | National Criminal Justice Reference Service |
| | Registration Customer Service Call Center |
| | RX Abuse Hot line |
| U.S. Department of Labor (1) | |
| | Datatrak |
| U.S. Department of the Treasury (10) | |
| | 1-800-USA-MINT - Plano, Texas Call Center |
| | AFC Help Desk |

| Department/Agency/Bureau (Number of Contact Center) | Contact Center |
|--|---|
| | BEP Public Tour and Visitor Center |
| | EFTPS Customer Service Call Center |
| | ETA Call Center |
| | IRS-JOC |
| | Legacy Treasury Direct Offices Call Center |
| | OCC's Customer Assistance Group. |
| | Treasury Offset Program (TOP) Call Center |
| | Treasury Retail Securities Processing Sites |
| U.S. Department of Transportation (4) | |
| | Aviation Consumer Protection Division |
| | FMCSA Support Services |
| | LTPP - Customer Support Service Center |
| | NHTSA Vehicle Safety Hotline |
| U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (1) | |
| | NRC Public Document Room |

APPENDIX D – MAJOR SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS USED

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Major software application(s) used (Question 6) to support the citizen service (listed by *activity type*):

ACTIVITY TYPE: TELEPHONE

- Adobe Acrobat
- Appligent Redax
- Call-routing software
- CARES
- CRVP database application for registration of healthy participants
- CDC INFO is supported by Siebel for content management, Witness for call recording, Aspect for workload management
- CISCO
- Cisco VOIP, Internet Protocal Contact Center, Mortgage Serv, E Quality Balance
- Cisco VOIP, IVR, Cisco Internet Protocal Contact Center, NGLS - New Guaranteed Loan System - Loss claims,Mortgage Serv Browser - Guaranteed Institution 651
- Guaranteed Loan System - Mainframe (Block Mode), Guaranteed Indexing Application
Cisco VOIP,IVR, Cisco Internet Protocal Contact Center, MFIS - Multi-Family Housing Information System,ADPS - Automated Data Processing System,,AMAS - Automated Multi-Family Housing Accounting System
- Filemaker Pro
- Filenet Image Retrieval, DOJ scanning and Indexing Application
- Multi-Family EFT / Pad System
- Consular Consolidated Database (CCD)
- Oracle
- CRISIS, ACS Plus, CCD, PIERS
- CW Direct and JD Edwards
- Dreamweaver
- EasyRun - EPIC Agent call center management software
- EFTPS is a Department of the Treasury software application which processes Federal tax payments from taxpayers bank accounts electronically.
- Emergency Response Notification System and Web EOC
- Enterprise Call Center (ECC) and Interaction Client (IC)
- FSQCS Active and Negative Systems support data entry, editing reporting and electronic transmittal of the results of Quality Control survey for the Food Stamp Program
- Fujitsu ACD/MIS
- Genesys, Siebel, Cognos, Witness, EQB, Stellent
- Help Desk Management Software 'TechXL'
- High Path Procenter
- HiPath Pro Center (for call routing by type of incoming call); Whisper Technology
- IAFIS
- ICE (ordering/fulfillment software)
- Inter-Tel (phone system)
- Integrated Contact Manager (ICM) - Intelligent Call Routing
- e-Workforce Management
- Aspect - Automated Call Distributor
- IVR Software (EDIFY), Phone Switch software (CCMIS), Call tracking software (Dictaphone)
- List-Serv Manager
- Lotus Notes
- MCMIS, MCREGIS III, CoTs internal OPs tracking system, various websites such as MCMIS, SAFER, & L&I online, FIOA jukebox Application Extender. We routinely use Microsoft

products - Windows, XP Professional, Office 2003, Internet Explorer. As well as, FTP, WinZip, Adobe, and Oracle 10g.

