





**Customer Services Provided by
Fiscal Employer Agents
Key Components and Challenges**

US DHHS/OASPE-Sponsored Government and Vendor Fiscal/Employer Agent
Workshop

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Introduction


PPL operates programs in 15 states, serving more than 17,000 consumers. Since 1999, PPL has designed, implemented, and managed participant-directed programs including adults and children with disabilities, children with mental illnesses and their families, older adults, and individuals with traumatic brain injuries

Our mission:

- To help individuals with a variety of needs, disabilities and chronic conditions to plan and manage their own budgets, giving them more freedom, responsibility and ability to make decisions
- We do this by enabling individuals to purchase flexible and non-traditional supports and services focused on meeting their needs; and
- Delivering customized solutions that balance consumer need for choice and decision making with the public agency need for documentation and fiscal accountability
- Mandy Sweeney directs PPL's Customer Service Center

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Today's Discussion

- Who calls and why do they call?
- Key Components of Customer Service
- PPL's Customer Service Model
- The Customer Service Center tool box - people, telephones, and technology
- Enrollment Management and call documentation using Client Contact System
- Spending and budget management
- RFP requirements versus program, participant, and provider realities
- Questions and Discussion

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Who Calls and Why Do They Call?

Wisdom gathered - Customer Service Experience 2004-2007

- Most calls are from employees seeking payment status
- The most frequent F/EA enrollment-related payment processing hurdle is incomplete **employee** documentation, followed by missing employer tax forms.
- Most error-prone form is USCIS Form I-9
- Participant authority and 1:1 relationship between employers and employees is difficult for **employees** to understand. *"I don't have to fill that form out. I provide services to X, you have that form already."*
- Program participants complaints correlate to the ability to the design and implementation team (F/EA, State and others) to define and articulate business rules, train and prepare program users, confirm data integrity and data delivery routines, and test prior to implementation.
- Transferring from one F/EA to another can be more difficult than start-up.

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Who Calls and Why Do They Call?

Wisdom gathered - Customer Service Experience 2004-2007

- Pay attention to the local culture; know what constitutes appropriate greeting and sign-offs.
- Pay attention to the local sub-culture; learn tribal customs, responding to population clusters. Recognize that participant-direction existed before we got here - learn to support it.
- Know your data and your business rules; understand how information flows, and know the impact it will have on participants and their networks if the process fails; Ill-defined business process definition can diminish the power and success of participant-direction.
- Due diligence by F/EAs, Support Brokers and State teams in advance of implementation determines initial program success.
- Plan, test, and test again: avoid fire-aim-ready implementation.

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Who Calls and Why Do They Call?

Wisdom gathered - Customer Service Experience 2004-2007

Most frequently asked questions

- Did you get my timesheet?
- Will I get paid?
- Why didn't I get paid?
- Can you send me additional forms?
- Do I have service units/funds available?

Most frequently asked unanswerable questions

- Who else is providing services to participant X and how much are they being paid?
- How much money/units of service does participant X have?

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Key Components of Customer Service

- Complete skill set and knowledge base supporting all F/EA functions
- System capacity and strength to support fluctuating call volume and communication
- Ability to support participants, employees, and stakeholders with the F/EA enrollment and transfer process
- Ability to support participants, employees and stakeholders with payment processing, service utilization and budget management information, including tax issues on time and accurately
- Respond to language needs, provide alternate formats and support regional, cultural, and tribal differences
- Demonstrate compliance with contract and RFP requirements through management reporting
- Manage change and respond to unforeseen events

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PPL's Customer Service Model

Phoenix, Arizona Center supports consumer-direction for 6000 participants in seven states, representing 30,000 points of contact

- Supports program participants telephonically and on site
- Uses technology to support real time communication of employer/employee enrollment status, payment processing information, problem-solving, and service/budget utilization data
- Supports over 100 languages, staff is multi-lingual, provides material in alternative formats, as well as TTY
- Uses call center technology to audit calls, monitor service levels, allocate staff and support client reporting requirements

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The Customer Service Center Tool Box - People, Telephones, and Technology

Customer Service Team:

- Commitment to participant-direction
- Detailed subject matter knowledge across the range of F/EA services
- Ability to communicate enrollment, payment, and utilization status at a highly detailed level in a participant-focused manner
- Ability to support critical processes, teach, learn, listen, and change
- Responsive to cultural, regional, tribal, and other needs

