

# NYC Customer Service Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 1 – Fall 2016

## City Agencies Observe National Customer Service Week 2016

National Customer Service Week was observed by 15 City agencies from October 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>. Customer Service Week was established to recognize front line staff and their daily efforts to provide good service to their customers. New York City has observed this special week since 2008.



**MOCS Director Michael Owu addressing staff at their Customer Service Week Breakfast**

Agencies that participated this year include the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings, the Department of Investigation, NYC-311, the Mayor's Office of Contracts (MOCS), the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Fire Department, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Finance, the Department of Buildings (DOB), the Department of Probation, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.



**DOT Commissioner Polly Trottenberg and Chief Operating Officer Margaret Forgione present the Act of Kindness Award to Robert Galliano, Supervisor of Highway Maintenance, Brooklyn Arterial Maintenance. Mr. Galliano pulled over to help a driver replace a flat tire. The customer's letter thanking him for his help is on the screen in the background.**

Events ranged from recognition ceremonies, luncheons, trainings and social gatherings. Some highlights include breakfasts with DCA Commissioner Lorelei Salas and MOCS Director Michael Owah; employees from DEP donating canned goods for charity; DOB senior and executive staff working the front lines, and DOE Executive Superintendent Yolanda Torres answering the Family and Community Engagement main line and conducting intake; and free movie tickets and restaurant gift cards provided by DOP to children and families in their care.



Department of Education Customer Service Week Honorees

## NYC Commission on Human Rights' Workshops and Community Outreach Draw Praise

As a welcoming city that has always celebrated cultural diversity, New York City ensures that all of its residents can live, work and thrive in our city free from discrimination. Every New Yorker is protected by the City Human Rights Law, one of the broadest and most inclusive anti-discrimination laws in the country that protects residents, employees and visitors. The NYC Commission on Human Rights is charged with enforcing the City Human Rights Law and provides public education about the law to cultivate positivity and understanding amongst our diverse communities.



**Surdarsana Srinivasan answers questions at Disability in Housing Forum, April 25, 2016**

The Commission's Law Enforcement Bureau, responsible for the intake, investigation and prosecution of complaints has proved to be an ally and critical source of justice for some of our most vulnerable communities who may have been discriminated against. Recent testimonials served as a reminder of the importance of the Commission's work.

"It is with your care and concern that this case was again revisited and heard; which then resulted in a monetary award, but most important an emotional award...My sincere thanks to you and the team of attorneys."

"I just want to thank you for a great presentation on Monday," a representative of a local non-profit said after a Transgender 101 training was provided by the NYC Commission on Human Rights. "My [trans Latina] members were very excited to host the Commission – in the last five years, we have never had anything like this. We had 23 members in the workshop, and it was excellent!"



Commission staff provides information and participates in the Disability Pride March, July, 10, 2016

The Commission's Community Relations Bureau provides a face and helpful resource for New Yorkers on their rights and obligations under the law. By offering trainings in areas such as the Fair Chance Act and Transgender 101, and by attending hundreds of community events across the City, the NYC Commission on Human Rights has educated and provided critical information to both businesses who want to remain compliant with the Law, and to individuals who wish to know how they are protected in housing, public accommodations and employment.



Paola Martinez greets New Yorkers at National Night Out 2016

New Yorkers from all walks of life have expressed praise and genuine thanks to the Commission for getting them justice under the Law and for educating New Yorkers about their rights and obligations under the Law. For more information on the City Human Rights Law and upcoming workshops hosted by the NYC Commission on Human Rights, visit [www.nyc.gov/HumanRights](http://www.nyc.gov/HumanRights)

## Department of Environmental Protection: Providing Customer Service through Data and Technology

In 2010, the Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Customer Services introduced My DEP Account, an online customer portal that provides customers with a one stop location where they can conduct a number of business transactions with the Bureau of Customer Services. Through My DEP Account, customers can view their water consumption, bills and payment history all from the comfort of their own home. My DEP Account also proactively alerts customers to potential leaks via email. This allows them to quickly catch and repair leaks and waste before they become a costly billing problem.



