



# Oregon Military Department Customer Service Strategy

March 2025

**BE CONNECTED BE COMPETENT BE COMMITTED**

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### Purpose | Mission and Vision

The Oregon Military Department (OMD) is dedicated to providing high quality customer service to people internal and external to the agency. The strategy contained within this document provides a comprehensive approach to delivering exceptional customer service tailored to meet the needs of our unique mission as well as the needs of associated stakeholders and partners. The goal is to create and maintain efficient, empathetic, and consistent service that upholds the Oregon Enterprise wide values of Accountability, Equity, Excellence, and Integrity while propelling us to being the Service of Choice.

### Mission

The OMD is a ready, professional organization dedicated to providing the highest quality services to Oregon citizens. The OMD's primary mission is to protect Oregonians and defend America by providing a ready force of Citizen-Soldiers, Airmen and Civilians, trained and equipped to successfully respond to any contingency. Oregon's Military Department is led by Brigadier General Alan R. Gronewold, The Adjutant General (TAG), appointed by the Governor under ORS 396.150. The Adjutant General functions as the Oregon Military Department's Director while also having command oversight of our valued Service Members and state employees.

Our values define who we are. Our top three values are Connected, Competent, and Committed.

1. Be **Connected** to your people, always put them first.
2. Be **Competent** in your skill sets and always complete the mission.
3. Be **Committed** to improving the Oregon Military Department.

At the OMD, the military environment teaches accountability standards, while instilling timeliness, professionalism, and work ethics at the highest levels. We strive to be the Service of Choice for Oregonians, trusted and admired by our fellow citizens. With regard to our specific mission, we strive to deliver timely, accurate, and reliable services that support the unique needs of customers receiving services from within the organization. Whether that's a Servicemember able to take advantage of well-maintained equipment on a firing range at one of the state's installations or being paid in a timely manner by the agency payroll department for services rendered while on State Active Duty, the goal is to ensure a supported customer base. This includes strong stewardship of resources and maintaining assets to a standard that ensures Servicemembers of the Oregon Air and Army National Guard can respond, as needed, in times of crises and emergencies.

### **Vision**

We strive to be the benchmark for customer service excellence at all levels of OMD, fostering collaboration that leads to seamless support of people seeking any type of service rendered by the agency, for both internal and external customers; this leads to the agency being considered the Service of Choice for Oregonians: being admired for our integrity, leadership, and commitment to our communities. The Oregon National Guard, which is supported by the civilian OMD workforce, is prepared, trained, and ready to fight and win. We are all members of a Winning Team.

OMD has overarching strategic priorities to consider in determining how to best serve customers. These priorities include:

### **PEOPLE AND CULTURE.**

- a. Improve leadership climate at all levels, modeling strong customer service.
- b. Improve individual professional development and talent management.
- c. Maximize and protect training time and opportunities.
- d. Enhance communication to ensure every employee understands what they are doing, and why; this often positively impacts customer service.
- e. Consider how your specific customer service supports meeting the Top Three values: Connected, Competent, and Committed.

### **READINESS.**

- a. Exceed all service-specific training and equipment readiness standards.
- b. Improve systems and processes to drive decision-making and efficiencies at all levels.
- c. Facilities and training areas meet or exceed current needs and are prepared for future missions and equipment.
- d. Customer service is focused on modernization efforts agency wide to include equipment and facilities.

### **PARTNERSHIPS.**

- a. Engage with key industry, civic, and educational institutions throughout our communities.
- b. Strengthen relationships with customers, to include state agencies, tribal, and local governments. Identify all of our partnerships and place value on all of our customers.
- c. Build and reinforce lines of communication with relevant military and national partners.

### Customers

Customers of OMD generally include citizens and communities of Oregon, all Oregon National Guard members and their families, as well as other internal and external customers. However, depending on the specific program, the customer bases are different. The specific customers served by the main programs within OMD are outlined in the OMD Customer Service Policy.

### Service Level Goals

Key objectives of our service level goals include:

- A. **Enhanced Service Accessibility.** We will ensure services are available through multiple channels for the ease of the customer. This includes making contact for service through email, phone, and in some cases in-person.
- B. **Streamlined processes.** Service times will be closely monitored, with an emphasis to establish clear workflows and accountability for service requests. This will be accomplished by establishing baseline expectations and monitoring results on a consistent basis. For example, the Time to Hire is a metric used in recruiting whereby AGP starts a timer when a job announcement is placed and then tracks the total time for filling the vacant position. This is checked quarterly to ensure it is within 50 days, which is the standard required by the governor's expectations to complete a competitive recruitment. Workflows will be established by managers at local offices to determine how to track time of completion of customer service tasks.
- C. **Foster Customer Engagement.** Through regular contact with customers, there will be feedback gathering (through surveys and random spot checks) to seek insight for areas of needed improvement and incorporate suggestions to improve service quality and delivery. Information technology will be leveraged in reaching out to supported audiences to gather feedback. Regular audits will also be conducted to assess service quality. Quality control will be a discussion during performance feedback.
- D. **Training for Service Delivery.** The state provides a comprehensive online training that is required to be completed by all new employees within 60 days of hire. In addition, OMD has a robust orientation of new employees and an expectation that direct supervisors will onboard new employees with information detailing the specific duties of their position in relation to customer service.

### Self Service Tools

OMD has a public facing website which customers can navigate to find answers to frequently asked questions without needing to engage with another person. The OMD main webpage is located at [Oregon Military Department : Welcome Page : State of Oregon](#) and allows for customers to peruse general information about available services.

