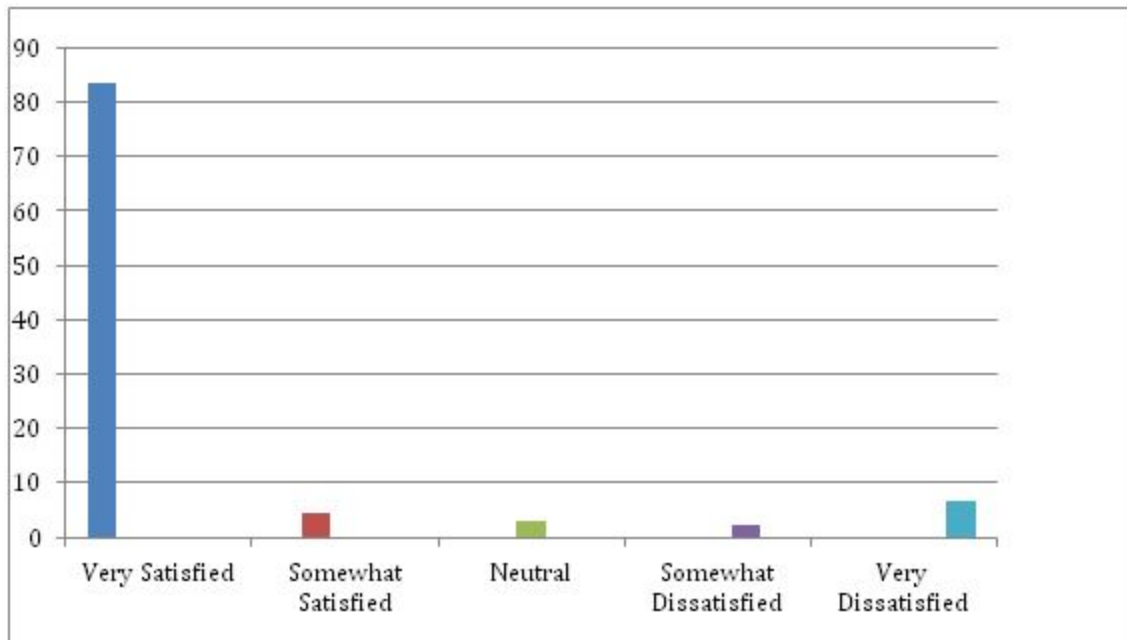




## Maryland Department of the Environment Customer Service FY19 Annual Report



### Survey Data: Overall MDE Customer Satisfaction Percentage



# MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report



This report was prepared by MDE Business Ombudsman Rob O’Conor, with contributions from many colleagues. Mr. O’Conor can be reached at [robert.oconor@maryland.gov](mailto:robert.oconor@maryland.gov).

## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>FY19 Highlights</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Recognition Given to Employees</b>                                 | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Leadership Analysis of FY19 and Summary of FY20 Approach</b>       | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Detailed FY19 Results and FY20 Plans</b>                           | <b>7</b>  |
| Land and Materials Administration: FY19 Results and FY20 Plans        | 7         |
| Air and Radiation Administration: FY19 Results                        | 11        |
| Air and Radiation Administration: FY20 Plans                          | 12        |
| Water and Science Administration: FY19 Results                        | 13        |
| Water and Science Administration: FY20 Plans                          | 20        |
| Operational Services Administration: FY19 Results                     | 21        |
| Operational Services Administration: FY20 Plans                       | 22        |
| <b>Customer Service Survey Results</b>                                | <b>23</b> |
| <b>Status of Customer Service Training</b>                            | <b>23</b> |
| <b>Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time to Resolution</b> | <b>24</b> |
| Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries                        | 24        |
| Best Practices  | 24        |
| Call Center Data  | 25        |
| <b>Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives</b>   | <b>27</b> |
| Making Agency Services Available Online                               | 27        |
| Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience                 | 28        |
| <b>Number and Type of Licenses and Permits Processed for FY19</b>     | <b>29</b> |

## **FY19 Highlights**

MDE issued over 20,000 permits, licenses, certifications, and approvals in FY19, and over 90% of them were issued within the applicable standard application turnaround times.

The Department handles over 4,000 Public Information Act requests annually, one of the largest numbers of any state agency. In FY19, MDE began a Lean continuous-improvement initiative designed to improve services to these important customers. Over 30 process improvement steps are complete or underway. Meanwhile, the percentage of PIA responses issued within 30 days remains at or near its highest level.

As detailed in this report, MDE has maintained its high customer-satisfaction rates as reported in survey responses, and has made important strides toward bringing services online.

## Recognition Given to Employees

MDE has several recognition programs that honor employees for going above and beyond their regular responsibilities to provide exceptional customer service, both to other employees and to external customers.

Employees recognized included the following:

**Customer Service:** John Anthony; John, a geologist in the Water Supply Program, provides superior customer service through positive communication to permit applicants (usually farmers) and their neighbors, whose water supply might be at risk from a farmer's water withdraw request. John always takes the time to ensure that applicants understand how requests for withdraws are evaluated and what information is needed to assess the request. Concerned citizens are treated with courtesy and all their questions are addressed thoughtfully and completely. John maintains open lines of communication with applicants and their neighbors and is a true bridge builder.

