



**Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation  
Customer Service Annual Report  
FY 2018**

## Agency Contacts:

Summar Goodman

Director of Constituent Services

410-230-6069

[summar.goodman@maryland.gov](mailto:summar.goodman@maryland.gov)

Kimberly M. Burns

Chief of Staff

410-230-6016

[kimberly.burns@maryland.gov](mailto:kimberly.burns@maryland.gov)

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## Introduction

The Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (Maryland Department of Labor) is focused on working for the people and businesses of Maryland by providing exemplary customer service at all times. The agency's overarching goal is to leave every customer with a positive impression. Over the last three and a half years under the leadership of Secretary Kelly M. Schulz, the Maryland Department of Labor has led the charge to change the perceived "anti-business attitude" often associated with state government. Secretary Schulz confronted this challenge by immediately instituting an agency-wide customer service training program designed to improve local government service delivery. The program became so successful that it was offered to employees at other state agencies and served a model for the all customer training programs administered at state agencies.

Governor Hogan's affirmation that we are changing Maryland for the better has been the fuel to drive the Secretary's mission to make constituent care a focus for the Maryland Department of Labor. This required a shift within the organizational culture. The first step was ensuring that employees recognized that they are essential to the overall mission of the agency. Embracing the idea that they were ambassadors for the agency and the state fostered the shift that empowered employees to work toward the goal of providing better customer care.

## FY18 Highlights

During FY18, the Maryland Department of Labor had a stellar year for customer service with an approval rating of 86%. The agency saw positive results from the survey reports week to week and constituents even began naming individual employees who had provided exemplary service. Informing employees about the overall customer service rating motivated them to strive for even better results. The change was reflected in the survey answers which showed that the majority of constituents were very satisfied with the overall service, level of friendliness and courtesy, timeliness and responsiveness,

accuracy and consistency, accessibility and convenience, and truthfulness and transparency.

In addition, the agency managed correspondence using the governor's correspondence system, Intranet Quorum (IQ). The Director of Constituent Services has worked diligently to ensure that the average number of cases in queue is 20 or below which is large feat considering the Maryland Department of Labor is among the agencies that receive the highest number of constituent cases daily. Each constituent case is addressed within the two week window established by the governor's office.

Lastly, with the passage of the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act in 2018, the Office of Small Business Regulatory Assistance (OSBRA) was formed. The unit works closely with the Division of Labor and Industry within the Maryland Department of Labor and is dedicated to assisting employers with compliance as well as facilitating discussions with employees regarding their rights under the new law. This new unit which functions within the Office of the Secretary has provided a coordinated outreach platform for other units and divisions within the agency. For instance, our office of Minority Business Outreach has worked hand and hand to reach out to customers proactively and together to talk about doing business with and in Maryland.



Senior leaders at the Maryland Department of Labor served lunch to the staff during "State Employee Appreciation Day."

This report will outline how the Maryland Department of Labor's Customer Service Plan enabled the agency to more effectively accomplish the mission, continually improve service delivery, and reward outstanding employees all while building trust among constituents, stakeholders, and customers.

## Recognition Given to Employees

As a part of the Department's Customer Service Initiative, the most vital piece was the recognition program which was implemented in three phases. The goal was to recognize employees for providing excellent customer service while simultaneously motivating staff members and boosting the morale within the agency.

**Phase I** focused on creating a special event to recognize all employees. On May 9, 2018, the Department celebrated the "State Employee Appreciation Day" by hosting a special celebration during the lunch to show appreciation for the Maryland Department of Labor staff. The event was coordinated by the Director of Constituent Services along with the Office of the Secretary staff and featured a 1980's theme to represent the agency's customer service rating ranking consistently in the 80% range. The staff was delighted to attend dressed in their best 1980's attire including the big hair, neon colors and large shoulder pads reminiscent of the era. Special highlights from the event featured an awards ceremony hosted by Secretary Kelly M. Schulz and a special appearance by Poe, the official mascot of the Baltimore Ravens, who greeted staff upon arrival. The senior leadership team led by example and provided excellent customer service to the staff as they served lunch consisting of hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, soda and popcorn. The staff enjoyed taking pictures with Poe and Secretary Schulz while also connecting with colleagues from various departments. Another aspect of the event included a drawing for door prizes and prizes for participation in organized games. The prizes were donated by each division. The name of every employee of the Maryland Department of Labor was placed inside a prize drum and entered into a random drawing. As the secretary and deputy secretary drew the names, the winners claimed their prizes as their colleagues cheered them on. Prizes included gift baskets created by the Office of the Secretary staff.



