

Customer Service Quality Statements

Community Literacy of Ontario's extensive research into customer service issues and practices confirmed that community literacy agencies across Ontario are deeply committed to excellence in customer service. In fact, literacy agencies excel at it!

However, during the research phase, CLO heard repeatedly from literacy practitioners that while they know how to do effective customer service, they don't have a way to clearly track and showcase their practices. Many literacy practitioners also told us that they want to be more deliberate and focused about delivering good customer service.

Being able to showcase formal processes and practices in customer service is becoming increasingly important under Employment Ontario. For example, MTCU's organizational capacity survey for agencies delivering Employment Services referenced the importance of agencies having customer service standards in place. As well, under Continuous Improvement Performance Management System, customer service is one of three core measures of success and currently it is weighted at 40% of overall agency performance.

To help our member agencies track and showcase their excellent work in customer service, Community Literacy of Ontario has created customer service quality statements. They were reviewed by the CLO Board of Directors at their April 2010 board meeting and were further reviewed and approved at the June 2010 board meeting. They were also reviewed by the project Advisory Committee.

In these quality statements, CLO defines customers in the broadest sense: adult learners, volunteers, donors, funders, local employment and social service agencies, partners, employers, and the community at large.

We hope that CLO's quality statements will help agencies to showcase the commitment to customer service that is inherent in Ontario's community literacy agencies, and that they will also give our members a tool to track and clearly demonstrate the excellent work that they do in communities large and small across Ontario.

— July, 2010

1 Our literacy agency fosters a culture of customer service.

BEST PRACTICES:

- We value people and ensure that customers are treated with respect and courtesy.
- Customer service is a priority for us and we show this by embedding customer service in our mission, core values, policies and operating procedures.
- We create a welcoming environment for all customers.
- We seek to provide our services in a timely manner that meets customer expectations and needs.
- We provide resources and information on effective customer service practices to our staff and volunteers.



2 Our literacy agency provides a learner-centred, quality learning environment.

BEST PRACTICES:

- We ensure that all programs and services of our literacy agency are offered using a learner-centred model of delivery.
- We offer an outcomes-based, flexible, supportive, and respectful learning environment based on adult learning principles.
- We provide quality instruction by skilled instructors and tutors who deliver effective programming that meets the needs, motivations and goals of learners.
- We offer literacy instruction to learners in a variety of formats that best meet their individual needs and goals.
- We ensure that students have the opportunity for direct input into how we deliver our services.
- We work hard to address the barriers to learning faced by adult students.
- We provide a safe learning environment free from risk, harm and harassment for students, staff and volunteers as guided by the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.



3 Our literacy agency provides initial and ongoing support to learners.

BEST PRACTICES:

- We provide an in-depth orientation process so that learners get a clear understanding of our program, our policies and rules, what is expected of them and what they must do to reach their goal.
- We provide information and referral services to learners who have social or economic needs.
- We support learners to access community supports that they require.
- We meet with learners regularly to review their progress, update their training plans and talk about any learning or support needs they may have.
- We celebrate and showcase the achievements of our students using a variety of methods.

4 Our agency honours the privacy of our customers.

BEST PRACTICES:

- Our agency strictly honours the need for confidentiality of service.
- Our agency is committed to the protection of privacy and personal information of our customers.
- We have privacy policies and procedures in place that meet the requirements of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.

5 Our literacy agency values respect, inclusion and accessibility.

BEST PRACTICES:

- We value and respect diversity in all its forms, including: age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, physical and intellectual ability, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation and educational background.
- We seek to accommodate people with disabilities and special needs wherever possible.
- We adhere to the Canadian Human Rights Act and all appropriate government legislation.

6 Our literacy agency knows who its key customers are and actively solicits their feedback.

BEST PRACTICES:

- Our literacy agency has a process in place to identify our key customers and determine their needs.
- We promote a culture of openness and transparency where learners, volunteers, referral partners, funders, community organizations, and all stakeholders have the opportunity to provide both informal and formal feedback on our services.
- We conduct regular check-ins with learners about their experiences in our agency.
- We regularly gather feedback from other customers about the effectiveness of our agency's operations.
- We follow up on any issues, questions, concerns, needs, etc. raised by our customers.



7 Our literacy agency seeks to regularly improve our customer service practices.

BEST PRACTICES:

- We regularly assess our customer service practices and improve as needed.
- We track and review feedback from our customers and change our customer service practices if needed.
- We seek input from people who are not currently customers, but who may still require our services.
- We stay informed of effective practices in customer service and adapt our own practices as appropriate.

8 Our literacy agency has a formal customer complaint and resolution process.

BEST PRACTICES:

- We encourage customer feedback — whether positive or negative.
- We have clear processes in place for stakeholder complaints, including policies about who receives and responds to complaints, response timelines, confidentiality and mechanisms for follow-up.
- Our customer complaint procedures are visible and accessible.
- We follow up on complaints within an agreed upon timeframe and manner.

9 Our literacy agency is actively involved in our community to ensure effective referrals and service coordination.

BEST PRACTICES:

- We support learners to access and participate in other training, employment and community services to help them meet their goals.
- We actively link and coordinate services with a wide variety of community partners in order to best meet the needs of adult learners.
- We are knowledgeable about resources and services provided in our community and make effective client referrals.
- We have a process in place to follow up on our referrals to ensure that learner needs were successfully met.



10 Our literacy agency has effective communication practices that reflect our commitment to excellent customer service.

BEST PRACTICES:

- We commit to communicating with customers, whether in person, over the telephone, online or via email, in a professional and respectful manner.
- We provide clear and accurate information about our programs and services to diverse community stakeholders.
- We use a variety of appropriate methods and tools to communicate with our customers.
- We use clear language design principles for agency brochures, promotional materials and website design to make them more accessible to people with low literacy levels.
- We commit to responding to telephone calls, emails, and requests submitted via our website within a set number of business days