**Mentorship:** Elaine Dietz, OS/CO; Elaine served as Acting Program Administrator of the Water Quality Financing Administration (WQFA) after the director and program administrator retired within a month of one another. In addition to fulfilling her own role as the chief of the capital finance and planning division, Elaine took on many new duties to help WQFA serve its many customers. She remained in this acting role for 18 months, tackling new challenges daily while always remaining positive and willing to help, guide, and mentor her team despite her enormous workload. She was patient and positive, even in times of tremendous stress. Elaine led with poise, kindness and generosity, always finding time to help find answers to problems. Her attitude, encouragement, and patience led WQFA and its customers successfully through this transition period.

**Environmental Commitment:** Linda Gustafson, LMA; Linda has managed MDE's shoe collection drive for all seven years of the program. She has collected nearly 4,000 pairs of shoes and distributed them to the Nike ReUse-a-Shoe program, where they are ground down and reused in athletic surfaces and other products; to Soles4Souls, which distributes them to those in need throughout the world; and to local shelters like The Helping Up Mission and Paul's Place. Linda sorts the shoes at home and transports them to drop-off centers as far away as Delaware and New Jersey. In addition, she has regularly delivered surplus three-ring binders from MDE to the Teacher Supply Swap Cooperative in Baltimore.

**Cost Efficiency:** Richelle Hanson, LMA; Richelle has led Public Information Act responsibilities in LMA's Land Restoration Program. Through initiative, persistence

## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

and diligence, she developed and drove implementation of a change to MDE's PIA process that has standardized redactions for requested records and has resulted in both faster services for customers and reduced workload for MDE and Office of the Attorney General personnel. When her proposal ran into obstacles, she diligently persisted in advocating for it. Her idea was ultimately approved and adopted, and all involved in MDE PIA work agree that it is a significant improvement that benefits both customers and staff.

Team of the Year: Radiation Machines Division Registration and Certification Team, including Kiera Saleem, Mathew Sievers, and Damika Gresham. Although neither Kiera, Matthew nor Damika have worked for MDE more than a year and they are all health physicist trainees, the team has done remarkable work processing the huge volume of various approval, certification, and registration applications submitted by stakeholders, overseeing 5,400 machine facilities in the state. The team has also suggested and implemented more-efficient methods of processing applications and reports. All members of the team have received compliments, maintained politeness with stakeholders and colleagues, and gone out of their way to research unusual issues that require innovative solutions for our customers.

## **Leadership Analysis of FY19 and Summary of FY20 Approach**

We are pleased to see that our customer survey results continue to show very high levels of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be challenging to achieve while running a regulatory agency. We are very proud of the excellent customer service provided throughout the year by so many of our employees.

We are also pleased with the continued deployment of Lean management systems and continuous improvement efforts. We remain confident that this is our most valuable way to improve customer satisfaction.

## Detailed FY19 Results and FY20 Plans

### Land and Materials Administration: FY19 Results and FY20 Plans

#### Resource Management Program (RMP)

- The Scrap Tire Unit worked to identify opportunities for online permit application and reporting submittals. Work on developing online permit application and reporting submittal capabilities is on hold until the internal enterprise tracking system upgrades are complete.
- The Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) Division provided farmers with the option to submit their Annual Implementation Reports electronically for calendar year 2018. Farmers are required to submit these reports annually.
- The Animal Feeding Operations Division met with stakeholders to receive comments on the revision of the General Discharge Permit for AFOs. The AFO Division also participated in the University of Maryland's New Grower Workshops, the University of Maryland's Animal Agriculture Education Initiative, and the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Nutrient Management Advisory Committee. Participating in these events affords AFO staff the opportunity to communicate directly with stakeholders and immediately respond to stakeholder questions or concerns.
- The Maryland Recycling Act (MRA) online reporting form was launched in CY19 for 2018 MRA data. The online reporting form to facilitate voluntary reporting of recycling activities by businesses will be launched CY20.

#### Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (LPPP)

- LPPP organized and hosted four Lead Inspector/Contractor Forums in FY19. The forums served over 100 customers. LPPP followed up with a customer survey for feedback on the events. LPPP received 59 responses, a 30% response rate of the total combined attendees. The survey showed that 65% of respondents found that the forums were beneficial and 84.5% of respondents found that the materials distributed at the forums were helpful. 67.2% of the



## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

respondents found that the knowledge gained from the forums would improve their business practices.

- 2019 Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (LPPP) Initiative to Implement Regular Training Provider Meetings and Formation of a Formal Partnering Initiative to Improve Training for the Accredited Community: LPPP organized this initiative and hosted the first meeting on November 19, 2018. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a closer partnership with the training provider community, which includes lead inspectors, lead inspection contractors, lead abatement supervisors, contractors, and trained workers. This initiative will foster enhanced training experiences for them.

