United States
Department of Agriculture

CONTROLLER OPERATIONS DIVISION CONTACT CENTER REFERENCE GUIDE

Karen Frederickson
Section Manager
504-426-5260

Eleanora Fleetwood
Senior Program Analyst
504-426-5126

December 2011

Table of Contents

1 Introduction and Objectives

1.1 Introduction

The Controller Operations Division (COD) Contact Center (Contact Center) exists to support users in resolving issues that may be encountered while using USDA financial and accounting systems. This guide provides a description of the various tiers which comprise the Contact Center and details the critical functions performed by each to deliver quality solutions to USDA system users. This guide also provides an outline of the Contact Center's resolution process.

The resolution process consists of the following key tiers:

Tier	Description
Tier 0	The agency point of contact, usually the agency Functional Administrator (FA)
Tier 1	COD, Customer Support Branch (CSB), Contact Center analysts
Tier 2	SMEs from the offices of the Associate Chief Financial Officer for Financial Operations (ACFO-FO)/COD, including agency advocates assigned to specific agencies, and the Associate Chief Financial Officer for Financial Systems (ACFO-FS)
Tier 3	ACFO-FS technical and application SMEs and contractor support

1.2 Objectives

The primary objectives of this guide are to:

- Explain the Contact Center resolution process
- Identify the tiers and define the roles and responsibilities of each

2 Contact Center Resolution Process

With the Contact Center at the core, all tiers are collectively responsible for resolving agency user issues related to system applications and hardware. Through the Contact Center resolution process, agency users are provided assistance as described in the following broad overview:

Agency user

- Agency user encounters a problem or has a question related to USDA financial/accounting systems and contacts the respective agency FA (Tier 0). In the FA model, the FA is the liaison between the Contact Center and agency user.

Agency FA (Tier 0)

- FA researches the issue and provides solutions when possible
- If unable to resolve the issue, FA escalates to Contact Center (Tier 1). The FA either requests the Contact Center to open a Remedy ticket, or creates a ticket in the Remedy System's (Remedy) Requester Console. **Note**: The FA has the capability to create a ticket in Remedy.

Contact Center (Tier 1)

- Contact Center receives or creates ticket and triages the issue to determine the correct priority.
- Contact Center researches the issue and provides solutions when possible
- If unable to resolve the issue, Contact Center escalates to Tier 2
- Agency-specific Contact Center analyst addresses the status of the ticket during established agency meetings, if any.

COD/ACFO-FS SMEs (Tier 2)

- COD/ACFO-FS SMEs perform more technical research and analysis to identify the root cause of the issue and provide solutions
- Agency advocates coordinate efforts and provide direct assistance to their respective agencies
- SMEs collaborate with Tier 3 to resolve more complicated issues

ACFO-FS and contractor support (Tier 3)

- ACFO-FS assists Tier 2 in identifying resolutions to issues

3 Tier Descriptions

3.1 Tier 0

3.1.1 Description

As Tier 0, the FA plays a critical role in handling inquiries from users within their agencies before these inquiries become issues in Remedy. The agency FA is contacted by a user when the user encounters an issue or has a question.

3.1.2 Activities Performed

Tier 0 performs the following activities:

- Resolves issues and answers user questions
- Creates and tracks Remedy tickets

3.1.2.1 Resolve Issues and Answer User Questions

Tier 0 assists users with their most common issues, such as:

- Accessing the Financial Management Modernization Initiative (FMMI) portal
- Contacting the agency's Security Administrator for FMMI role access

A list of FMMI Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), which provides information about general FMMI topics (including system access and navigation, specific functional areas, training, and reporting) is available online and can be accessed at http://info.fmmi.usda.gov/FAQs/FAQs_home.html.