### Welcome to My DEP Account

*The centralized portal for all DEP customer online activities*

**Registered Customers : Log In**  
User ID:   
Password:   
**LOGIN**  
[Forgot Your User ID or Password?](#)  
**Water Customer? [Register Now](#)**

**DEP QuickPay – One Time Payment**

**[View Water Charges](#)**

**Water and Sewer Customers**

- Track your water use
- Pay your bill online
- Sign up for eBilling
- Sign up for online leak notification

**Plumbing Professionals**

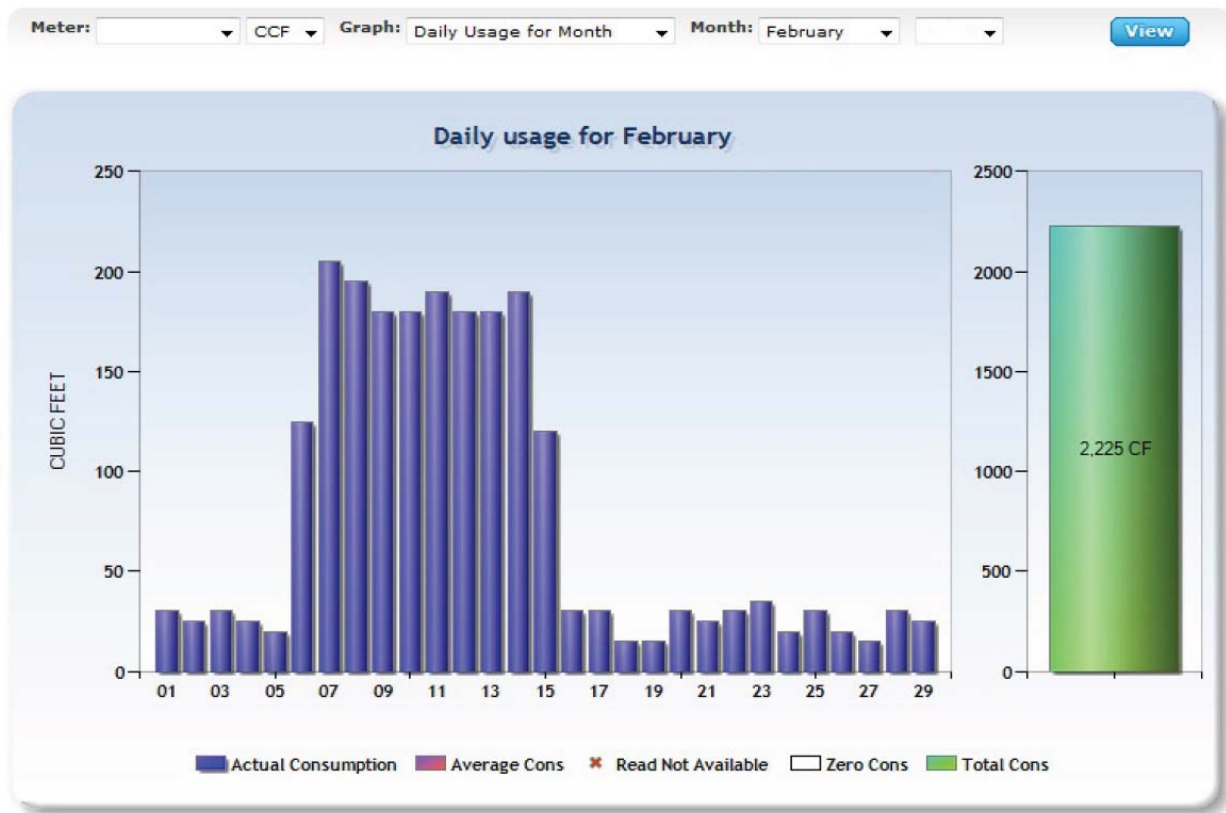
- Apply for and receive water and sewer permits online
- Pay any applicable fees online

**View Water Charges (New)**

- If you are only interested in viewing your water and sewer charges, please click the "View Water Charges" link in the blue box.

