



# MARYLAND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY Customer Service Annual Report



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## FY17 Highlights

- Developed internal Customer Service Training curriculum and delivered training sessions to all staff.
- Used social media to help get the word out about services, events, and news to provide citizens and businesses with information important to them.
- Updated online publications, forms, FAQs, and pertinent information on our website so that citizens and businesses can find relevant information quickly and accurately.
- Recognized top performers in our agency for professionalism and courtesy, responsiveness in resolving a customer's needs, and for innovations that improve customer service.
- Monitored and analyzed customer service survey results in order to continuously improve customer service.
- Conducted customer service committee meetings to discuss progress on achieving customer service goals.

## Recognition Given to Employees

Currently the Maryland Emergency Management Agency has the Executive Director's ABC Award. This award is given to MEMA employees who go Above and Beyond the Call of duty each day to provide the following:

- Activities that have an impact on the work place
- Helpful services to others both in and out of the agency
- Go "above and beyond" while showing initiative
- Consistently display outstanding personal qualities

Employees are nominated for the ABC award by their co-workers. Each quarter, Executive Director Strickland rates the nominations and selects a winner who receives the following:

- Award presentation at the monthly all- staff meeting
- Lunch with the Director
- Parking in the designated Employee Parking spot for the quarter

Winners of the ABC award for the past year are listed below:

### **Emily Allen**

Digital Engagement Coordinator

*"For working on projects that have directly or indirectly helped other branches, as well as other agencies, always thinking outside the box, and taking on projects that promote and augment the agency mission"*

### **John T. Broaddus, Jr.**

Training Administrator

*"For your quick responsiveness, willingness to help with staff, and always being cordial to others, and going above and beyond your service to assist the department"*

### **Kelly Devilbiss**

State Public Assistance Officer  
& Procurement Coordinator

*"For your outstanding relationships with FEMA, local partners and private non-profit's within the State of Maryland. Your daily efforts in getting locals reimbursed quickly contributes immensely to the image and integrity of our agency"*

### **Chuck Webster**

Safety Officer/Daily Operations Administrator

*"For your positive "can do" attitude and willingness to go above and beyond your daily duties while constantly ensuring the safety of MEMA employees and visiting guests"*

### **Ian Alexander**

Senior National Capital Region Planner

*"For being a critical member of the MEMA Planning Team, and the work you have produced during your tenure with MEMA. The quality of work is incomparable and has gained merit across the State, the District, and NoVa"*

### **Josephina Fogell**

Administrative Officer

*"For always going above and beyond the call of duty for everyone at MEMA and being the "go-to" person while always doing everything with a great attitude and never saying no. A great multitasker and works hard to make sure MEMA looks good as an agency"*

## Leadership Analysis of FY17 and Summary of FY18 Approach

The customer service mission of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is to actively engage with customers in providing consistent, accessible information and support before, during, and after emergencies. MEMA's customers span a broad range, from other state agencies and federal and local emergency management partners to community stakeholders, private businesses, and everyday citizens. Given this broad customer base and mission, MEMA delivers a diversity of services and functions.

Following Governor Hogan's Customer Service Initiative announcement last year, a customer service committee was established at MEMA to ensure that the agency was delivering exceptional customer service, both internally and externally. The committee developed the MEMA Customer Service Plan and training curriculum for all staff, based on the following core goals:

- Provide clear and accessible information, prompt response, and active engagement in delivery of all services
- Promote effective communication, relationship building, and problem-solving through staff Customer Service Training
- Cultivate a culture of customer service within the agency

All MEMA employees, including leadership, have completed their customer service training as of July 2017 and the customer service committee continues to meet on a regular basis to review customer service survey results, identify/address areas for improvement, and discuss potential initiatives to enhance customer service within the agency moving forward.