- Microsoft .NET
- Microsoft Office: Word; Excel; Outlook; Access
- Microsoft Exchange
- Mortgage Serv, Cisco VOIP, Cisco IVR, Cisco Internet Protocol Contact Center, E Quality Balance
- MS Dynamics Great Plains; MS Dynamics CRM
- Nortel Symposium Express
- Nortel Call Pilot Desktop Messaging
- NESDIS E-Government (NeS)
- Nortel Contact Center
- Nortel Telecommunications
- PRRC database application for registration of potential participants
- Remedy™ Case Management System; Avaya™ Communications Definity G3SI Private Branch Exchange.
- Remedy (trouble ticket generation and tracking), Centre Vu (collects performance metrics for the ACD System and Witness (call monitoring software) are the software applications that support this activity
- Right Now Technology's Knowledge and Customer Management to operate our knowledge base and to make a record of all contacts - including phone and email
- Interactive Intelligence's Customer Interaction Center - hardware and software ACD solution, including metrics and call recording
- SAP - Systems, Applications, and Products
- SAP R-3 software for ordering, accounting, and inventory control.
- SBC Symposium Express Software for phone system
- Siebel 7.0
- Siebel Call Center
- Interactive Intelligence - Interaction Client
- Spectrum Plus is the software that is used to direct the orders to the distribution center so that the orders can be pulled, packaged and sent for mailing.
- SQL Server (Caller Database)
- Strata ACD application to determine call distribution; Taske Contact to manage call center staff and generate reports; Oaisys Net phone (advanced call management application)
- supports Internet Explorer, MS outlook for emails and Remedy Action Request System.
- The FSAIC's advanced call center technology has simplified the process for customers by answering questions quickly and accurately. IVRUs are available 24 hours a day; the Intelligent Call Routing system transfer calls to the appropriate center while transparent to the caller; the AVAYA Call Management System monitors CSR statistics; the ASPECT Workforce Management helps schedule staff for fluctuating and seasonal volumes; and the NICE Call Recording Software monitors and coaches CSRs.
- Treasury Offset Program (TOP)
- TRIP, interacts with the Passport TDIS system in order to allow access to inquiries.
- Victars
- Web-based licensed commercial databases such as CSA Illumina, HeinOnline, CyberRegs, ScienceDirect, etc.

ACTIVITY TYPE: E-MAIL/WEB-BASED FORMS

- Adobe Acrobat
- Adobe Photoshop
- Apache Server
- Appligent Redax
- ARGOS - an OIG Oracle DBMS is used to compile complaint information, track responses and produce activity reports
- ASP (Active Server Pages) / ASP.NET
- Avaya IC 6.1.5 for the S8700 PBX Server
- NICE Recording Systems
- Blue Pumpkin Workforce Management System
- CDC INFO is supported by Siebel for content management, Witness for call recording, Aspect for workload management, MS Exchange
- Cisco Phone System network based application
- Citrix
- Clean Air Markets Division Business System
- Cold Fusion
- Consular Consolidated Database (CCD)
- Corel Draw Graphics Suite
- Customer relationship management system (CMRS)
- Digital Asset Manager (content management system)
- Dreamweaver
- FAIM computer software
- Filemaker Pro
- Genesys WFM
- Help Desk Management Software 'TechXL' which is a COTS package.
- Homesite
- HTML
- ICRS - Web based system developed for SSA
- JAVA
- Law Enforcement Online (LEO)
- Lotus Notes
- Lyris ListManager
- MCMIS, MCREGIS III, CoTs internal OPs tracking system, various websites such as MCMIS, SAFER, & L&I online, FIOA jukebox Application Extender
- Microsoft .NET
- Microsoft Office: Word; Excel; Outlook; Access
- Microsoft Exchange
- Microsoft IIS
- NESDIS E-Government (NeS)
- Nortel Call Pilot Desktop Messaging
- Nortel Symposium Express
- Oracle
- Peregrine 7.0 Call Center Software
- PNSI-Prior notice system interface
- PRRC database application for registration of potential participants.
- CRVP database application for registration of healthy participants.
- Remedy™ Case Management System is used to capture each consumer contact.
- RightNow Technologies CRM
- RightNow Technology's Right Now Web - knowledge and email management software