Poe, the official Mascot of the Baltimore Ravens walked the red carpet during Employee Appreciation Day on May 9, 2018.

Winners did not need to be present, and prizes were mailed to those not in attendance. The event ended with an 80's costume contest.

**Phase II** focused on recognizing the employees who constituents mentioned by name on the customer service surveys. The Director of Constituent Services maintained a file of surveys which highlighted the great work of specific employees throughout the fiscal year. There were 29 employees from various divisions mentioned. Each employee was awarded a Secretary's Citation. Secretary Schulz called each person up to walk the red carpet and presented them with an award. The secretary spoke from a podium with a backdrop covered in gold stars. Each star had the name of one the employees recognized for excellent customer service.



Several Maryland Department of Labor employees were recognized for providing excellent customer service. Each employee was recommended by a constituent who they helped.

Among that group, there were two special citations presented. One was given to Ms. Leigh Hoyt of the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing for receiving the most mentions by constituents. Some of the constituents describe Leigh as being very helpful, courteous, and always willing to go above and beyond the call of duty.



Left to right: Officer George Anderson stands next to Jack McNelly, the gentleman who's life he saved and Secretary Kelly M. Schulz

The second was awarded to Officer George Anderson with the Maryland Department of Labor's Police Department. Officer Anderson noticed a robbery in progress in a nearby neighborhood and interrupted by driving his police vehicle on to the scene. Officer Anderson discovered that the victim had been stabbed and called for help. He stayed with the victim until

the paramedics arrived. The victim's name is Jack McNelly and in addition to receiving this special acknowledgement, the Office of Small Business and Regulatory Assistance reached out to Mr. McNelly and invited him to attend the Employee Appreciation Day ceremony. He was more than happy to have the opportunity to thank Officer Anderson in person and took a picture with him and Secretary Schulz.



Lastly, Olivia "Libby" Deyette, an employee of the Division of Unemployment Insurance in Southern Maryland, (*pictured to the left with Secretary Kelly M. Schulz, Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford, and Governor Larry Hogan*), was recognized by the Governor for excellent customer service at the cabinet meeting in March of 2018. She was nominated by the Assistant

Secretary of Unemployment Insurance Dayne Freeman and Secretary Kelly M. Schulz.



**Phase III** included the continuation of the weekly employee electronic publication, “*OneDLLR ENews: Making Change*.” The newsletter highlights employee accomplishments, updates from the secretary, new projects and new hires. The newsletter promotes awareness of all of the work accomplished throughout the agency and helps to connect employees.

Secretary Kelly Schulz spearheaded the development of the e-newsletter which has afforded the agency the opportunity to provide and disseminate official information throughout the agency and state on positive and important employee practices and division activities. The e-newsletter is developed on a weekly basis and released every Monday by the Director of Communications. This product of collaborative team effort featuring contributions from the Office of the Secretary, the Office of the Commissioner of Financial Regulation, Maryland Occupational Safety and Health, Division of Unemployment Insurance, Division of Labor and Industry, Office of Information Technology, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, Office of Administration, Office of Fair Practices, and the Governor's Workforce Development Board.

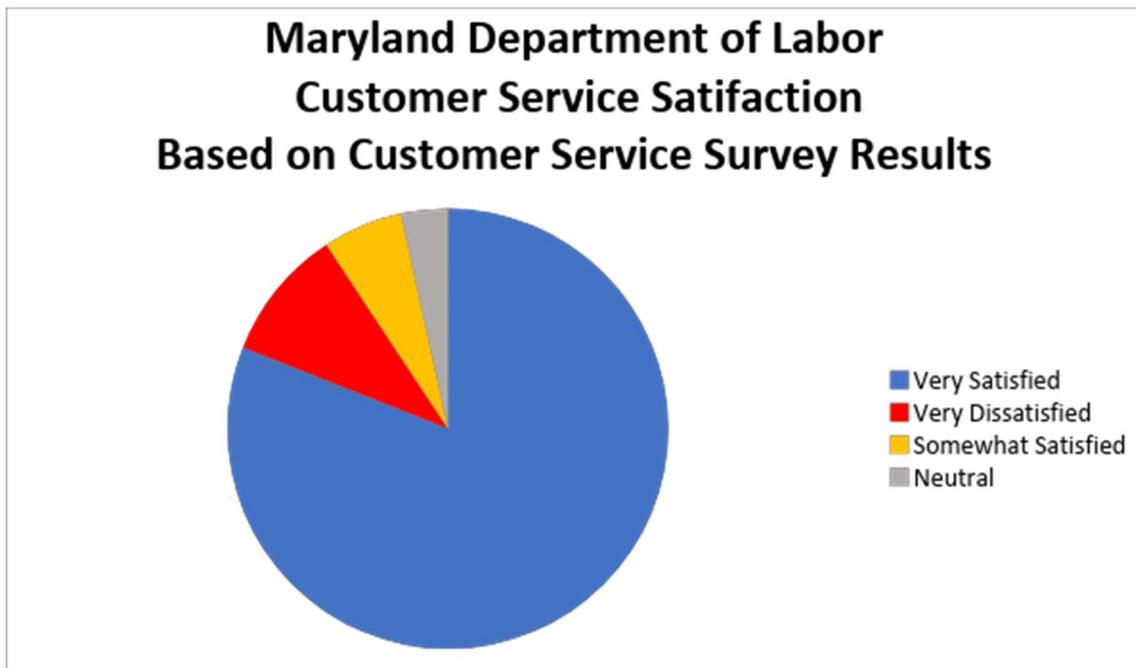
## Leadership Analysis of FY18 and Summary of FY19 Approach