The committee is currently developing the Maryland Emergency Management Agency Customer Service Excellence Award, a new award program to recognize employees who exemplify exceptional customer service. Under this program, employees who are identified in the survey or by management and meet certain criteria will be awarded the following:

- Picture displayed on the digital monitor at the front entrance of the building
- Recognition at the monthly all-staff meetings
- Recognition on the Maryland Emergency Management Agency's social media channels
  - Facebook – [facebook.com/mdmema](https://www.facebook.com/mdmema)
  - Twitter - @mdmema
  - Instagram - @mdmema
- An article in the Maryland Emergency Management quarterly newsletter
- MEMA certificate

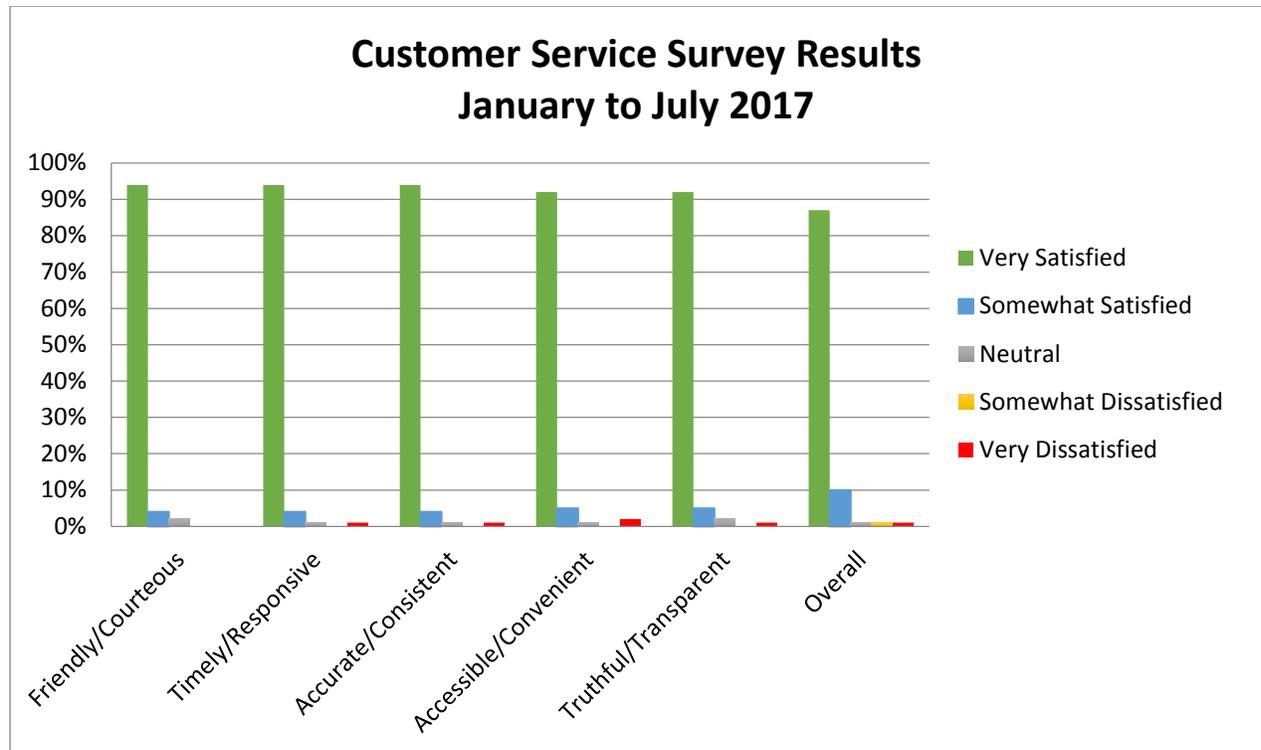
In addition to the internal recognition and awards given, each MEMA employee who wins the agency award will also be considered for the submission to Governor Hogan's Customer Service Hero Award.

The customer service committee plans to start the new Maryland Emergency Management Agency Customer Service Excellence Award program by January 1, 2018.

## Detailed FY17 Results and FY18 Plans

### Customer Service Survey Results

Upon review of the customer service survey for MEMA from January to July 2017, the customer service ratings reflect the following, from at least 220 responses received:



While recognizing that there is always room for improvement, the predominately favorable survey results indicate that MEMA is on target for providing excellent customer service. In instances of less than favorable ratings, prompt efforts were made to reach out to the customer and address/correct the issue.

