



# Customer Experience Philosophy (DRAFT)

## Introduction

The City of Arvada is committed to consistently providing the highest quality of customer service to all our customers. To achieve that goal, the customer service team has developed this Customer Experience Philosophy, which provides the foundation of principles and standards that help every team member connect opportunities to provide service to our core values and our mission to deliver superior services to enhance the lives of everyone in our community. Through related service level agreements (SLAs), which are included in the appendix, the team is able to target specific aspects of our delivery, help ensure alignment with our principles and provide metrics to help determine success and opportunities for training and improvement.

An interdepartmental team of City employees developed the philosophy based on research, personal expertise and experience, and input from the larger organization and community. The document includes our vision for excellent customer service, our guiding principles, how this work aligns with strategic and organizational objectives, our plans for integrating the voice of the customer in this work, and discussion of implementation and training.

An appendix includes information and links to documents related to the team's ongoing work to develop the SLAs for several venues for customer service within the organization, as well as training and ongoing community engagement related to customer experience.

As such, the team anticipates this document continuing to evolve as we continue on a path of continual customer service improvement.

## Strategic and Organizational Alignment

The 2020-25 City Council Strategic Plan identifies Organizational and Service Effectiveness as a strategic priority along with principles and strategic results that call for transparency, accountability, access to City services and information and a general commitment to building community trust in and satisfaction with the City.

In addition to the Organizational and Service Effectiveness strategic priority, the City's other priority areas include related principles, strategic results and milestones that support and are supported by customer experience.

Furthermore, providing customer service that reflects our organizational Vision, Mission and Values instills trust in our customers. When our actions align with our assertions, we establish credibility with and instill confidence in our customers.

- **Vision: We Dream Big and Deliver.** *Excellent customer service is directly tied to successful delivery.*
- **Mission: We are dedicated to delivering superior services to enhance the lives of everyone in our community.** *“Delivering superior services” includes delivering superior CUSTOMER service.*
- **Values:**
  - **Innovation - We excel in creativity, flexibility and the use of best practices while valuing diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.** *Excellent customer service often requires innovative approaches.*
  - **Passion - We are a high performing, inclusive team inspiring each other to pursue excellence.** *We demonstrate passion when we strive to provide excellent customer service.*
  - **Opportunity - We value our diversity, embrace possibilities, face challenges, persevere and take action to deliver quality results.** *Being committed to providing excellent customer EMBRACES opportunities.*

## A Vision for an Excellent Customer Experience

The diverse and dedicated citywide team of employees developed a set of objectives that comprise a vision for what excellent customer service looks like and must achieve. A core concept is that we are all customer service team members, and that we receive and provide customer service to each other and our community on a daily basis. Specifically, our approach must:

- Be relevant to anyone who engages with the City, from team members to customers.
- Shape the spirit of all customer service policies and interactions.
- Assist in understanding the needs of our diverse customers.
- Demonstrate the core values of the City.
- Ensure all team members and customers understand our customer service expectations, and that we meet those expectations through the use of reporting, performance measures and performance evaluations.

## Guiding Principles

A set of guiding principles provides our teams with a clear framework to work within to quickly find solutions--ones that align with our customer experience philosophy. Knowing which details are important to focus on and how best to proceed promotes efficiency and a more predictable and favorable outcome. Clearly defining the customer service expectations through a number of

key principles will shape our customer service culture. The team identified the following five principles as critical characteristics of successful customer service:

- **Respectful:** interactions that always include the humble appreciation of other people's ideas and points of view and the affirmation that you understand, as conveyed with kindness and empathy.
- **Reliable:** approaches that are consistently prompt, responsible, efficient, accurate and thorough.
- **Responsive:** approaches that are prompt, efficient and knowledgeable and meet the customer's needs and expectations.
- **Relevant:** providing the right information at the right time, while maintaining ongoing relationships with customers, both through timely updates in addressing a problem or inquiry, and through continual outreach.
- **Convenient:** direct and easy access to useful information and effective solutions.

In addition to identifying the five guiding principles and their definitions, the team established the behaviors that support the principles. **See Appendix A to view the complete table of principles, definitions and behaviors.**

## Mapping the Customer Experience and Service Level Agreements

From the minute our customers engage with us, either through direct contact, in-person and on the phone, or indirectly through email, on our website or social networking platforms, it is essential they have a consistent experience. Mapping out their experience at each touchpoint along the way will enable us to achieve that goal.