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The Customer Service Center Tool Box - People, Telephones, and Technology

Telephone System:

- Call hardware and software must support program size, known call volume, and withstand unanticipated spikes in call volume
- System capacity, performance, and reliability are critical to success; otherwise high quality services can be compromised by weak call center infrastructure
- Provide F/EA contract management with performance data including call volume, service levels, call length, voice mails, and audit trail
- Include disaster recovery capability

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The Customer Service Center Tool Box - People, Telephones, and Technology

- Data is critical to managing performance
- Facilitates correct staffing - program complexity, call length are key factors in determining correct staffing
- Call volume spikes are symptomatic of change, or unintended event across an array of possibilities


Program	Participants Served	Total Inbound	Average daily inbound	Total Outbound	Average Daily Outbound	Average Call Length	Service Level	Voice Mail	Daily Inbound High
Virginia	2,600	22,490	434	8,482	112	3:01	75%	4,040	1600
Arizona	2,000	14,612	249	5,798	90	2:16	91%	354	477
Florida	1,000	31,227	487	6,651	105	4:09	71%	5,186	637
New Mexico	190	2,344	40	583	31	2:22	75%	442	59
Tennessee	110	1,200	20	583	10	3:23	80%	46	61
Indiana	100	1,213	32	517	18	4:05	88%	134	60
West Virginia	80	372	6	334	5	3:23	90%	20	22
Total	6,080	74,158	181	22,948	54	2	83%	10,222	22

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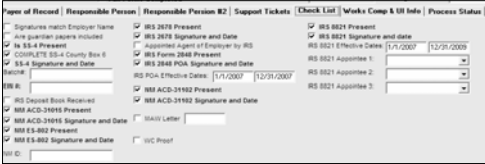
Enrollment Management and Call Documentation Using Client Contact System

- Client Contact System (CCS) tracks each tax form process for individuals and workers.
- Consumer Enrollment Status reports include the following information:
 - detailed demographic information,
 - enrollment packet delivery and completion for employers and employees
 - approved employee and rate of pay
 - employer of record packet delivery and completion
- CCS is used to document, store, and report support tickets generated per inbound and outbound calls. Reports can be created by date, category, user, employer, employee, as required



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Enrollment Management and Call Documentation Using Client Contact System

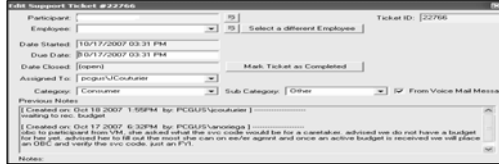


- CCS validates receipt of each employer and employee form
- Triggers next steps for PPL staff processing tax forms in other operational and program sites. Staff location is not a barrier
- CCS track completion and accuracy of participant and employee enrollment documents
- Customer Services follows up with participant and employee

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Enrollment Management and Call Documentation Using Client Contact System

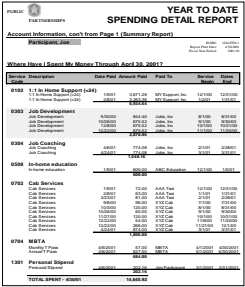
- Caller questions can identify other open issue, trigger outbound call and follow-up
- CCS used to track voice mail and aligns with phone system voice mail data
- Unresolved issues are maintained as open support tickets – triggers contract with individual or organization responsible for delivering outstanding issue
- Allows management of concurrent processes



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Spending and Budget Management Support

- A key component of Customer support is providing spending information
- Reports are mailed to participants
- Customer Services creates reports on an as needed basis
- Reports provide spending detailed are grouped by service
- Details tie to Individual Budget and Summary Report



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RFP Requirements Versus Program, Participant, and Provider Realities

Voice mail return:
States typically require a 24 hour turn around while callers expect an instant live answer or an immediate call back.
Most frequent complaint: *"They didn't return my call. I had to call several times."*
Callers dial continuously until they get an answer

Critical incident reporting:
Occurs infrequently. Staff must be trained and retrained on response and escalation process. Most common critical incident report is fraud allegation. PPL uses CCS and supplemental material

TTY, alternate formats, ASL, and languages other than English and Spanish:
Needed infrequently; Staff must be trained to escalate and respond. F/EAs must be able to quickly acquire translation and interpreter support

Fax and toll-free numbers:
RFP rarely define capacity or ask the F/EA to describe hardware and software. Existence of a toll-free dialing does not guarantee caller access

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Questions and Discussion

Thank you

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