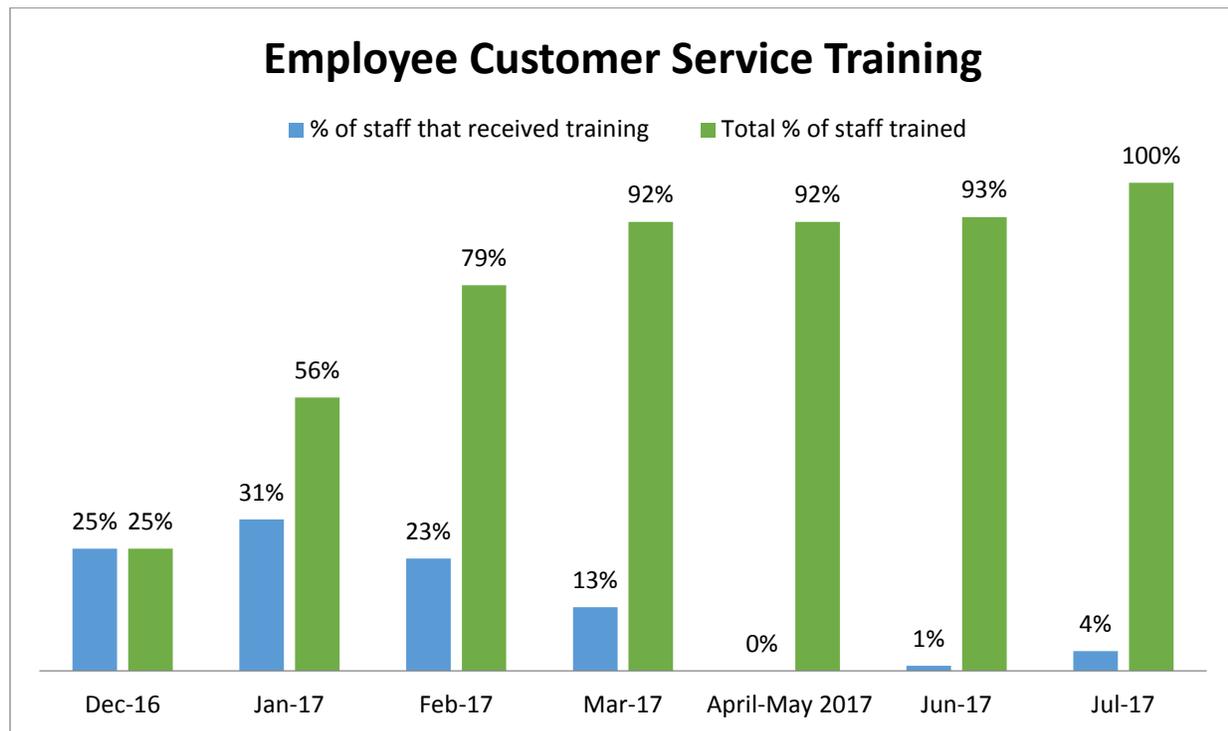
Goals to continue and enhance exceptional customer service in 2018 are as follows:

- Monitor observable employee customer service performance and take corrective actions to facilitate improved performance where needed
- Track survey responses and reach out to customers whose ratings were less than "very satisfied"
- Utilize performance data to assist in data-based customer service planning and decision-making
- Deliver refresher training to all staff members to address and improve performance gaps

## Status of Customer Service Training

After the launching of the Customer Service Initiative by Governor Hogan in 2016, the mission of the customer service team at MEMA was to have all staff members trained prior to June 2017, and to ensure that new staff members were trained within 4-6 weeks of hire. The customer service team began developing an agency specific training curriculum shortly after the Governor's announcement and started delivering training to the staff in December. As of July 2017, all MEMA staff members (including new hires) have received Customer Service training.

Based upon current staffing, below is a snapshot of the progression of the training effort:



## Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution

### Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries

In 2015, Facebook updated their platform to include a response rate rating whenever a Facebook social media account sends a private message to a verified Facebook page. MEMA's current response rating is ranked, "very responsive" as a result of responding to 90% of messages in less than 5 minutes.

MEMA's Facebook page response rating can be viewed by everyone and is displayed publicly to visitors alongside a green messages icon right below the Cover photo on the left-hand side of the screen.

## Best Practices

As survey results indicate (94% very satisfied) the timely response to customer inquiries has been consistent. Promising practices included the following:

- Following up to email and telephonic service requests in a reasonable amount of time (within 24 hours where possible)
- Providing the customer with periodic status updates regarding the service delivery process and anticipated service delays
- Following up within 24-48 hours of notification of service gaps identified through the customer service survey (especially less than satisfied customers)

## Plans for Improvement

Plans for improvement in FY18 include continued review and evaluation of the service delivery processes and practices, to ensure that our service is best meeting the needs of our customers.