### Technical Services and Operations Program (TSOP)

- TSOP revised the process by which haulers of hazardous waste or special medical waste had to provide required information about the use of Interstate Certificates, called "floaters". Previously, haulers could only provide required information to TSOP by faxing hard-copy documents. Now, haulers can download an electronic form and email it to TSOP.
- TSOP initiated a process to review lead rental renewal documents for compliance with requirements to obtain inspection certificates. When certificate information was missing, TSOP staff contacted property owners and property managers and provided compliance assistance.
- TSOP was part of a nationwide change initiated by U.S. EPA to move the RCRA hazardous waste manifest process from paper forms to an online system developed by EPA (eManifest). Handlers of hazardous waste can now prepare manifests in the electronic system, and are no longer required to mail manifests to TSOP. TSOP no longer needs to key manifests into EPA's data systems, and instead can track and review the information in the eManifest system.
- By the end of the calendar year, TSOP plans to activate MyRCRAId in EPA's Industry Application software. This will allow generators of hazardous waste who need to obtain an EPA ID Number, update an existing EPA ID Number, or deactivate an EPA ID Number to complete the application electronically. Generators will no longer need to complete and mail a six-page paper application to TSOP. In addition, TSOP will activate EPA's version of the Biennial Report Application. Since MyRCRAId, Biennial Reporting and eManifest systems are all linked in EPA's Industry Application, generators of hazardous

## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

waste would experience a streamlined, electronic system to manage their hazardous waste.

- TSOP also plans to revise the process for online lead rental registry renewals, including reducing the data entry required by customers if the information on the rental properties has not changed from the previous year.

### Oil Control Program (OCP)

- OCP is continuing to work with the Maryland Environmental Service to develop a program for electronic submission of the UST Third Party Inspection Report. Once completed and implemented, underground storage tank owners and inspectors will be able to receive electronic notifications on when inspections are due and to download pre-loaded inspection forms, and inspectors will be able to submit the inspections to OCP electronically. OCP will be able to more efficiently review the inspection results and provide a public facing compliance status for inspected facilities.

### Land and Materials Administration Anecdotes and Select Customer Comments

- At the request of the Town of Hampstead, LMA personnel attended Hampstead's zoning meeting on the Hampstead Overlook development to answer any public questions about the environmental conditions of the site. Many people were very concerned about the development, the former Black and Decker property that is nearby, and the wells on their adjacent property. In addition to attending the public meeting and answering questions about the site's environmental conditions, LRP personnel also sampled domestic wells for volatile organic compounds throughout the area. The results demonstrated that there were no residential wells impacted by hazardous substances. As a result of these efforts, the Town of Hampstead sent a letter to Secretary Grumbles praising LMA's efforts to address the issues raised by the public.
- "Thank you for your quick response and for being so nice. I wish the lady at the dump was as knowledgeable as you and I wouldn't have wasted a trip to the dump."
- "Thanks for all your help. It was a pleasure working with you and I enjoyed your polite and friendly help."
- The Scrap Tire Unit received a call from an angry constituent. The project manager talked to him for quite a while, calmed him down, and helped him

## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

resolve the issue he called about. At the end of the call the constituent said, "You people...are...the nicest government people I've ever dealt with!"

- "Thank you for assisting with processing my lead abatement compliance. I found your customer service superior and efficient."
- "Thank you once more for your excellent assistance ...thank you for all the work that you do to protect our environment!"
- "I am a Lead Paint Inspector. I wanted to reach out to say how helpful your staff was in helping me with two of my clients (who were suffering tragic loss of life of their family rental managers) .... Both of my clients were very impressed with the latitude that was allowed through the process and in turn – we didn't bandaid anything. Each rental property was assessed and thought through to make sure the right financial decision was being made. Your staff's patience in all this is what allowed the properties to come out as they did, (in compliance). I appreciated your staff's attention and patience in the matter. I'm contacting you to give you the appreciation your staff deserves."
- "I am a new rental property owner in Baltimore City. I phoned your office today, after having a challenging day. A member of your staff walked me through the process and after talking with him, my day is MUCH MUCH better!"
- "Thanks again for all your help. My daughter had another round of lead testing, and the lead count is reducing in her blood, which is great. You really went the extra mile to help us. I really appreciate your effort."
- "Many thanks for your efforts on Origin Baltimore permits. It has been a pleasure working with you, and we look forward to continuing that good working relationship under MDE's Oil Control Program."

## Air and Radiation Administration: FY19 Results

- Radiation-to-Information (RTI) tablets were purchased for the Radiation Machines Division State inspectors to improve inspection efficiency. The use of these tablets have reduced paperwork, prevented the loss or misplacement of files, and reduced inspection times. This has reduced the disruption of dental facilities business operations, while increasing customer service efforts. The implementation of this upgrade improves production and costs.
- A checklist-style licensing application for X-ray refraction lead paint gauges that use radioactive material has been implemented and has successfully reduced review times from months (up to seven) to a few weeks.
- A seven-year look-ahead on license expiration dates for facilities possessing radioactive materials has been instituted. This allows staff to anticipate workloads and develop strategies, such as administratively-extending the expiration dates for good performers, which helps to balance workloads and reduce turnaround times for customers.
- Inspection planning for the Radioactive Materials Division was further developed to identify inspection and compliance history of the licensee, changes in the administrative structure, and license amendment history since the last inspection. This information has assisted the inspector in writing the final inspection report and identified a logical pathway for the inspection sequence for critical sub elements.
- The Air Quality Permits Program met with stakeholders in March 2019 to propose a new general permit source category for emergency generators and to receive comments on the proposal. The general permit eases the burden on permit applicants by simplifying the application process and reducing the amount of time it takes to receive an air quality permit to construct for common emergency generators. The proposal was well received by stakeholders and the general permit package was revised to incorporate comments received. The new general permit for emergency generators will be effective in early FY20.