- Siebel CRM Suite
- Spectrum Plus is the software that is used to direct the orders to the distribution center so that the orders can be pulled, packaged and sent for mailing.
- SQL Server
- Talisma - customer service management software product
- The FSAIC's advanced call center technology has simplified the process for customers by answering questions quickly and accurately. IVRs are available 24 hours a day; the Intelligent Call Routing system transfer calls to the appropriate center while transparent to the caller; the AVAYA Call Management System monitors CSR statistics; the ASPECT Workforce Management helps schedule staff for fluctuating and seasonal volumes; and the NICE Call Recording Software monitors and coaches CSRs.
- The phone system is an Avaya™ Communications Definity G3SI Private Branch Exchange.
- The Vulnerable Zone Indicator System (VZIS) allows you to quickly find out if an address of interest to you - your home, place of work, or child's school - could be affected by a chemical accident. You can use the VZIS to determine whether the address may be in the vulnerable zone of a facility that submitted a Risk Management Plan (RMP).
- Service provided by GovDelivery, Inc.
- Treasury Direct
- TRIP, provides access to Passport's TDIS tracking system. It is utilized for status checks.
- Windows Server 2003

ACTIVITY TYPE: IVR SYSTEMS

- Avaya IC 6.1.5 for the S8700 PBX Server
- Blue Pumpkin Workforce Management System
- Call-routing software
- CISCO IVR
- Customized Visual Basic Application and ICIS
- EDIVY IVR
- EFTPS is a Department of the Treasury software application which processes Federal tax payments from taxpayers bank accounts electronically.
- Genesys
- Help Desk Management Software 'TechXL' which is a COTS package.
- Microlog
- Mortgage Serv, Cisco VOIP, Internet Protocol Contact Center, IVR
- Microsoft Office: Word; Excel; Outlook; Access
- NICE Recording Systems
- Oracle Database
- Proprietary software owned by the contractor
- Regionally funded software for voice generation and telephone switch administration of products.
- Remedy™ Case Management System is used to capture each consumer contact.
- Response not provided by DHS
- RightNow Technologies software
- Siebel
- Televoice
- The FSAIC's advanced call center technology has simplified the process for customers by answering questions quickly and accurately. IVRs are available 24 hours a day; the Intelligent Call Routing system transfer calls to the appropriate center while transparent to the caller; the AVAYA Call Management System monitors CSR statistics; the ASPECT Workforce Management helps schedule staff for fluctuating and seasonal volumes; and the NICE Call Recording Software monitors and coaches CSRs.
- The phone system is an Avaya™ Communications Definity G3SI Private Branch Exchange.
- TRIP, provides access to the Passport TDIS tracking system. It is used for status inquiries.
- Verizon IVR
- VRU Software via separate server
- Windows 2000 Server
- Telepath IVR System

ACTIVITY TYPE: FAQ SYSTEMS

- ColdFusion
- CRISIS, ACS Plus, CCD, PIERS
- Microsoft SQL Server
- HTML
- Lotus Notes
- Oracle
- Rhythmics
- RightNow Technologies
- RightNow Technologies - Right Now Web
- RightNow Technologies CRM
- The FSAIC's advanced call center technology has simplified the process for customers by answering questions quickly and accurately. IVRUs are available 24 hours a day; the Intelligent Call Routing system transfer calls to the appropriate center while transparent to the caller; the AVAYA Call Management System monitors CSR statistics; the ASPECT Workforce Management helps schedule staff for fluctuating and seasonal volumes; and the NICE Call Recording Software monitors and coaches CSRs.
- TRIP, allows access to Passport's TDIS tracking system. It is utilized for status inquiries.