The Maryland Department of Labor is committed to safeguarding and protecting Marylanders. The department is proud to support the economic stability of the state by providing businesses, the workforce and the consuming public with high quality customer-focused regulatory, employment and training services. To do this effectively, the agency is laser focused on providing exemplary customer service to all constituents.

- The Maryland Department of Labor will continue the approach of “leading by example” that was exercised in FY18. The leadership team serves lunch to the staff each year during “Employee Appreciation Day” and supervisors in each division understands the importance of providing good customer service to their staff, which in turn translates to the staff providing better service to constituents.
- The customer service promise is prominently displayed through all of the Maryland Department of Labor’s offices and buildings to instill the idea that customer service is the agency’s highest priority.
- The agency will continue to explore moving toward more innovative, digital solutions to provide customer service to constituents via the website, social media and phone applications.
- The agency will continue to reinforce and reward positive individual performance among employees. In FY18, there were 29 employees recognized. The agency hopes to increase that number in the next fiscal year.
- The e-newsletter is a vehicle to communicate to all employees and allows the secretary to ensure that all staff is aware of the most up-to-date information so that the staff can provide consistent messaging.

## Detailed FY18 Results and FY19 Plans

### Customer Service Survey Results



- The Maryland Department of Labor maintained an overall score of 86% percent on all areas and strives to continually improve that number as well as improve the image of the agency among the citizens of Maryland.
- The agency received a total of 3,562 survey responses from customers from January 2017 to present.
- Of that number, there were 3,094 constituents who reported that they were overall satisfied with the service provided.
- There were 346 constituents who responded that they were dissatisfied and 122 who said they were neutral about the service.

## **Status of Customer Service Training**

All employees of the Maryland Department of Labor are required to receive customer service training. From June 2017 to June 2018, there were 525 employees who received customer service training. This number is a combination of new hires and also employees within the Division of Unemployment Insurance who have attended refresher training. The customer service training has progressed to demonstrating new methods to best handle internal and external customers. This training has been particularly effective as a part of the agency's onboarding process and outlines the secretary's expectations as well as sets that standard to make providing excellent customer service the highest priority.

## **Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution**

The department receives a large volume of inquiries coming into the agency through various channels, and the Maryland Department of Labor is among the agencies that receives the most inquiries through the governor's Intranet Quorum (IQ) correspondence system. The agency has consistently responded to inquiries from the IQ system within the designated two week period.

In addition, Facebook measures the agency's online rating as very responsive as constituents are using social media as a new means of communicating with staff and getting information in real time.

Lastly, all staff members are encouraged to return phone calls and emails within a 24 hour period to ensure that we are addressing each matter in a timely fashion.

## Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

In an effort to continually improve internal customer service processes, the agency has begun taking the following steps:

- Create a more efficient process to receive and respond to customer questions and issues by tracking calls received and noting when the call has been resolved.
- Reduce the time it takes to respond to customer inquiries received via mail by communicating through email and making phone calls when possible to deliver the message in a more timely manner.
- Reduce the time it takes to resolve issues and close cases by educating staff on frequently asked questions and making sure that reference information is available to quickly handle routine questions.
- Increase customer satisfaction by providing excellent customer service.
- Reduce customer complaints by providing excellent customer service.

