

## NYC Customer Service Newsletter

Volume 6 issue 4 - November 2014

### City Agencies Participate in Customer Service Week, October 6-10 to Recognize City Staff for Customer Service

#### *Department of Homeless Services*

On Friday, October 10th, Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Commissioner Taylor joined members of his executive and senior staff to celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of Customer Service representatives throughout the agency. The agency hosted a breakfast where 12 employees, who exemplify excellent customer service skills as they carry out their day-to-day duties, were honored.

Following the breakfast, Commissioner Taylor gave remarks and presented awards to the honorees. Recognizing that customer service representatives often play a role in how an agency is perceived—either on the phone or in person—the Commissioner thanked all of its customer service representatives for their hard work and sincerely congratulated this year's award recipients.



DHS Commissioner with award recipients (from left to right): Commissioner Taylor, Janine Woodley-Brown, Lily Nuamah, Lula Urquhart, and Calvin Pitter

## **NYC311**

This year NYC311's theme for Customer Service Week was "NYC311 Superheroes" because NYC311 believes that its Customer Service professionals are all superheroes in their own way, saving the City of New York one call at a time. There were various programs, recognition ceremonies and team-building activities throughout the week at the Contact Center. A milestone event was the formal readout of the 311 Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted by CFI Group Inc.



**NYC311's Team Yashram - front row, left to right: Shaunte Boyd (Captain America) Tanysha Donaldson (Green cape), Kateema Lake (holding 311 logo), and Dihanne William (holding the POW stick); back row, left to right: Yashram Balkaran, Daniel Dayal, Rafiat Kassim, and Amanda Henry**

## **NYC311 Outranks Private and Public Sector Call Centers in Customer Satisfaction Survey**

New Yorkers are tough to please, but they are happy with the service they receive from NYC311, according to a recent survey. The agency, which handles on average over 20 million calls per year, received an 84% satisfaction rating in an annual survey conducted by CFI Group Inc. NYC311 remains a model to Call Centers throughout the US, outscoring both public and private sector Call Centers. The public sector average rating was 63% and the private sector average was 69%. NYC311 Customer Service Representatives played a major role in the overall satisfaction score, receiving a 90% rating for

their performance.

"NYC311 has set the bar very high for customer service and this survey proves what the public already knows: 311 employees are dedicated to providing exceptional customer service to all New Yorkers," said 311 Communications Director Shaleem Thompson.

Since its inception in 2003, NYC311 has evolved into a multi-channel Contact Center. New Yorkers now have the option to get assistance from 311 via Mobile App, Social Media, Text, Chat and Online in addition to the Call Center.

Agency	Segment	CSI
NYC311	2014 CSI	84
CFI Contact Center Clients	Average	78
Private Sector	2013 CCSI	69
Public Sector	2013 GCCSI	63

**NYC311 Customer Contact Center outperforms both the private and public industries and the CFI Group Contact Center average**

### ***Department of Transportation***

On October 3, 2014, the Department of Transportation held its annual Customer Service Week Kick-Off Event, attended by representatives from throughout the agency. The event, which included an informative – but humorous – presentation by the Correspondence Unit Director, ushered in a week with more than a dozen or so smaller events to recognize employees who work so wonderfully in the agency’s Public Service Centers and other public-facing offices. DOT’s Customer Service Week continued to include events which brought all DOT employees together for fun and healthy activities (such as walks across the Brooklyn Bridge) and activities aimed at raising awareness and money for causes meaningful to DOT employees (such as bake sales for autism and breast cancer).

This year’s Kick-Off Event highlighted the one-year anniversary of the correspondence tracking system: ARTS (Agency Response Tracking System), and honored the development team from DOT’s Correspondence Unit and IT Division, who brought multiple smaller systems that did not communicate well into a single agency tracking system. With ARTS, the agency can now respond more effectively and intelligently to citizens and elected officials, and employ new ways to consider and track trends on transportation issues and concerns. This is critically important as DOT endeavors to meet Mayor de Blasio’s Vision Zero Action Plan – the inter-agency effort to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2024.



DOT also used the Kick-Off Event to recognize the Language Bank Volunteers upon whom the agency relied the most over the past year, and to honor the managers and staffs of those Public Service Centers who received “2014 Excellence Awards for Walk-In Center Management” from the Customer Observing and Reporting Experience Program (CORE), the facility inspection program run by the Mayor’s Office of Operations.