Other valuable resources that provide more detailed, specific information are performance support materials, which include:

- **Online Help Procedures (OLHPs)** – Step-by-step instructions to complete specific transactions. This documentation also provides screen shots, required fields, and acceptable values to complete a transaction
- **Simulations** – Simulated activities that demonstrate how to complete transactions and provide a safe environment to learn how to process transactions in FMMI
- **Job Aids** – Guidance for end-to-end processes not already provided in a procedurally-focused OLHP
- **Participant Guides** – Primary handbooks utilized during FMMI training

These online help materials are available in the FMMI portal and can be accessed by selecting the Help link located in the header of any page once the user is logged into FMMI.

While these materials are helpful resources for FAs, FAs are encouraged to direct users to online help for their future reference. Context-sensitive help is also available when attempting to perform transactions in FMMI. Context-sensitive help displays help related to the specific transaction the user is attempting.

3.1.2.2 Create and Track Remedy Tickets

When the FA is unable to resolve a user inquiry/issue, the FA can create a Remedy ticket through Remedy's Requester Console or request the Contact Center to create a ticket via (1) e-mail at cod.help@usda.gov; (2) Web at https://servicecenter.nfc.usda.gov/cod/; (3) telephone at 877-243-3072 or 504-426-5695; or (4) fax at 303-205-3478. For more information, visit the Contact Center online at http://sig.nfc.usda.gov/crchelpdesk/index.htm.

FAs are encouraged to track and monitor updates of tickets they create in Remedy. This offers FAs the ability to keep their users apprised of updates and status changes. (**Note**: FAs only have access to the tickets they create in Remedy.) Alternatively, FAs can contact their agency-specific advocate or Contact Center staff member for status updates. Refer to the List of Agency Advocates and Contact Center Representatives in the left-hand menu on the COD Web site, Contact Info tab, at http://cod.nfc.usda.gov/contact_info/contcod.html.

FAs can also assist in enhancing the quality of the Remedy ticket by referring to the Appendix, Information for Ticket Request, which provides the types of information that should be included to create a thorough and comprehensive ticket. This will ensure that Tiers 1, 2, and 3 have the accurate and detailed information required to (1) effectively understand and resolve the issue; (2) correctly escalate the issue to the appropriate SME; and (3) identify any structural/program changes that may be required as a result of the issue.

3.2 Tier 1

3.2.1 Description

As Tier 1, the Contact Center is the initial point of contact for questions and issues escalated by Tier 0, where Tier 0 is unable to provide resolution. The Contact Center manages the Remedy ticket process from receipt to close.

3.2.2 Activities Performed

Tier 1 performs the following activities:

- Receives/reviews incoming Remedy tickets
- Creates Remedy tickets
- Prioritizes Remedy tickets
- Researches and provides resolution
- Assigns Remedy tickets to Tier 2
- Tracks, updates, provides reports on, and resolves Remedy tickets

3.2.2.1 Receive/Review Incoming Remedy Tickets

Incoming tickets are assigned to an agency-specific Tier 1 analyst, who triages it to determine if sufficient information has been included to assign the proper priority level, and assess whether or not resolution can be provided at Tier 1. If so, Tier 1 staff researches the issue and provides resolution. If not, the assessment determines what Tier 2 area should receive the ticket for further handling.

3.2.2.2 Create Remedy Tickets

Tier 1 receives requests to create Remedy tickets through the avenues described in Section 3.1.2.2. If sufficient information has been provided to accurately document the issue, Tier 1 creates a ticket in Remedy and the requester receives a ticket number via an automatically-generated e-mail.

If additional information is required to accurately document the issue, Tier 1attempts to contact the requester via telephone. If phone contact is unsuccessful, the requester will be sent an e-mail from Remedy.

Please note:

E-mails sent from Remedy contain a subject line that is similar to that of the e-mail providing the ticket number, which is automatically generated when a ticket is first created; therefore, it is important to read all e-mails issued from Remedy.

When additional information is requested, ticket requesters are required to respond within 3 workdays from the date of the e-mail. If the ticket requester does not respond within that timeframe, the ticket will be closed due to insufficient information.