## Best Practices

- The Division of Unemployment Insurance created the new PEAK (Positive Engagement and Knowledge) unit to assist constituents. This specialized unit which focuses on referrals which have risen to the level of the Offices of the Governor, Office of the Secretary, and state of Maryland legislative offices, i.e., senators, congresspersons, delegates, and other elected representatives of government.
- The Division of Financial Regulation within the Maryland Department of Labor partnered with the Maryland Department of Aging, Maryland Bankers Association, and MD|DC Credit Union Association to combat elder financial

abuse through a campaign of written materials and outreach events that provide clear information to consumers and bring greater attention to the signs of elder financial abuse and prevention.

- Under the leadership and direction of Governor Larry Hogan, the Maryland Department of Labor quickly turned around guidance documentation on the Maryland Healthy Working Families Act and the new Office of Small Business and Regulatory Assistance to assist employers with their questions and compliance. This included frequently asked questions, model policies, and employer notices.
- Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) within the Division of Labor and Industry and the Maryland Department of Labor created the Strategic Partnership for Excellence in Construction Safety (SPECS) program, a pilot safety program with Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC). SPECS promotes a working relationship that creates trust and respect for the mutual roles of each organization in the construction safety process and recognizes contractors that demonstrate excellence in safety performance and promote construction safety throughout the industry. The goal of this program is to expand to all businesses.
- The Apprenticeship Maryland Program, DLLR's youth apprenticeship program, successfully completed its pilot period and was expanded statewide – allowing staff the ability to work with more students to expand opportunities across Maryland.
- The department launched the Maryland Apprenticeship Ambassador Program to raise awareness about registered apprenticeships. Ambassadors are volunteers that cultivate and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders including students, parents, educators, business owners, elected officials, trade associations, and employment bodies.

- The electronic newsletter “One DLLR” goes out weekly to an average of 1,764 recipients across the Maryland Department of Labor.

## Plans for Improvement

- Plans to improve response timeliness for the Maryland Department of Labor include:
  - The Division of Unemployment Insurance within the Maryland Department of Labor will move into its next phase of its modernization project which will include testing of new systems, the development of a customer focus group, interfacing with employers to determine their needs for a new system and training employees.
  - The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing is working to modernize its electronic licensing systems that licenses and renews the licenses of more than 250,000 professionals and businesses in the State of Maryland in 23 non-medical occupations and professions.
  - The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning will continue to push the Maryland Workforce Exchange application currently available for both iPhone and android phones to better assist constituents with their job search.
  - The Department of Labor will search for ways to better serve customers by determining what services currently offered should be available via phone applications to improve accessibility.

- The Department of Labor will continue to streamline its website to ensure that it is user friendly and that constituents may have more availability to information.
- The Department of Labor will discover new ways to utilize the social media platforms to provide more information to constituents in real time.

## **Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives**

- Improving the customer experience from multiple perspectives includes educating the public about the services currently available online and driving traffic to the website. This goal is being accomplished through the department's communications office which has issued 52 press releases to date covering the agency's progress around the state. The press releases may be found on the department's website under press room.
- Utilizing the social media pages as an informational channel to provide updates on services and drive traffic to the website for customer service concerns by communicating to more than 6,000 people on Facebook and nearly 5,000 on Twitter.
- The Division of Labor and Industry has ramped up its outreach activities to ensure that all workers and employers are educated on safety issues. To date, the division has held 176 events in Calendar year 2018 so far across the state with more than 3,500 attendees.
- The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing conducts a survey of a random sample of those who apply for or renew licenses in an effort to improve the customer experience. During FY18, the division received an average 8.9 rating on a scale of 1-10. This is an increase from 8.8 in FY17 and 8.5 in FY16.

- The Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning has made several programmatic improvements to the Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN) program, an industry-led workforce development initiative that cultivates job skills in unemployed and underemployed workers that businesses need to compete. Under Governor Hogan's leadership, funding for the EARN program has doubled, with targeted investments to increase Cyber/IT and Green Jobs for Marylanders. Some of the notable achievements which positively affect the customer experience include:
  - The EARN Maryland program was named one of the Top 25 programs in the 2018 Innovations in American Government Award competition by The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, a leading research center at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.
  - More than 950 employers have participated in the EARN program, an increase of 324% since 2015.
  - As of April 2018, there are 2,550 unemployed and underemployed participants have obtained employment, an increase of 2,239%.
  - As of December 31, 2014, there were 190 incumbent workers who had received training. Conversely, in April 2018, there were 4,723 incumbent workers have received training, an increase of 2,385%.
- The American Job Centers which operates under the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning, has provided 136,876 Marylanders with a full range of employment services such as career exploration assistance, referrals to training programs, placement services, résumé preparation assistance, and workshops to enhance job seeking skills and work readiness.