**DOT Customer Service staff with CORE Perfect Score managers: Desiree Maple, Customer Service; Lashawn Clemons, Highway Inspection and Quality Assurance, Queens Boulevard; Elsie Martell, Parking and Customer Service, Queens; Mitch Paluszek and Eleanor Di Palma, Customer Service; Norris Powell, Permit Office, Manhattan; Andrea Batiste, Permit Office, Staten Island**

Photos from DOT’s 2014 Customer Service Week can be viewed here:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nycstreets/sets/72157648401574916/>

### ***Department of Records and Information Services***

DORIS recognized agency staff with an invitation to a special program related to the new exhibition in the Visitor Center: *The Last County: The Bronx, 1914 – 2014*. All agency staff were excused from regular duties to attend the lecture entitled *Hostos Community College: Its Unique History and Place in the South Bronx Community Since 1968*. Presented by Archivist and Professor William Casari, the event took place on 7 October.



**DORIS staff attend lecture on Hostos Community College**

### ***Fire Department***

Customer Service Week coincided with National Fire Prevention Week, and the New York City Fire Department marked the week by holding events in all five boroughs from Sunday, October 5 through Saturday, October 11. Every event held throughout the week gave New Yorkers the opportunity to interact with the FDNY Fire Safety Education Unit and to learn invaluable, life-saving lessons in fire safety.

The Department celebrated National Fire Prevention Week with a morning of events, and the swearing in of more than 200 Junior Firefighters and EMTs from schools throughout the five boroughs on Tuesday, October 7 at Rockefeller Center. The Junior Firefighter and EMT's Pledge, an oath designed to remind children to practice fire safety and share it with their family and friends, was administered by Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro. Wearing red junior fire helmets and learning invaluable lessons in fire safety from members of the FDNY Fire Safety Education Unit, all children had the opportunity to interact with firefighters and fire apparatus, as well as to view demonstrations by FDNY members.





**New York City schoolchildren attending the FDNY's Fire Prevention Week event at Rockefeller Center**

### ***Department of Youth and Community Development***

With a mission to support New York City youth and their families by funding a wide range of programs and community-based organizations, the staff at the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) knows the importance of responsive and high-quality customer service.

Under the leadership of Commissioner Bill Chong, DYCD's Customer Service Week was the perfect opportunity to highlight the work of agency departments including Human Resources, Administrative Services, Information Technology, Programming and Research Development. It was also a time to acknowledge individuals for their courtesy and professionalism to providers and to their agency co-workers.

During the week, staff attended a series of fun, informative and celebratory events, and outstanding staff members were nominated by their colleagues for People's Choice Awards. The culmination of Customer Service Week was the breakfast and awards ceremony that recognized retirees, the 2014 Excellence in Customer Service recipient, and the winners of the People's Choice Awards.

This year, Customer Service Week was also reason to celebrate the highly successful rollout by the de Blasio administration and DYCD of School's Out New York City (SONYC), which nearly doubled the number of afterschool seats for middle school students throughout the City. With a team of dedicated employees that support the agency's vision, DYCD continues to provide support to its community partners and programs that address the needs of our City's youth, families and communities.



**The Comprehensive After-School System of NYC (COMPASS NYC) team that manages over 800 high-quality afterschool programs serving NYC youth enrolled in grades K-12 observe Customer Service Week**

### ***Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings***

The NYC Office of Administration Trials and Hearings (OATH) celebrated Customer Service Week with a recognition breakfast throughout the week at each of its branch offices. In addition, all customer service employees were provided with OATH-branded book bags, a small gift in appreciation of their daily commitment and hard work on behalf of the agency. The Commissioner also held an agency-wide Town Hall meeting during the week where customer service staff was recognized and thanked for their dedication.

## **Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Introduces Cross-Agency Language Access Training for 2015**

To help agencies implement their language access plans and provide the best possible service to New Yorkers with limited English proficiency, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will be hosting a training series starting January 2015. MOIA will share local and national best practices, review protocols, and provide a forum for expert advice and peer technical assistance.

### **Cross Agency Language Access Training 2015 Sessions**

## **Review of NYC Demographics, Language Access Mandates and How to Respond to 311 Language Access Complaints**

**January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015**

### **Audience: Senior Staff, General Counsels and Language Access Coordinators (LACs)**

MOIA will give an overview of NYC's immigrant populations, including demographics around individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEPs), and discuss how agencies can be more effective in serving these populations. MOIA will also review federal and local laws around Language Access, including mandates for City Agencies around Executive Order 120, Local Law 73 and Title V.