**Attention:** When you log in to pay your bill for the first time through **My DEP Account**, you will be required to create a unique **access code**. Your access code provides an additional layer of security and protection for your banking information. Most properties are connected to DEP's automated meter reading devices. This allows customers to see water use online through **My DEP Account**.

DEP continues to provide customer service enhancements; in 2015, customers were given the option to easily switch from quarterly to monthly eBilling to better manage their finances. Customers can also schedule an appointment online and choose one of four time slots so that they are not waiting at home all day for an inspector. The My DEP Account mobile application is also available on Android and iOS devices, allowing customers the convenience of these features at any time or place.



My DEP Account showing large leak.

## Department of Consumer Affairs Expands its Mission to Better Serve New York City Communities

Recognizing the changing needs of New York City's communities and the agency's evolving role, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) recently announced a new, evolved mission: **to protect and enhance the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities**. Under the de Blasio Administration, DCA's work has expanded to include an increased focus on equitable enforcement coupled with business education, and—with paid sick leave, the City's new Office of Labor Policy and Standards and fair scheduling legislation—greater protections for workers in New York City. DCA, which was established in 1969, has now evolved to stand at the nexus of consumers, businesses and working families in New York City.



DCA's new mission reflects the expansion of the agency's scope and builds on its historic work licensing and regulating of businesses, as well as consumer protection and financial empowerment. DCA's commitment and ability to serve the needs of consumers, businesses and working families is borne by the numbers:

- In 2015, DCA secured \$3.9 million in restitution for consumers, of which more than \$2 million was obtained through mediation;
- Since 2014, DCA has achieved and maintained a more than 50 percent reduction in fines levied on small businesses, averaging \$15 million annually from a high of close to \$32 million;
- During the 2016 tax season, DCA, which has been operating the City's annual Tax Credit Campaign for 14 years, helped more than 160,000 New Yorkers file their returns for free, resulting in \$250 million in saved tax preparation fees and refunds going back into the pockets of hardworking New Yorkers; and
- In the two years since DCA has been enforcing the Paid Sick Leave Law, the agency has secured nearly \$4 million in fines and restitution for nearly 14,500 workers who were denied their legal right to sick leave.

Now, with its expanded mission, DCA looks to pioneer the way that city government can protect and enhance the lives of all players in the marketplace, including consumers, businesses and workers, and how that work ultimately fosters stronger, more sustainable and thriving communities.



Engine Company 231 and Ladder Company 120 in Brooklyn teach children about firefighting at summer block party.

## Fire Department of New York: October is National Fire Prevention Month

October is national fire prevention month and all of us hold a personal responsibility to learn and practice fire safety. Awareness of fire safety is essential to protect our homes, communities and our firefighters who risk their lives to combat devastating fires.

In August 2016, Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro urged parents and guardians to engage and educate children on fire safety after three serious fires across New York City were caused by children playing with fire. The fires destroyed and damaged 14 homes and hurt 35 people – including three firefighters who were seriously injured.

“While we provide our firefighters and fire officers with the best training and equipment to keep our neighborhoods safe, it is critical for all to be aware, practice, and involved in fire safety and prevention,” said Commissioner Nigro. “Fires are preventable if parents and guardians ensure children under their care are properly supervised, don’t have access to matches, lighters and open flames, and other dangerous sources of fire. By making fire safety a family affair, fire prevention can regularly become a part of your household, for generations to come.”

The department regularly provides access to information and best practices for fire safety and prevention:

**FDNY Smart** - FDNY Smart is the educational website for the Fire Department of the City of New York. The primary mission is to educate New Yorkers to make the City safer.