We have identified six touchpoints or venues for customer service, including:

- In-person (in a facility or in the field) - Under non-pandemic circumstances, all employees regularly provide customer service to other team members or members of the public through in-person interaction.
- Phone - Most employees provide customer service to other team members or members of the public using City landline telephone service or mobile devices.
- Email - Most employees provide customer service to other team members or members of the public using the City's Google-powered email and calendar software.
- Ask Arvada - The City's online customer relationship management (CRM) tool helps team members answer community questions and calls for service. The City is working diligently to enhance the communities experience with a CRM platform and as a result is pursuing an update to the current CRM platform.

- Social media - Social media is an external-facing broadcast media. Residents, business owners, City Council, City team members, visitors and community organizations follow The City of Arvada's social media channels to obtain timely information about news, programs and services.
- The City's websites, including Arvada.org - The City's websites provide one-way communication as well as the ability to access other forms of engagement and more interactive services and information. Providing clarity around this access improves customer experience.

The team is in the process of analyzing these venues to propose recommended models for managing customer service (centralized vs. decentralized) at each touch point, create more streamlined and standardized processes, develop performance measures, and contribute to the development of a robust knowledge base.

This mapping of the customer experience along six primary methods of delivery has helped the team develop service level agreements (SLAs) for each venue. Still a work in progress, the SLAs are available in Appendix C.

## Public Involvement and the Voice of the Customer

In order to include our customers in forming our customer experience philosophy, it was critical to understand their expectations, needs, desires and concerns. As part of our community engagement process, we invited the community to participate in a customer service survey. **See Appendix B to view the survey questions and the survey report.** As we continue to work through and improve this process, it is crucial to continue to listen to our customers. This information will be gathered externally through Speak Up Arvada, our community engagement platform; the ArvadaNews, our bi-weekly electronic newsletter; Nextdoor, a community-targeted social media platform; Channel 8 - Local access TV for Comcast & TDS subscribers; and internally through Google forms. **See Appendix C to view the complete table of methods and tools.**

The team anticipates continuing community involvement in order to gather more regular feedback on performance and engage the public in understanding expectations.

## Training and Implementation

A trained team is an effective team. We are committed to providing rigorous customer service training for all team members.

**Training:** Training will be available to all City team members to promote the importance of our customer experience philosophy and ensure it becomes a fundamental element of our organization, valued by all. This training will include all new employees during the onboarding process, in addition to refresher training for current employees through Arvada University.

**Implementation:** In addition to training, our teams need the resources to implement our policies, which reflect our customer experience philosophy. Our customer experience philosophy will ensure all team members understand the importance of top quality customer service. When implemented, our customer experience philosophy will ensure we consistently deliver excellent customer service that routinely exceeds customers' expectations.

## Measurement through Performance Management

The successful implementation and growth of a customer experience philosophy is dependent on our ability to track our performance and understand whether changes in approach are improving our customers' perceptions of the service they receive. What follows are several methods for tracking and measuring the performance of our customer service philosophy.

**Public Feedback** - The team will continue to involve the community in the development and growth of the customer experience philosophy and related service level agreements (SLA). The team anticipates this happening in several ways:

- Community Survey results
- SLA-level surveys
- Public meetings and focus groups

**Internal Feedback** - Most external information gathering will also have an internal component of surveys and discussion distributed by the Weekly Briefs and through employee committees, department leadership and supervisory staff.

**ClearPoint Measures** - Ongoing evaluation of levels of customer satisfaction and process data will inform the development of operational and strategic performance measures to be tracked within the ClearPoint system.

**Performance Management Process** - The vision and principles of our customer experience philosophy will be part of every employee's annual performance review and assessed uniformly in Trakstar, our performance management system. During reviews, supervisors will discuss and address problems team members have encountered with implementing the customer experience philosophy to determine opportunities for improvement and to outline future goals to meet citywide expectations.

## Appendix

NOTE: Much of the appendix contains working documents that will be linked here once finalized.

# Appendix A: Notes on Guiding Principles, Definitions and Behaviors

## Key Team Insights

- “We know we have it in our culture when we live it, touch it, train it, etc”
- “Building some expectations around customer service to support consistency of experience across different venues.”
- “Our opportunity to shine.”
- “How we exceed their expectations.”
- “Demonstrating dedication.”
- “They should be able to leave with the experience of ‘I’m glad I live here’.”
- “We not only share our passion, but grow other people’s passion.”
- “Two-way feedback.”
- “We are on the team.”
- “We need to anticipate the needs.”
- “Stay away from the waiting mode.”
- “Get to a place where it is all of our responsibility.”
- “Gets to the one team perspective that we are all working together to achieve.”.