3.2.2.3 Prioritize Remedy Tickets

Tickets are assigned priority levels based upon how widespread the issue is and how severely the issue impacts users' business functions and duties. The following table displays the criteria used to assign priority levels to tickets. **Note**: FMMI implementation is in progress through Fiscal Year 2013; therefore, the response/resolution time may vary until all agencies are implemented.

Priority	Description	Response Time	Resolution/ Status Time
Critical	Agency-wide problem	1 hour	4 hours
High	Issue affects a large number of users	4 hours	2 days
Medium	Issue affects small number of users	Next business day	20 days
Low	Issue affects minimal number of users	Next business day	90 days

Tickets are handled in the order of their assigned priority, followed by the order in which they were received.

3.2.2.4 Research and Provide Resolution

Tier 1 researches basic issues escalated by Tier 0 and provides resolution, if possible. If resolution is not possible at this level, the ticket is escalated to Tier 2 for further handling. (See Section 3.2.2.5 below.) Additionally, Tier 1 directs user inquiries regarding the Employee Personal Page, health benefits, eAuthentication, and other help desks, as appropriate.

3.2.2.5 Assign Remedy Tickets

An issue that cannot be resolved by Tier 1 is assigned to the appropriate Tier 2 group for follow-up and resolution. When a ticket is assigned to Tier 2, the status is updated in Remedy and an automatically-generated e-mail will be issued to the requester and assignee(s).

3.2.2.6 Track, update, and provide reports on Remedy Tickets

A Tier 1 analyst is assigned to each agency, and has several responsibilities in the Remedy ticket life cycle:

- Collaborates with Tiers 2 and 3 to expedite ticket resolution
- Coordinates and facilitates meetings with agencies and Tiers 2 and 3, along with SMEs, to discuss tickets and develop resolutions
- Prepare agency-specific Remedy reports for tracking tickets
- Communicate ticket status changes and updates to ticket requester

3.3 Tier 2

3.3.1 Description

Tier 2 consists of SMEs across ACFO-FO/COD and ACFO-FS. They are assigned Remedy tickets with moderate to high complexity that require more in-depth analysis.

3.3.2 Activities Performed

Tier 2 performs the following activities:

- Research and resolve Remedy tickets
- Submit Change Requests (CR)
- Communicate system/procedural changes to requester

3.3.2.1 Research and Resolve Remedy Tickets

Tier 2 assumes responsibility for tickets until they are resolved. Tier 2 researches and analyzes tickets to identify root causes and underlying problems, and recommends actions to resolve the issues. Tier 2 updates the status of tickets via Remedy as they are worked through.

Agency Advocates are also available to assist their assigned agencies by providing status updates, relaying information about available workarounds for issues, and following up on unresolved tickets. Refer to the List of Agency Advocates and Contact Center Representatives in the left-hand menu on the COD Web site, Contact Info tab, at http://cod.nfc.usda.gov/contact_info/contcod.html.

If a ticket requires attention from a different group within Tier 2, the assignee reassigns the ticket to Tier 1 for rerouting, and when possible, recommends the appropriate Tier 2/3 group, including the reason for rerouting.

If Tier 2 requires additional assistance or expertise to resolve an issue, they collaborate with Tier 3. Tier 2 remains responsible for resolution.

3.3.2.2 Submit Change Requests

The following actions are initiated by CRs:

- Security role updates
- Technical configuration changes
- Functional configuration changes
- System modifications

Tier 2 collaborates with relevant parties (including functional and technical SMEs from Tiers 2 and 3, requirements analysts, quality assurance testers, security, ACFO-FS technical staff and contractor support) to review and analyze the issue. If any of the above actions are deemed necessary, Tier 2 initiates a Corporate Systems Change Request form (AD 1168), which documents the justification for the requested change, and the accompanying FMMI Change Request Communications Summary (CR Checklist). The CR and checklist are submitted to the ACFO-FS Customer Service Operations Branch, through the respective COD branch chief. The CR goes through a formal review and approval process and, if approved, is prioritized based upon functionality and availability of resources.