## **Emergency Management and Language Access**

**March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

### **Audience: Senior Staff and LACs**

During an emergency, OEM works to make certain that agencies involved in an emergency response provide a unified, accurate, and timely message to the public. Considering New York City's ethnic and linguistic diversity OEM makes every effort to make the information available and accessible to all New Yorkers. While the capability of OEM's partner agencies to provide language assistance may vary, we work in tandem with these agencies to support language access to their clients whenever they provide emergency services. During this session, OEM will offer an overview of the New York City's language access policy during emergencies.

## **Development of Language Access Plan**

**April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

### **Audience: Senior Staff and LACs**

MOIA will share best practices around Language Access Strategy and help agencies develop plans or improve on existing ones. Agency representatives will learn how to (1) Analyze demand for language assistance services and (2) Develop an effective plan to expand language assistance to their LEP clients.

## **Plain Language**

**May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

### **General Counsels, Directors of Public Affairs and Communications and LACs**

MOIA will discuss the importance of plain language in creating public information materials to allow information to be more easily understood by a broad range of New Yorkers with different literacy levels, including LEP persons. Agencies will receive a copy of Easy-to-Read, a manual that offers City agencies guidelines for clear and effective communication.

## **Recruiting, Hiring, and Training of Public Facing Staff**

### **Audience: Senior Staff, Directors of HR and LACs**

**July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

MOIA will introduce training methods and best practices to prepare frontline and managerial employees to meet the needs of LEP individuals, taking into account cultural and linguistic sensitivities. Continual development of capacity, training, and competency among all staff is integral to providing meaningful access to information and services for LEP individuals. This session will detail how agencies can: (1) Train all frontline and managerial staff, regardless of whether they are bilingual, on language access policies and procedures; (2) Recruit, hire, and train/certify multilingual staff and provide quality assurance; and (3) Create and use incentives for staff to provide translation and interpretation services on a volunteer basis.



**Components of Interpretation and Translation Services and How to Secure a Contract Audience:  
Senior Staff and LAC  
September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015**

MOIA will provide training on how to develop or enhance interpretation and translation services for LEP individuals. This session will help agencies ensure that their clients receive the best quality of interpretation and translation services. The appropriate and effective use of interpretation and translation services for LEP individuals requires careful planning, implementation, and evaluation by City agencies. This session will present the essential components of: (1) Assessing an agency's interpretation and/or translation needs; (2) Developing a plan for interpretation and translation services; (3) Ensuring the competence of interpretation and translation services; (4) The range of interpretation and translation services available; (5) Common pitfalls of interpretation and translation services; and (6) The case for citywide consolidation of interpretation and translation services.

**Ethnic Media  
November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Audience: Directors of Public Affairs and Communications and LACs**

MOIA will discuss the importance of engaging with ethnic media to maximize outreach and communicate agency key messages to LEP persons. Many LEPs rely on ethnic newspapers, television and radio as their primary means of obtaining information in their language. MOIA will also discuss translation of press releases and share current ethnic media contacts.

**Data Collection and Quality Assurance  
December 16, 2015**

**Audience: Senior Staff, Directors of Evaluation and Quality Control and LACs**

MOIA will review best practices for data collection and analysis around language access, as well as discuss the use of data throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of a language access program. Agency staff will learn: (1) How to use City resources and data to assess the language access needs of agency clients and (2) Receive an overview of an effective data collection and evaluation system for language access services. MOIA will also review how to institute internal quality assurance measures to help gauge the efficacy of language assistance services and identify any systemic gaps or challenges.

Please contact Azi Khalili, Executive Director of Language Access Initiatives, at [akhalili@moia.nyc.gov](mailto:akhalili@moia.nyc.gov) to sign up or for more information.

**Administration for Children's Services Helps Families Enroll in Universal Pre-K**

This Back to School season was particularly special as the city celebrated the historic expansion of pre-kindergarten to more than 51,000 four-year-olds. Along with the Department of Education (DOE) and others, ACS' Division of Early Care & Education (ECE) worked tirelessly to promote the Mayor's vision to ensure that pre-k seats in the agency's contracted *EarlyLearn NYC* centers were filled with children ready for a jumpstart on their education. Through its contracted community-based providers, ACS administers *EarlyLearn NYC*, which serves children from six weeks through four-years-old from low-income families. The innovative program helps children develop socially and intellectually during the most important years of their learning lives. By working the phones, conducting outreach on the ground

and across city agencies, and providing ongoing direct support to over 350 providers, ACS contributed over 12,600 pre-k seats.