## Air and Radiation Administration: FY20 Plans

- An evaluation will be made as to whether a checklist-type approach can be used for applications for radioactive material licenses for equipment that is more complex than simple lead paint gauges. If any other radioactive materials equipment can utilize a checklist-type application process, the owners of such equipment would benefit by getting their licenses approved much more quickly.
- In an effort to ease the burden on both staff and customers, frequently-asked questions will be posted to address questions and concerns from owners of x-ray radiation machines and equipment using radioactive materials.
- The Radiation Machines Division has collaborated with Environmental representatives to begin the workflow processes for the “Maryland OneStop” a new Statewide Licensing Portal system initiated by the Governor. The new system will allow stakeholders to obtain online services through a web-based portal system, resulting in a more efficient process, reduced paper usage, and increased communication between RHP and its stakeholders.
- A new general permit process for emergency generators will be effective in August 2019. The new general permit will provide a quicker and easier way for permit applicants to apply for and obtain required air quality permits for common emergency generator types.
- The Air Quality Permits Program will be working with ARA's Operational Services Program and OSA's fiscal programs on a Lean process-improvement initiative relating to the procedures for receiving and processing payments of permit application fees. Payments are currently received directly at the office or through a secure P.O. box, by check, ACH transfer, RSTARS transfer, or with a credit card with a substantial transaction fee. Depending on how the payment is received, the time required to notify the Air Quality Permits Program of payment can weeks. Through this initiative, the Program hopes to improve the payment notification process so that permits can be issued in a more timely manner.
- In FY20, the Air Quality Permits Program plans to begin developing new user-friendly, online fill-in capable, permit application forms. Current application forms will be revised and formatted into a more user-friendly format. The process will require a detailed internal technical review, administration approval, and program staff training prior to implementation.

## Water and Science Administration: FY19 Results

### Wastewater Permits Program

- Held meetings with scrap metals and recycling facilities to improve communications, provide guidance, and share success stories in preventing water pollution at these sites.
- Continued to encourage water reuse through discussions with permittees.
- Continued to refine and enhance the online Interactive Wastewater Permits Search Portal to provide easy public access to permit and permit processing information. All permit applications, issued permits, and final fact sheets are posted online. As a further enhancement to our public participation outreach efforts, when we know of significant public interest, we also post draft versions of those documents.
- Met with multiple stakeholders interested in the renewals of the Construction Stormwater and Pesticides General Permits.
- Continued work on a renewed hydrostatic testing general permit. Developing the renewal has included significant outreach with many governmental and private-sector stakeholders/customers. The renewal permit will allow for most discharges from groundwater remediation projects to be safely, quickly and efficiently covered and allow dischargers drawing down surface water or groundwater (dewatering) to treat the discharge with flocculants to remove solids. We also found that the existing permit had several weaknesses, where requirements were unclear, and tables were too complex to follow for both the customer and the inspector. The resulting permit changes were provided to this same group, and we received very positive comments. The permit will be issued in FY20, and we feel the compliance will be greatly improved, as will satisfaction by the public and permitted entities.
- Started quarterly MDE/Environmental Health Directors meetings to improve communication with local health departments. Meetings to provide updates on regulatory processes and outreach to address local health agencies' needs for improved customer service.
- Began an extensive joint process with the local approving authority for permitting and review in one county to improve customer service and

## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

employee performance related to onsite sewage disposal systems. This has included several public meetings to address community concerns and listen to suggestions from the community.

- Attended several community meetings to address concerns about legacy failing septic systems, and to discuss possible solutions and potential funding options. Meetings focused on sites with clustered onsite systems that are failing and at risk for residents, such as bermed infiltration ponds in Dorchester County.
- Increased enrollment for well construction training program for persons interested in the well drilling industry. Changed the program to include a full day of interaction in the field with Master Well Drillers.

### Water Supply Program

- Completed the first phase of lead testing for schools. During that period, a total of 415 schools were tested for lead in their drinking water. Out of that number, 186 schools had elevated levels of lead. In total 25,348 outlets were tested for lead and of those, 724 outlets were above the Action Level of 20 ppb. The 724 outlets were either taken out of service or replaced. MDE is currently in the second phase of lead testing, which includes the testing of school buildings constructed in 1988 or later and/or serving students in grades 6 through 8.
- The Board of Waterworks and Waste Systems Operators staff continued to conduct an increased number (28) of scheduled examination dates, with a total of 940 certification examinations given. The additional examination including exams provided at two major Maryland annual conferences, provided the opportunity to increased exam options for applicants.
- The Board of Well Drillers and staff have begun a program to update and revise the examinations required for licensure. Spanish-language exams are being created for some license categories. During FY19, the apprentice well driller exam was revised and approved by the Board.

### Integrated Water Planning Program

- Water Quality Trading website: IWPP has created new web pages and tools for the new Water Quality Trading Program to assist potential participants with understanding the trading regulations and requirements. To date, numerous

## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

presentations to various potential stakeholders including wastewater, stormwater, and oyster aquaculture groups, have been provided. Additionally, the Program maintains a separate email account specific to Water Quality Trading that is used for communications between MDE and interested parties. An online trading guide is being developed to allow feedback through an online form.