## Improving the Customer Experience from Multiple Perspectives

### Making Agency Services Available Online

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency interacts virtually with customers through both the agency website and social media platforms. The MEMA website can be translated into numerous languages and can be accessed by those with disabilities or special needs. In addition to connecting with customers on social media platforms, the MEMA website provides customers with access to the following services and information:

- Learning Management System (LMS), for information and registration to all MEMA coordinated, sponsored and/or led training and exercises throughout the state
- Electronic Grants Management System for Sub Grantees of Homeland Security and Emergency Management awards
- Information and resources for the Public and Individual Assistance programs
- Information and access to the Private Sector Integration Program for business community partners
- OSPREY (Operational and Situational Preparedness for Responding to an EmergencY), a suite of public facing applications for situational awareness including:
  - OSPREY Public: interactive map providing information about current conditions; includes ability to view specific data such as hurricane tracks, traffic conditions, flood prone areas and medical facilities.
  - OSPREY Dashboard: color-coded table providing the status of power outages, weather, traffic, hospitals and shelters
  - OSPREY Power Outage: map and chart displaying power outage information using data provided by utility websites every 30 minutes

Later this year the MEMA website will be updated and redesigned for ease of access, based on feedback and data from both our internal and external partners. This reorganization will make the information and resources on our site more easily available to our broad customer base, from businesses, to state and local partners, to everyday citizens.

### Processing Times for Customer Transactions

MEMA's primary functions are communication, coordination, and support. While attempting to capture these functions in a formal tracking system to assess processing times is impracticable, the agency regularly holds forums and meetings with its partners to provide an opportunity for feedback and improvement of its services. Some examples of forums for feedback are:

- The Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council
- Monthly calls and quarterly meetings with local Emergency Managers
- Debriefings with staff and partners following exercises and activations to identify best practices and areas for improvement

Two process change initiatives currently in development that have stemmed from collaboration with and feedback from partners are the Maryland Emergency Management System and the Maryland Swiftwater/Flood Search & Rescue Response System.

### Adjusting Hours to Meet Customer Demands

In addition to the many services MEMA provides to local and State partners during regular operating hours, during emergencies MEMA personnel shift to staffing 24/7 functions within the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). These activations generally run 12-hour operational periods and may last hours, days, weeks, and sometimes months. For example, MEMA activated and staffed the State Emergency Operations Center to support Howard County in response to the extensive flooding in Ellicott City last July. During this activation, MEMA led the coordination of recovery activities between Howard County and State departments/agencies involved in providing support and services, including the following:

- Maryland Department of Planning
- Maryland Insurance Administration
- Department of General Services
- Maryland Department of Health
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Human Resources
- Department of Disabilities

Additionally, several MEMA staff members provided staffing support on location at the Howard County Emergency Operations Center throughout the duration of the activation.