## Making Agency Services Available Online

- The Division of Unemployment Insurance is progressing with its modernization project, and the overall goal is to allow claimants and employers the ability to access more services online. Modernization of this system is expected to be completed in the spring of 2019.
- Constituents also have an open channel of communication through social media where they are able to receive information via direct messages in real time.
- Marylanders can access job search and self-service options utilizing the Maryland Workforce Exchange. They can instantly view any job posted to the web directly on their mobile phone or tablet by simply searching for “MWEJOBS” in Apple iTunes or Google Play app store.
- The American Job Centers also offers computers for Marylanders to use to access services online if they do not have computer access at home.

## Processing Times for Customer Transactions

- The Maryland Department of Labor processes several types of customer transactions each day – from licenses and license renewals to unemployment claims. Because of the varied number of service transactions, the department is currently examining ways to broadening the range of services offered online in efforts to offer more constituents the self-serve experience to decrease processing times.
- The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing maintains one call center that receives phone calls from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. There are four people who are permanently assigned to the call center which receives more than 100,000 calls per year. To reduce processing times,

additional employees are able and available to answer the phones when all agents are busy with other callers.

- The Division of Unemployment Insurance (DUI) operates four UI call centers statewide which are called Claim Centers. The Claim Centers do not take UI claims in-person and receive upward of 500,000 calls per year. To reduce processing times, constituents are instructed that all claims for unemployment insurance benefits may be filed online at [www.md.unemployment.com](http://www.md.unemployment.com) 24 hours a day, seven days a week or by telephone through a Maryland UI Claim Center, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. EST, excluding state holidays. The reduced hours allow time for staff to research special cases and process inboard calls faster.
- DUI also operates an automated Claimant Information Service voice-response (IVR) telephone system available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Callers can select different options by phone, such as information on how to file for unemployment insurance, filing weekly claim certifications to request payment (can also be done online), obtaining payment (can also be done online), overpayment, penalties, or appeals information, requesting an address change, including the 1099-G tax form and other relevant claimant information which reduces call hold times to speak to an agent.
- The agency's innovative movement to testing and development of more online services and phone applications will reduce processing times tremendously.

## **Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands**

- The Division of Unemployment Insurance is in its second year of operating with modified hours for the Claim Center. The centers take calls from Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. excluding state holidays to allow claim center specialists the ability to provide individual, uninterrupted service to complex cases during the afternoon hours of 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. According to management feedback, these afforded staff the opportunity to return calls to claimants and focus on individual cases in the afternoon.

## **Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience**

- The agency's maintains a Facebook page as well as a Twitter account, and both have always been a trusted source for information on job fairs, workshops, current employment initiatives and job news. In addition, the social media pages are vehicles for constituents to have direct links to communicating with the agency and are a valued form of customer service delivery. Facebook rates the responsiveness of business pages, and the agency currently has a rating of being "very responsive" to inquiries.
- The number of likes on the Maryland Department of Labor's Facebook page has risen from 4,921 on June 30, 2017 to 6,024 likes on June 30, 2018. That's an increase of 22.4% or 1,103 new likes over the year.
- The number of Twitter followers increased over-the-year from 3,784 on June 30, 2017 to a total of 4,587 followers on June 30, 2018-- a gain of 803 new followers and an increase of 21.2%.

## Conclusion

Under the leadership of Governor Hogan and Secretary Schulz, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation has experienced a culture shift to a more responsive and transparent organization. From the professionals we license (plumbers, electricians, engineers, HVAC professional and others) to the services we provide to help others; we touch the lives of Marylanders every day and sometimes at the most vulnerable times in their lives. We are especially proud to have been in the forefront of advancing the Governor's customer service pledge, and are firmly committed to continuing to develop that standard of excellence and the quality of service that Marylanders receive from the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation. We ARE indeed changing Maryland for the better at the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation every day.



KELLY M. SCHULZ, SECRETARY

INTERNET: [www.dllr.maryland.gov](http://www.dllr.maryland.gov)

PHONE: 410-230-6020

FACEBOOK: [DLLR.MARYLAND](https://www.facebook.com/DLLR.MARYLAND)

TWITTER: [@MD\\_DLLR](https://twitter.com/MD_DLLR)