- Maryland Association of Counties Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) meetings: IWPP, in collaboration with Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, organizes quarterly meetings with the MACO MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer) jurisdictions to discuss local TMDL implementation. These meetings are part of an ongoing outreach that helps to provide direction and collaboration within the MS4 community on achieving local TMDL goals for a variety of pollutants. Topics included bacteria, sediment, chlorides and trash.
- MS4 Monitoring Requirements Outreach: Two rounds of one-on-one meetings with Phase I MS4 counties to discuss and get feedback on the proposed permit monitoring requirements and guidelines. Changes were subsequently made and county comments addressed. Additionally, IWPP held a workshop with all the jurisdictions the new biological monitoring requirements.
- Water Quality Trading website: IWPP has created new web pages and tools for the new Water Quality Trading Program to assist potential participants with understanding the trading regulations and requirements. To date, numerous presentations to various potential stakeholders including wastewater, stormwater, and oyster aquaculture groups, have been provided. Additionally, the Program maintains a separate email account specific to Water Quality Trading that is used for communications between MDE and interested parties. An online trading guide is being developed to allow feedback through an online form.
- Maryland Association of Counties TMDL meetings: IWPP, in collaboration with Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, organizes quarterly meetings with the MACO MS4 jurisdictions to discuss local TMDL implementation. These meetings are part of an ongoing outreach that helps to provide direction and collaboration within the MS4 community on achieving local TMDL goals for a variety of pollutants. Topics included bacteria, sediment, chlorides and trash.
- MS4 Monitoring Requirements Outreach: Two rounds of one-on-one meetings with Phase I MS4 counties to discuss and get feedback on the proposed permit monitoring requirements and guidelines. Changes were subsequently made and county comments addressed. Additionally, IWPP held a workshop with all the jurisdictions the new biological monitoring requirements.



## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

### Field Services Program

- Fish Kill events: The Bioregulatory Monitoring and Response Division are “on-call 24/7 365 days a year.” They received 82 fishkill reports of which 56 required on-site investigations by field biologist. “The ‘clients’ reporting” a fish event were from the general public; representatives of state, local, and federal agencies; and others. All responses were handled within 24 hours of receipt, and most were handled immediately.

### More WSA Customer-Service Improvements

- In FY19, WSA embraced Lean continuous-improvement principles, approaches, and tools to improve processes and procedures to enhance customer satisfaction. Photos from Lean meetings and examples of progress made appear below.