### Root Cause Analysis

As the Service of Choice for Oregonians, OMD is committed to providing excellent customer service that leaves all those who have contact with agency personnel feeling valued and appreciated. To improve when something goes wrong or falls short of a customer's expectations, the agency has pinpointed methods of discovery, to include:

- A. Collect and Analyze Customer Feedback. Surveys and questionnaires will be used to gather feedback directly from the customer after services have been rendered.
- B. Social media and reviews. Representatives who maintain social media sites for OMD will monitor feedback from customers. If/when complaints are received, they will provide to the proper authority to identify the issue(s) and determine resolution(s).
- C. Conduct trend analyses. Management and leaders will examine patterns in customer complaints or escalations over time to identify trends or reoccurring issues. This will involve categorizing complaints to determine if any are frequently occurring as this could signal systemic problems. Management will engage with frontline staff for input and ask customer service representatives about any recurring issues, themes or concerns.
- D. Conduct exit interviews. When a manager is aware of a dissatisfied customer, they will attempt to facilitate an "exit interview" whereby they seek to understand the reason for the dissatisfaction and look for clarity on how this could be avoided in the future.
- E. Conduct quality assurance audits at random intervals. Management will evaluate the quality of responses from customers, look at adherence to local policies and protocols, while implementing resolutions when needed or necessary.

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- F. Industry comparison. Compare current practices against industry standards to identify any gaps.
- G. Utilize engagement surveys. OMD will use our currently conducted annual engagement survey results to look for any trends and issues that may be impacting engagement, which in turn, effects customer service.
- H. When issues are identified, acknowledge the problem or complaint, then respond promptly to the concerned customer(s). Offer a sincere and genuine apology while taking responsibility for the issue and expressing a commitment to rectifying the issue.
- I. Implement immediate solutions, if possible. Provide clear steps through a transparent explanation to the customer of how the issue(s) will be resolved.
- J. To improve internal processes, incorporate additional training or coaching for employees who may be involved with the situation(s). If needed, update internal operating procedures. Continuously refine procedures based on data insights.

## Communication Channels and Live Assistance Contacts

The agency encourages and promotes direct contact communication with members of the public and those seeking customer support. Due to the geographic distances between different entities in OMD, this is often accomplished through the use of phone, web-based interactions (Microsoft Teams, Zoom), or through email. It is advised that the customer's communication preference always be considered; however, there may be times when there are factors that cause limitations to in-person interactions. Each situation should be analyzed case-by case. Selecting the right communication channel is crucial for great customer service.

Considerations for different types of communication include:

- A. Phone support. This offers immediate and more personalized assistance. It is ideal for resolving more complex or urgent issues and may be the best solution if a customer is in a rush and does not have immediate access to other forms of information technology. Employees providing customer service over telephone should utilize active listening, patience, and empathy.
- B. Email support. Probably the most utilized type of communication for internal customers, this allows for detailed communication as well as document sharing. It is

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more suitable for non-urgent queries or follow-ups. Staff responding over email must adhere to the response timeline from policy, which does require constant checking for any questions. It is recommended that local offices create templates for answers to common inquiries to ensure consistency as well as speedier responses.

- C. Live chat or video camera support (MS Teams). Microsoft Teams allows staff to communicate internally through voice/video conversations or an instant message chat feature. This enables real-time support without the need for a phone call. It can be useful in responding to simple inquiries as the responder can multi-task or respond when engaged with another item. The video feature can create a virtual in person meeting and is good to use when seeking to understand and show facial expressions and non-verbal communication. It also offers face-to-face communication for personalized service. The written chat feature is not advisable to use to convey complex information.
- D. In-person support. The in-person support is most effective for building trust and rapport and is best to use if engaging in a high conflict situation. It must be understood that some customers have a strong preference for this type of communication. This may require an appointment scheduling time so that agency staff can meet with customers at a pre-planned time and location. It is recommended to provide digital follow-up documentation to memorialize information sharing when meeting in person.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Our agency strives to include voices at all levels, and this includes hearing directly or indirectly from our customer base. Input, feedback, and comments from customers received is always welcome and collected to be shared at the appropriate levels, depending on the information presented. We strive to identify customers as individuals and allocate the resources and opportunities needed to reach equal outcomes at the level in which the individual needs are met. Managers work with their employees directly to identify customers' needs and plan for customers' positive experiences and interactions.

As part of our agency Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) strategy, the agency holds DEIB committee meetings twice a year with participants from all divisions. Customer feedback identified as being rooted in the area of diversity, equity, or inclusion will be shared with the agency DEIB Coordinator so that it can be discussed as a topic for potential improvement through and with the DEIB committee.



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One way in which the agency is working to improve upon DEIB initiatives is through providing optional training, conducted every other month during 2025. The agency DEIB Coordinator is facilitating the virtual training sessions for all staff. The six trainings will allow for staff who serve in customer service roles to introspectively consider their customer service support through the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

## Continuous Improvement Processes

Due to the diverse nature of the different divisions and programs within OMD, there are vastly different customers and ways in which those customers are engaged and supported. As such, each major division is tasked with creating an internal customer service Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to detail the processes for tracking customer service metrics, measure successes of reaching objectives, and define how to improve upon any deficiencies. Divisions are charged with identifying ways to engage customers to rate their satisfaction with interactions and support provided. This data will be gathered through regularly collected post-service surveys or management level quality assurance checks, such as after-service queries. Other operation metrics to track will include customer inquiries acknowledgement and resolution times. Ultimately, each division will determine how to identify needed customer service improvement areas and implement methods to enhance and improve upon the customers' experiences.

### REFERENCES

- Department of Administrative Services, Strategic Initiatives and Enterprise Accountability, [Department of Administrative Services : Strategic Initiatives and Enterprise Accountability : State of Oregon](#)
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