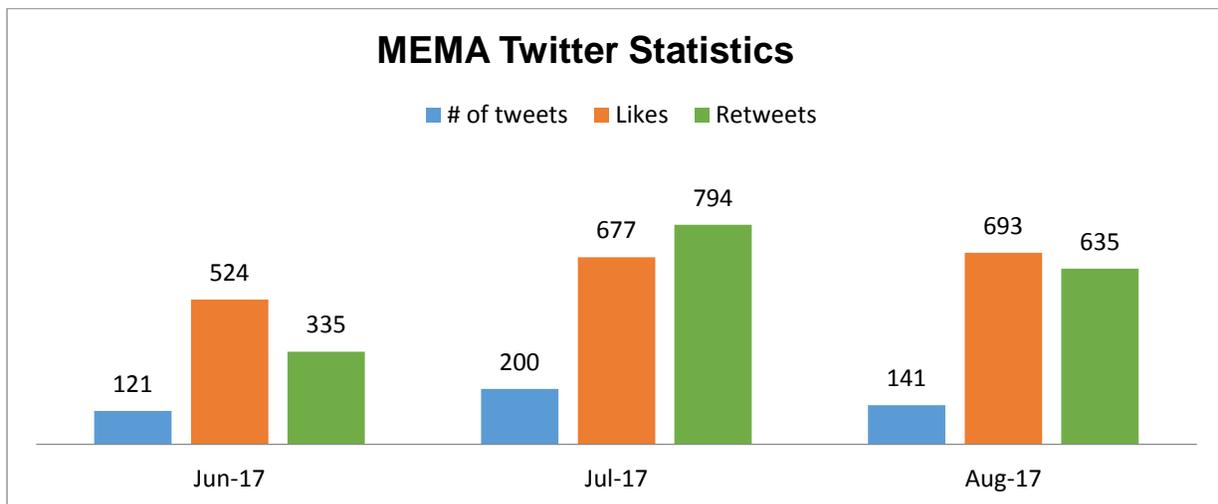
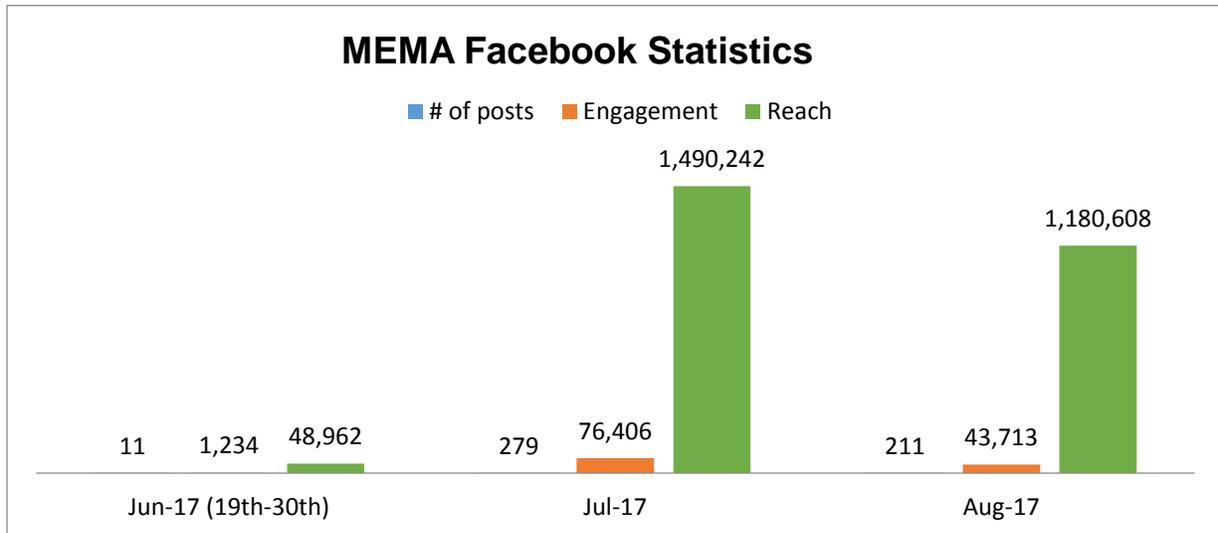
Another key element of MEMA is the Maryland Joint Operations Center (MJOC), which is the state's primary situational awareness, alert, warning, and notification center. The

MJOC is operated around-the-clock by National Guard and emergency management professionals, providing a 24/7 conduit for information gathering and situational awareness during normal, day-to-day operations, as well as supplementing situational awareness activities within the SEOC during periods of heightened activity.

### Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience

Information sharing is one of MEMA’s primary missions and the agency is consistently engaged in social media outreach and interaction. MEMA is currently active on the following platforms, catering to a variety of demographics:

- Facebook (66,959 followers)
- Twitter (34,100 followers)
- Instagram (1,220 followers)
- LinkedIn (1,127 followers)
- SnapChat (106 followers)
- SoundCloud (20 followers)



In addition to these social media platforms, MEMA became the first state emergency management agency in the nation to join Nextdoor, a private social network for neighborhoods. Each Maryland neighborhood has its own private Nextdoor neighborhood website, accessible only to verified residents of that neighborhood. This partnership with Nextdoor gives MEMA the ability to target communications by geography, such as regions or flood zones, allowing the agency to connect with communities and share timely preparedness and alert information directly with residents who need it.

Finally, MEMA has been coordinating with the Maryland Department of Disabilities to ensure its social media platforms meet the needs of those with disabilities and access and functional needs. The two agencies have been working together over the last year to identify and address existing accessibility gaps and presented on their process and findings at the 2017 National Government Social Media Conference.



*“Good,  
better, best.  
Never let it  
rest.  
Until your  
good gets to  
be better,  
and your  
better  
gets to be  
best”*