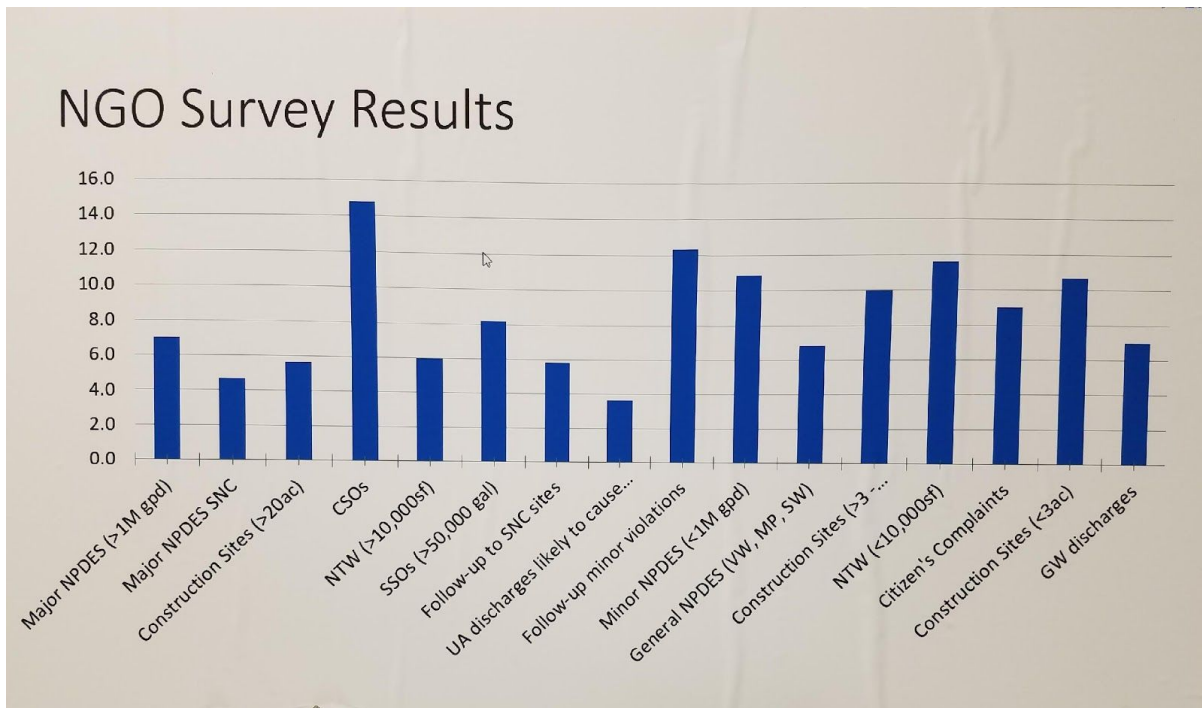




## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

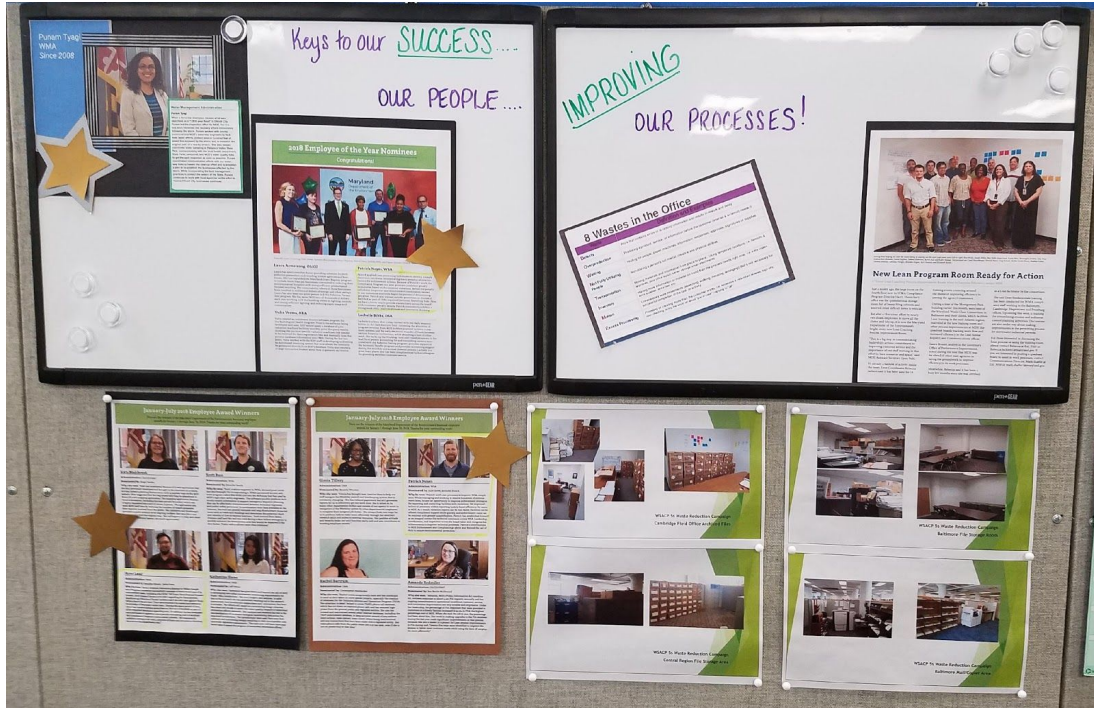
to continuously improve the content of the training sessions in the best interest of the regulated community.

- WSACP realized a 60% increase the number of pre-construction meetings scheduled and attended annually, in comparison to the previous five years. Data suggests that facilities that participate in a pre-construction meeting are 85% more likely to maintain compliance throughout the project in comparison to those who do not participate in such meetings. The improved response time was largely credited to placing a larger focus on stakeholder concerns, creating a new triage process and improved tracking and oversight responsibilities.



WSACP's ability to identify and resolve minor violations before they became significant increased by 350% in comparison to the previous four years of data. Improvements are credited to process improvement and inspection prioritization initiatives.

# MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report



## Water and Science Administration: FY20 Plans

WSA's plans for FY20 include the following:

- Investigate ways to improve the funding sources to repair mobile home parks. Select a few pilot projects to begin a streamlined approach for offering repair solutions for legacy failures in mobile home parks that provide a niche housing commodity to diverse residents with limited financial resources.
- Develop outreach educational material for the real estate industry regarding proper operation of septic systems in Maryland. Work to improve communication with the industry for sales and development of properties.
- Examine methods to improve customer service with agents of our delegated programs through increased training, performance assessments and accountability. Partner with Maryland Department of Health through the Environmental Liaison Committee Work group to determine the most successful manner in which to achieve this goal.
- Continue to implement the requirements of the Lead in Drinking Water in Schools, by developing an on-line reporting system that schools can use to transmit testing results to MDE, and continued outreach and assistance to schools.
- “Hold the Annual Groundwater Symposium (September 2019).”



## **Operational Services Administration: FY19 Results**

- OSA officials attended two Procurement Connection Workshops. These meetings were designed to tell the public what we do, how to contact us for information, and inform them of the types of procurements we have on the horizon.
- Dinesh Gandhi received the Cost Efficiency Award. He was honored for his ability to reduce the amount of taxpayer dollars spent. On several occasions, he has taken his own time to drive and pick up items in an effort to save on shipping costs. Finally, he does his best to find the lowest price on items and services needed whenever possible.
- OHR participated in five career fairs that assisted in providing MDE access to large pools of candidates and allow the recruiter to convey information face-to-face about MDE's mission and the types of open positions. As a result of OHR recruitment efforts to increase the Agency's brand awareness, 75% of agency hires were talented individuals new to State employment.
- The Office of Fiscal Services paid over 99% of the 5,607 vendor invoices in a timely manner in accordance with the 30 day turnaround time prescribed in Maryland law. The late payment rate was less than 1% of all invoices.