Tier 2 monitors the CR as it goes through the approval and implementation cycle.

3.3.2.3 Communicate system/procedural changes to requester

Tier 2 keeps in communication with the requester to keep the requester apprised of status changes throughout the CR process, from the initial submission through implementation.

3.4 Tier 3

3.4.1 Description

ACFO-FS and contractor support provide Tier 3 assistance. Issues that require code or configuration changes, or in-depth SAP knowledge are escalated to Tier 3.

3.4.2 Activities Performed

Tier 3 performs the following activities:

- Assists Tier 2 in resolving Remedy tickets
- Assesses CR disposition, develops requirements, develops code, tests, and implements CRs
- Communicate FMMI system changes or scheduled maintenance to agency communication leads

3.4.2.1 Assist Tier 2 in resolving Remedy tickets

Tier 3 supports Tier 2 in resolving tickets by providing more complex investigation and analysis of data, configurations, and functional designs of FMMI. Tier 3 works collaboratively with their Tier 2 counterparts to resolve issues and resolve tickets.

3.4.2.2 Assesses CR disposition, develop requirements, develop code, test, and implement CRs

Tier 3 is responsible for ensuring that CRs that have gone through the appropriate approval chain are implemented. Once modifications to FMMI are coded, Tier 3 conducts unit and system testing to verify that functionality meets CR requirements. Next, the ACFO-FS Quality Assurance team is responsible for testing and approving the code and conducting user acceptance testing before it is implemented in the live environment.

3.4.2.3 Communicate FMMI system changes or scheduled maintenance to agency communication leads

If applicable when a CR is moved into production, Tier 3 requests CSB to issue a FMMI Communication (FMMI Com). FMMI Com is an e-mail issued to all key stakeholders, notifying them of the specific FMMI system change, the affected user roles, and the impact on users. As appropriate, system changes communicated via FMMI Com are posted on the FMMI Web site (http://info.fmmi.usda.gov/) for future reference. The same process is followed to communicate system availability due to scheduled maintenance.

Appendix: Information for Remedy Ticket Request

The following is a guide for what types of information should be included in a Remedy ticket request.

	Information to Include in Remedy Ticket Request	
	Requested Information	**Examples**
User Information	Ticket Requester's primary contact information	Name Agency Phone Number Email NFC ID
Transaction User is Attempting	General description of what process/transaction the user attempted.	**Attempt:** The user was trying to create a "sales order with an advance" otherwise known as a ROWA so that our agency can enter into a reimbursable agreement with a non-Federal USDA customer and provide them with a service. **Issue:** The user needs instructions to create a sales order with an advance since they only know how to create one without an advance.
	What process tab was the user in?	Accounts Receivable
	What is the role used within the tab?	Sales Order Processor
	What is the business activity link that the user attempted?	Manage Sales Order
	What was the user's expected outcome if the issue had not occurred?	Expected to enter required fields to access form for Reimbursable Order WITH an advance.
Steps User Has Taken	What steps did the user take before encountering the issue?	NA
	If applicable, what values did the user enter when performing the activity/action?	**Entered the following fields:** ▪ Order Type: RONA ▪ Sales Organization: CF00 ▪ Distribution Channel: AG ▪ Division: AG Selected the Sales Link and saw that Reimb – Without Advance showed up.

	Information to Include in Remedy Ticket Request	
	Requested Information	**Examples**
	If applicable, provide screenshot(s) of the error message.	Note: To capture a screenshot, double click error message at the bottom of the screen. A pop-up window will display the error message. Print screen and attach to Word document before attaching to Remedy ticket request.
	If applicable, what steps has the user attempted to resolve this issue?	Contacted FA for assistance.
Optional	Any associated document/identification number(s), as reference, to assist in researching the issue?	NA