To better assist families and make the enrollment process more accessible, ACS connected *EarlyLearn NYC* providers with the Department of Homeless Services to help families in the shelter system register their children for pre-k. ACS also worked closely with the DOE to link providers with parents on the DOE waiting list. Working closely with providers during the summer months, the ACS team routinely made phone calls to providers to follow-up on any barriers they were experiencing in the recruitment and enrollment process, including providing IT support, developing marketing strategies, and helping troubleshoot problems. The agency also set up a dedicated e-mail inbox to quickly respond to providers' concerns and included a list of Frequently Asked Questions and other critical information in its weekly provider bulletin.

For families involved in the ACS child welfare system, ACS launched a facilitated enrollment policy and staff from its child welfare program area worked with families of four-year-olds to complete UPK applications, which were routed directly to ECE's referral unit to help identify a vacancy, contact the provider, and reserve a seat.

To acknowledge all of this hard work to meet this monumental goal, ACS hosted a celebration on September 18<sup>th</sup> with departments from across the agency including Financial Services, Administration, Child Protection, Family Permanency Services, Preventive Services, Office of General Counsel (OGC) and Communications and Community Affairs (CCA).



**ECE staff receive a well-deserved round of applause from colleagues at the September 18<sup>th</sup> UPK celebration**

## Consumer Affairs is Reducing Fines for Small Businesses and Expanding Education and Outreach

In July 2014, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) announced a Small Business Relief Package with a sweeping set of nearly two dozen reforms as an effort to meet Mayor de Blasio's goal of reducing the number and cost of violations for small businesses and expand outreach and education.

Reforms include curable violations, warnings instead of violations for signage and reduced settlement amounts. In most cases, a DCA inspector will only issue one violation for each piece of information missing from a required sign or a receipt instead of one violation for each missing item. The policy on individual price posting has also changed, which will benefit bodegas, small groceries and general retail stores. For example, if a bodega has 10 cans of different kinds of soup and did not post the prices on any of the soup cans, they will receive no more than two violations for a maximum fine of \$500 whereas before they could have received 10 violations—one for each kind of soup that did not have a price and could face a fine of up to \$2,500.

The Cure Law, which went into effect June 30, 2014, means businesses can correct many first-time, signage violations within 30 days to avoid paying a fine. Going beyond the Cure Law, DCA will issue warnings instead of violations for additional violations not covered by the law such as not having the DCA license number on all printed materials (except for electronics stores) and not stating the reason for the range of price variations on a price list. DCA posted all 41 inspector checklists on its website so businesses know in advance what inspectors look for when they come into their businesses.

The Small Business Relief Package also includes language access, in which businesses can have inspections conducted in the language of their choice; an internal mapping tool to know which neighborhoods are being inspected; an inspector available at the licensing center five days a week; and a legal ombudsman to provide businesses with legal assistance.

DCA's reforms will not only assist the majority of law-abiding businesses who may make an honest mistake but are also tailored to balance enforcement and consumer protection. The Agency's commitment to consumer protection will be strengthened with a rigorous structure of oversight and penalties for businesses that flout rules, engage in predatory behavior, and/ or negatively affect the public's health or safety.

Visit [nyc.gov/consumers](http://nyc.gov/consumers) for more information about the reforms, resources and upcoming events.





**Commissioner Menin presents to the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce at the first in DCA's citywide Business Education Tour**

## **CONSUMER AFFAIRS: PROTECTING NEW YORKERS FROM PREDATORY BUSINESSES**

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) has committed to reducing fines for small businesses but remains vigilant in upholding its core mission of protecting New Yorkers. In particular, DCA is cracking down on businesses that are defrauding consumers, jeopardizing the public's health and safety, and those targeting immigrant and low-income communities. Two of DCA's most recent initiatives include used car dealerships and employment agencies.

In July, DCA announced an investigation into the City's used car dealerships, which the DCA licenses, seeking to discover whether they were selling unrepaired recalled cars. As part of the investigation, DCA issued subpoenas to 200 dealers forcing them to provide their policies on selling unrepaired recalled cars, to reveal how many such vehicles they have sold in the past year, and whether consumers were notified at the time of sale. DCA will work to ensure that any dealer found to have sold a recalled car that was not repaired at time of sale in the past year notify the customer, make any repairs that are necessary at the dealers' expense and stop selling unrepaired recalled used cars in the future.

DCA is also cracking down on predatory employment agencies in a more robust and comprehensive way than ever before. DCA has issued 115 subpoenas to employment agencies with a history of complaints, is conducting dozens of investigations and inspections and is working with advocates and elected officials in the State legislature to strengthen laws.

DCA encourages consumers to visit [nyc.gov/consumers](http://nyc.gov/consumers) for tips on buying a used car, using an employment agency and dozens of other topics and to file a complaint online or by calling 311 if they have a problem with a business transaction.

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