## Operational Services Administration: FY20 Plans

- OSA Procurement plans to continue attending Minority Business Enterprises/Small Business Reserve (MBE/SBR) workshops throughout the year in an effort to generate more MBE and SBR participation in our solicitations. This effort also includes sending out PowerPoint slides of information from outreach events that will generate interest to potential vendors.
- OSA Procurement staff is actively seeking out MBE/SBR vendors whenever possible by bringing their attention to relevant solicitations on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA), the State's bid board. This outreach involves contacting them by email and phone. Additionally, we are encouraging them to sign up on eMMA and helping them through the process by giving them helpful links and offering any other assistance that we are able to provide.
- Procurement will publish MBE lists on eMMA whenever subcontracting is possible in an effort to match subcontractors with primes.
- OSA is planning to host an outreach event that will target SBR vendors. Similar to the workshops, this event will make our presence known, while providing the vendors information about what we do. Further, they will be made aware of upcoming opportunities.
- The Office of Human Resources will continue to attend job fairs in order to assist MDE with its mission and find potential future staff.
- The Office of Human Resources will work with the Administrations to create a Summer Student Technical Assistance Program for college students pursuing

## **Customer Service Survey Results**

For FY19, the Business Ombudsman, along with his other duties, was responsible for evaluating and responding to MDE's survey respondents and taking the necessary steps to continue to improve MDE's Customer Service Survey results.

For FY19, our Overall Satisfaction rating is a healthy 88%, a .5% increase from prior year. In addition, Ease of Working with MDE rose to 85%, an increase of almost 3% from the prior year. These are clear indicators that the programs implemented to service our customers (Customer Service Training for all employees, Continuous Improvement and Lean Initiatives, and the Ombudsman's rapid response to survey respondents) are having a significant impact.

All survey responses that included contact information were communicated with by email, phone, or a site visit by our Ombudsman within two business days.

At the same time, as with all agencies, individual survey responses have illuminated opportunities for improvement, and MDE's managers have worked to address those issues

For FY20, with the continuation of the programs mentioned above, along with other Departmental initiatives, we aim to maintain or even improve our high "Overall Satisfaction" rating.

## **Status of Customer Service Training**

MDE is committed to ensuring that all employees receive training in customer service; all new employees are advised of this requirement during the new employee's orientation. In FY20, we have also arranged four refresher training sessions provided both at MDE headquarters and at area colleges.



## Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time to Resolution

### Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

Whether through surveys, field visits, or any other interaction, MDE's goal is to respond to those requests within 48 hours. This enhances the customers experience and leads to a continuing higher percentage of overall satisfaction.

The OSA Administrative Services staff continue to provide service as the first line public face of the Agency. The staff collects fees from customers, directs incoming calls and greets visitors to MDE promptly and courteously. In FY '19, staff greeted 5,338 visitors and conducted 1,510 transactions involving collection of \$541,121.84 on behalf of the Administrations within MDE.

### Best Practices

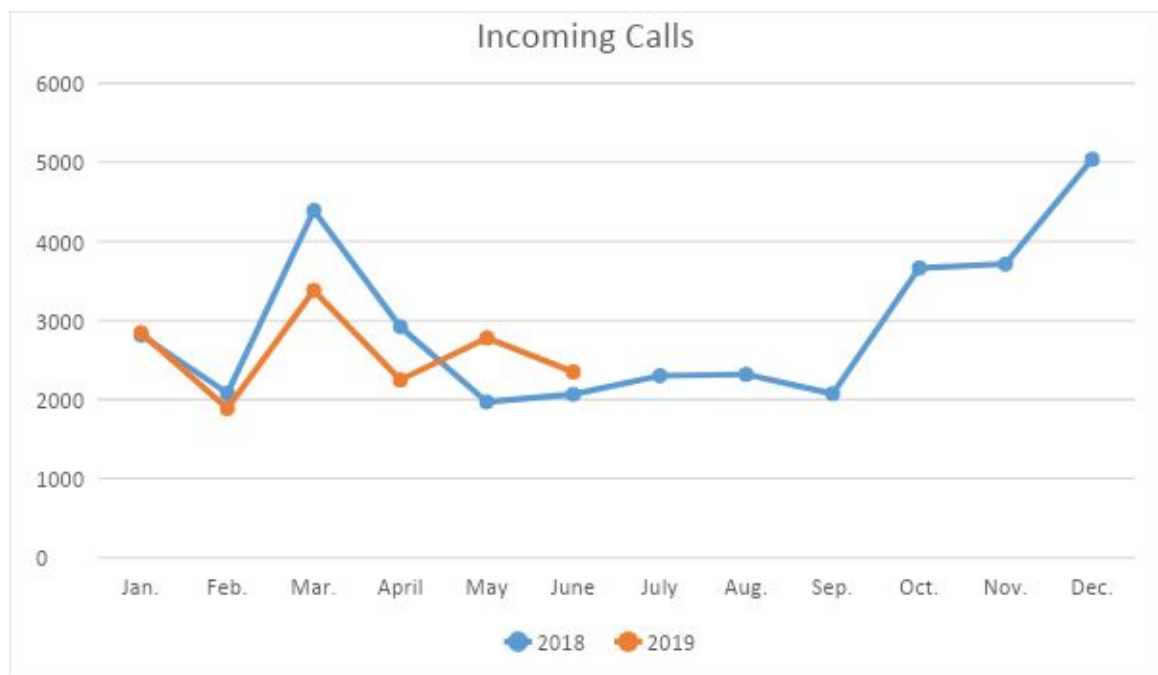
MDE's Business Ombudsman, in addition to numerous customer phone calls and emails, personally visited over 325 businesses, citizens, or organizations, reaching out to them to openly discuss any possible issues or questions they have with MDE, and to review with them the various programs MDE has to offer for their benefit. In those few cases where there were issues, the Ombudsman immediately contacted the appropriate Department or Agency to help facilitate a resolution as expeditiously as possible. We're proud that from these visits, any questions or problems were handled within 48 hours. The overwhelming feedback from the personal visits has been extremely positive as customers are very pleased to see MDE taking such a proactive step to provide aa active conduit for them.