## Principles Table Developed by the Team

Principle	Definition	Behaviors
Respectful	Respectful customer service is the humble appreciation of other people’s ideas and points of view and the affirmation that you understand, as conveyed with kindness and empathy.	We provide respectful customer service when we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate an authentic, friendly, calm and patient demeanor.</li> <li>• Convey honesty and compassion when a customer’s needs cannot be optimally met.</li> <li>• Acknowledge when answers are not readily available or a previous answer was incorrect.</li> <li>• Respond with kindness and patience, never dismissive or defensive.</li> <li>• Are human and personable, never scripted.</li> </ul>
Reliable	Reliable customer service is consistently prompt, responsible, efficient, accurate and thorough.	We provide reliable customer service when we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate timely, efficient and active participation with the customer.</li> <li>• Use repeated, predictable and documented processes to find solutions.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Follow through on unresolved issues or questions.</li> <li>● Use performance management to measure our progress and make changes based on data analysis.</li> </ul>
Responsive	Responsive customer service is the prompt, efficient and knowledgeable approach to meeting the customer's needs and expectations. It requires active listening, the willingness to relentlessly seek answers and the ability to adjust your communication style to build trust with the customer.	<p>We provide responsive customer service when we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Listen attentively, with visual or verbal feedback, including follow-up questions.</li> <li>● Convey the process and solution steps.</li> <li>● Strive to deliver accurate and timely information and solutions.</li> </ul>
Relevant	Our customer service is relevant when we maintain an ongoing relationship with the customer, both through timely updates in addressing a problem or inquiry, and through continual outreach. By listening and conveying an understanding of customers' needs, we provide customized solutions that meaningfully address the original problem or inquiry and anticipate potential future issues, complications and opportunities.	<p>We provide relevant customer service when we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strive to understand both the request and the underlying need.</li> <li>● Anticipate related needs, information and solutions.</li> <li>● Communicate processes and provide updates.</li> <li>● Empower customers to find solutions themselves.</li> <li>● Using the right tone in responses.</li> <li>● Acknowledge when we make mistakes.</li> <li>● Prioritize human interaction.</li> <li>● Provide follow-up contact information, opportunities for feedback.</li> <li>● "Go above and beyond" to exceed customer expectations for good service.</li> </ul>
Convenient	Customer service is convenient when we provide direct access to useful information and effective solutions. By minimizing process steps, offering multiple ways to access services and meeting our customers where they are, we are able to serve more customers and a more diverse set of customers, while providing solutions that increase satisfaction with the City.	<p>We provide convenient customer service when our:</p> <p>Systems and tools are readily available, accessible, intuitive and easy to use for everyone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Processes achieve success as efficiently as possible with minimal steps and transfers to different team members.</li> <li>● Information and instructions for accessing service are easy to understand for people of all abilities and accessible across a variety of channels and formats.</li> <li>● Interactions with customers are cooperative and solutions-oriented.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Communications and Engagement Methods and Notes

Table of Methods and Tools to Gather the Voice of the Customer

Communication Platform	Reach	Communication Platform	Reach
Speak Up Arvada - Dedicated online platform where participants can learn, engage and give honest feedback when and where it's convenient for them. Allows the City to pose questions and topics to the community.	2,597 registered users 29,247 site visits to date Surveys (draft content below) Quick polls	Arvada.org - The main website for the City providing comprehensive information on City services and resources.	38,000 monthly users (avg)
ArvadaNews - Electronic newsletter sent to community members via email. Provides information and links to engagement opportunities.	4,480 subscribers	Arvada Report - Printed reported mailed to every Arvada mailing address (residents & businesses) on a quarterly basis. Provides links to engagement opportunities.	44,427 households 2,274 bricks & mortar businesses 1,044 home businesses
Nextdoor - Electronic communications platform that connects neighbors with each other.	49,700 followers	Citywide Facebook & Twitter - Electronic networking sites the City uses to push information. Provides links to engagement opportunities.	Facebook followers: 11,632 Twitter followers: 10,400
Channel 8 - Local access TV for Comcast & TDS subscribers. Programming		Engagement Phone Hotline -Communication	

can also be found on the YouTube site.		connection for individuals who want to provide feedback via telephone.	
GOOGLE Form - Survey tool for internal customers.		ZOOM - Electronic meeting tool used to host meetings both internally and externally.	

Communications and Engagement Planning (in progress)

External Survey Report (in progress)

**Appendix C: Service Level Agreements (in progress)**

**Appendix D: Implementation and Training Plan (TBD)**