**Fire Safety Education Program** - The goal of the Fire Safety Education Program is to eliminate residential fire deaths in New York City. Fire deaths have dropped to historic lows during the past decade and studies have shown that there is a direct link to strong public education programs. The goal of FDNY instructors is to continually educate the public with critical life saving strategies that focus on fire prevention, with a special focus on the City’s most vulnerable populations and at-risk communities. FDNY holds free educational events at educational institutions, community events and senior centers. Call 311 to find an event near you or to schedule one in your area.

**Juvenile Fire-Setters Intervention Program** - The FDNY Juvenile Fire-Setters Intervention Program works to both educate and evaluate children (up to the age of 12) who are engaging in fire play. If you suspect a child is playing with fire or setting fires intentionally, you can get help from the Fire Department. This free program offers both education and evaluations for children. The program is run by the Bureau of Fire Investigation and is completely confidential. The program has a very high success rate and is tailored to fit the needs of each individual child who takes part. Parents and guardians of children are also given important information.

## **NYC311 Mobile App named 2016 “Best of New York” Winner**

The NYC311 Mobile App was recognized as “Best Application Serving the Public” by Government Technology and the Center for Digital Government in Albany on September 16, 2016.

The NYC311 Mobile App serves over 1 million users annually, offering quick access to the City’s most requested services and 24 unique Service Request categories from infrastructure to health and human services. A partnership of NYC311, DoITT, the Mayor’s Office of Operations and participating City agencies, the Mobile App aligns with the 311 strategic vision of “*meeting customers where they are*” and offers a customer-centric platform that promotes equity, equality and opportunity for all. Over the past year service enhancements increased customer demand significantly with App downloads doubling to 12,000 per month and customer-generated Services Requests tripling to 19,000 per month.



**Chenda Fruchter, Director of Strategy and Development for 311 accepting the award on behalf of the NYC311 Mobile App team.**

The Best of New York Awards recognize state and local government organizations for their standout contribution, best practices and innovations in information technology that improve citizen services.

## **Enhanced Business Owner Customer Feedback Survey**

Feedback from New York City's business owners is critical for the city to ensure that they are receiving the best services from the agencies with which they interact. Over the past few years, the City has introduced a number of efforts to achieve this goal including providing customer service training for inspectors, creating a business owners bill of rights and providing an online survey to provide feedback.

To receive more and better feedback from business owners, in August 2016 the Mayor's Office of Operations launched an enhanced business owner survey. The new survey allows business owners to rate their experience and provide feedback on their interactions and provides different sets of questions depending on whether a business owner was inspected, visited a service center or received a compliance advisor consultation from the Department of Small Business Services (SBS). The survey also

includes questions about the business owner's experience in receiving interpretation services, if requested.



## Welcome to the NYC Customer Service Survey

## Bienvenidos a la Encuesta de Servicio al Cliente de Nueva York

Please choose the language you wish to do the survey in:  
Por favor, elija el idioma que desea hacer la encuesta:

[English](#)

[Español](#)

Each month, business owners who interacted in the prior month with the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Department of Buildings or the Taxi and Limousine Commission will receive an email from the surveying company inviting them to complete the survey. Businesses who do not respond to the initial survey will receive up to four follow-up invitations. The survey will also be available on the website of the New York State Restaurant Association and on SBS' coming new NYC Business Portal. The survey link - [www.nyc.gov/customersurvey](http://www.nyc.gov/customersurvey) - is also available on the Business Owners Bill of Rights palm card via a QR code. Since its launch in August, more than 100 surveys have been completed by business owners. The City will use feedback from the survey to address business owner concerns.

---

### Mayor's Office of Operations (OPS)

Mindy Tarlow, Director

Bonda Lee-Cunningham, Senior Advisor

### Editor

Francisco Navarro, OPS

### Contributors

Sheshe Segar, CCHR

Tanjila Rahman, DCA

Gloria Kim, DEP

Joseph Morrisroe, NYC311

Katherine Raitz, FDNY

If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, please send an email to [customerservice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:customerservice@cityhall.nyc.gov). Enter "Subscribe" in the subject field.

To view prior issues of the newsletter, click [here](#).

Fall 2016