The Ombudsman also attended almost 40 trade shows, business conferences, or off-site trade association meetings, again for the purpose of networking in a proactive manner and to see how MDE could help them.

In addition, the Ombudsman worked in collaboration with other State Agencies (primarily Commerce) to visit their customers who had expressed some difficulty or problem regarding MDE. In each case, the Ombudsman was successful in gathering the facts and provided those to the proper Department for resolution (several of these involved other agencies as well). On average, we were successful at addressing issues or clarifying questions within two working days. Being great at customer service is not limited to being friendly and timely.

## Call Center Data

- LMA staff provides assistance to customers related to registering and/or renewing residential rental properties built prior to 1978.
- These staff work in a call-center type environment on shifts during normal business hours.
- Call center management has software that allows for tracking calls in the following categories:
  - Number of calls received.
  - Number of calls received (and length) by each customer service representative.
  - Number of calls missed.
  - Number of calls going into voicemail.
  - Number of callers who hang up without leaving a message.
- There is a link for the Governor’s Customer Survey on the bottom of each email sent out by customer service staff.
- All customer survey responses are reviewed within 24 hours of being downloaded and passed on for management review. If a specific employee is mentioned, s/he is copied.
- The customer survey comments are posted on a Lean process improvement board near the customer service representatives’ work area, categorized by month.



## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

- LMA continues to make progress in reducing the number of customers who have to leave voicemails because we aren't able to pick up their calls.

### 2019 Total Monthly Voicemail Messages

| Month    | Day Box<br>6801 | Night Box<br>6802 | Overflow Box<br>6030 | Total # of<br>Messages |
|----------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| January  | 21              | 18                | 27                   | 66                     |
| February | 4               | 34                | 9                    | 47                     |
| March    | 21              | 37                | 23                   | 81                     |
| April    | 5               | 12                | 20                   | 37                     |
| May      | 23              | 27                | 37                   | 87                     |
| June     | 10              | 15                | 18                   | 43                     |

## Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

### Making Agency Services Available Online

Information Technology (IT) investments are critical to improving customer service, and we continue to build on the strong momentum gained in recent years implementing online permitting and payment systems. Additional IT-related improvements planned for FY20 include the following:

- **Environmental Tracking System:** MDE continues to develop its modernized Electronic Permit Tracking System for capturing permit application, inspection, compliance, and enforcement data. The new system will be more efficient and improve customer service by providing greater flexibility to “Lean” business processes while also enabling online permit application submission and payment capabilities. The new system is anticipated to be completed by December 2021.
- **Lead Rental Certification and Accreditation Online Tracking System:** This project will provide a new online system with fee payment for the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program to track accreditation entities, property certificates issued to property owners, and enforcement cases. This solution will address many of the constraints currently challenging MDE in achieving requisite operational efficiencies, transparency, and improved customer service. The new system will allow customers to submit and access accreditation, certification, enforcement and oversight information online. It will provide payment and tracking of various fees such as certificate fees, accreditation processing fees, enforcement fees and other associated fees. A contract award to develop the system is anticipated in fall 2019.
- **Online Lead Rental Registry Enhancement Project:** The purpose of this project is to implement functionality enhancements for the Online Lead Rental Registration system. These enhancements are designed to provide additional functionality for tracking of registrations and fee payment for lead rental properties.
- **The Maryland Recycling Act (MRA) online reporting form:** This form was launched CY19 for 2018 MRA data. The online reporting form to facilitate voluntary reporting of recycling activities by businesses will be launched CY20.
- **ePayments Portal Expansion:** MDE continues to expand the use of the Department’s ePayments portal, which allows customers to pay invoices

## MDE FY19 Annual Customer Service Report

online using a credit/debit card or electronic check. This expansion will target invoice process improvements for various payment types and replace current paper processes with online services.

- Oil Control Program (OCP) electronic reporting capabilities: OCP is continuing to work with the Maryland Environmental Service to develop a program for electronic submission of the UST Third Party Inspection Report. Once completed and implemented, underground storage tank owners and inspectors will be able to receive electronic notifications on when inspections are due, download pre-loaded inspection forms, and their inspectors will be able to submit the inspections to OCP electronically. OCP will be able to more efficiently review the inspection results and provide a public facing compliance status for inspected facilities.

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

MDE utilizes several social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to communicate MDE services and news. In addition, MDE actively participates in community civic events, Chambers of Commerce, email campaigns, and direct mail to “get the word out” about all we have to offer.

**Number and Type of Licenses and Permits Processed for FY19**

Applications received: 20,844

Permits issued: 20,237



MDE's Green Registry FY19 Award Winners

The Maryland Green Registry is a free program created to promote and recognize sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes within the state. Almost 600 organizations are now Green Registry members!

Businesses, churches, schools, government agencies and other organizations are all invited to join and share the steps they've taken to reduce their environmental footprint. Maryland Green Registry Leadership Awards were given to five member organizations that were selected by a judging panel for their strong commitment to sustainable practices, measurable results, and continual improvement.