ACTIVITY TYPE: INTERACTIVE WEB PAGES

- Active Server Pages
- ARC Internet Mapping Service
- CC Pulse
- Cold Fusion
- Dreamweaver
- Front Page
- Genesys
- Genesys Contact Navigator (GCN)
- Genesys WFM
- J2EE
- Lotus Notes
- MCMIS, MCREGIS III, CoTs internal OPs tracking system, various websites such as MCMIS, SAFER, & L&I online, FIOA jukebox Application Extender
- Microsoft Office: Word; Excel; Outlook; Access
- Microsoft IIS
- Microsoft SQL Server database
- Oracle Database
- REDDOT.
- RightNow Technologies
- RSA KEON software (digital certificate - PKI)
- SAS, SQL Server custom apps
- SMARTTECH
- SSNVS is a web-based application with a browser interface that interfaces with SSA legacy systems
- The FSAIC's advanced call center technology has simplified the process for customers by answering questions quickly and accurately. IVRs are available 24 hours a day; the Intelligent Call Routing system transfer calls to the appropriate center while transparent to the caller; the AVAYA Call Management System monitors CSR statistics; the ASPECT Workforce Management helps schedule staff for fluctuating and seasonal volumes; and the NICE Call Recording Software monitors and coaches CSRs.
- Windows 2003 Server

ACTIVITY TYPE: WALK-IN FACILITIES

- Adobe
- CASS
- Lotus Notes
- Microsoft Office: Word; Excel; Outlook; Access
- NSF VISIT system
- Siebel
- System for Risk Management Plans - Collects risk management plans from industry required by the Clean Air Act
- The Resource and Patient Management System (RPMS) is the distributed health information system consisting of over 60 major applications. The National Patient Information Reporting System (NPIRS) is the national data repository for summary data from sites for reporting to Congress, users, and other approved requestors.
- Web-based licensed commercial databases such as CSA Illumina, HeinOnline, CyberRegs, ScienceDirect, etc.

ACTIVITY TYPE: KIOSKS

- A customized software application for way-finding which is a product of TTSS, Inc
- RightNow Web
- Oracle Database
- Macromedia Cold Fusion with JavaScript
- Macromedia Dreamweaver and Fireworks
- Macromedia Flash
- Microsoft Access
- SQL Server
- Touch-Screen Technologies

ACTIVITY TYPE: OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Adobe Acrobat
- CCCP: Provides survey design, data entry, and reporting via the Natural Resources Management Gateway. (<http://CorpsLakes.usace.army.mil>)"
- Databases created in Microsoft Visual Basic, with Business Object Crystal Report as the reporting tool
- FileNet Imaging
- Help Desk Management Software 'TechXL'
- Integrated automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS)
- Macromedia ColdFusionMX
- Macromedia Dreamweaver and Homesite
- MCMIS, MCREGIS III, CoTs internal OPs tracking system
- Microsoft Office: Word; Excel; Outlook; Access
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Mortgage Serv
- NESDIS E-Government (NES)
- Netsatisfaxion software
- NRRS: Outdoor Recreation Management (ORM) Field Manager Suite
- Oracle
- SAP's R-3 software is used for sales and distribution, accounting, and inventory.
- WordPerfect

APPENDIX E: OTHER METHODS USED TO MEASURE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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“Other” methods used to measure customer satisfaction (Question 10b) are listed below.

- Ask each caller if the information meets their needs
- Client tracking system to measure client activity is being implemented
- Duty logs reviewed daily by senior management
- E-mail feedback
- End User Forum
- FAQ System: Was this helpful? yes/no feedback mechanism
- Foresee Results Survey
- Increase of requests
- Input from stakeholders is verified twice a year
- Monitor questions asked that do not trigger response
- Monthly report is submitted to agency for accuracy of response(s) given to inquiries
- No formal feedback, but customers always respond to the messages
- Number of compliments
- Office level customer surveys
- One-on-One interaction with individual feedback
- Periodic Surveys on the NRC Web site
- Phone survey to determine why registrants don't use web forms
- Quality Assurance by staff
- Quality monitoring
- Survey to Federal Program Agencies - not General Public
- Track frequency of visitor suggestions for facility/service improvements at recreation areas
- Voluntary direct feedback from inquirer at time of contact

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APPENDIX F: OTHER CHALLENGES TO PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICE

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“Other” challenges to provide quality service (Question 16) are listed below:

- Ability to have Bi-lingual, Spanish Speaking staff
- Ability to hire staff due to budget constraints
- Ability to maintain phone coverage.
- Ability to respond to inquiries in a timely manner
- Access to IT staff to revamp the in-house tracking systems
- Administrative efficiency of program delivery
- Assure that everyone knows when policy changes and what that policy is now
- Buy-in from program staff
- Differing policies/procedures in each agency office
- Flexible work schedules make it hard for us to connect callers with staff, and callers get upset about this
- Inadequate staff working the project
- Justifying technology costs based on volume
- Keeping site timely updated and being able to update as requirements change
- Keeping track of all the staffing changes within the Region
- Maintaining efficient interoffice coordination
- Managing in a union environment
- Mandates for home page content
- Motivating citizens to use the online/electronic services
- Receiving up-to-date information from Stakeholders
- Data Security
- SPAM: time spent filtering emails
- Staff levels to perform task with their other assigned duties
- Support Systems utilized by our operation that are owned by other agencies
- Having simple web authoring tool available to allow SMEs & other staff to manage content directly without having to go through technical staff for posting to the web

There are a number of survey responses indicate “No challenges”:

- We don't identify any of these as challenges.
- No real problems such as described above
- None.
- Not aware of any
- Not Sure

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APPENDIX G: FEDERAL CUSTOMER SERVICE ENHANCEMENT ACT (H.R. 404)

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110th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. R. 404

To require the establishment of customer service standards for Federal agencies.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 11, 2007

Mr. CUELLAR introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

A BILL

To require the establishment of customer service standards for Federal agencies.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'Federal Customer Service Enhancement Act'.

SEC. 2. DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE PROVIDED BY FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) Requirement-

(1) PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS- The Comptroller General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall jointly develop--

(A) performance measures to determine whether Federal agencies are providing high quality customer service; and

(B) standards to be met by Federal agencies in order to provide high quality customer service.

(2) REQUIREMENT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT CERTAIN INFORMATION- Such standards shall be developed after taking into account the information collected by Federal agencies under subsection (b).

(b) Customer Service Input- The head of each Federal agency shall collect information from its customers regarding the quality of those services. The information shall be collected through a survey, focus groups, or such other appropriate methods as may be approved by the Comptroller General. Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each Federal agency shall submit to the Comptroller General a report on the information collected.

SEC. 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS.

(a) Customer Relations Representative- The head of each Federal agency shall designate an employee to be the customer relations representative of the agency. Such representative shall be responsible for implementing the customer service standards developed under section 2 and the agency requirements under subsection (b).

(b) Agency Standards- Subject to subsection (c), the head of each Federal agency, acting through its customer relations representative, shall prescribe regulations to implement the customer service standards developed under section 2 within the agency. The regulations shall include specific principles of customer service applicable to that agency and shall be available on the agency's public website.

(c) Approval by Director- The regulations developed under subsection (b) may be prescribed only after approval by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

SEC. 4. INSPECTIONS AND REPORTS BY GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE.

(a) Inspections- The Comptroller General shall inspect each Federal agency each year and analyze each such agency's customer service performance to determine whether it is meeting the standards for customer service developed under section 2.

(b) Reports to Agencies- After inspecting a Federal agency pursuant to subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall annually provide to the agency a report on its customer service performance.

(c) Report to Congress- The Comptroller General shall annually submit to the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the performance of customer service by Federal agencies.

SEC. 5. AWARDS FOR EXEMPLARY CUSTOMER SERVICE.

The Comptroller General may give an award to a Federal agency to recognize the provision of exemplary customer service by the agency, as determined by the Comptroller General based on an inspection under section 4 or such other evaluation determined appropriate by the Comptroller General.

SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) The term `customer', with respect to a Federal agency, means any individual or non-Federal Government entity to which the agency provides services.

(2) The term `Federal agency' has the meaning given the term `Executive agency' by section 105 of title 5, United States Code, except that the term does not include an agency if the President determines that this Act should not apply to the agency for national security reasons.

END