



Case Study: Maryland DHR, Office of Constituent Services

Maryland DHR, Office of Constituent Services, Transforms Its Customer Service Process and Delivers on Mandate to Provide Accessibility to Constituents

Background

The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) manages the Office of Constituent Services, which handles all information and assistance on a wide range of family, health, and fiscal services to the public. The manual nature of the department's management of constituent inquiries was inefficient, preventing DHR from providing the public with easy access to needed services. Active Network, Government was selected to develop a call center system and handle all inbound constituent inquiries for 37 different human services.

Challenge

For over 35 of the human services programs it managed, the DHR Constituent Services handled all customer service activities manually. This involved receiving calls from the public, determining the type of service needed, completing a hard copy form designated for the service requested, faxing the forms to the appropriate State department, and transferring the call to that department for resolution. The completed forms were then filed in Constituent Services and later used for compiling monthly reports to upper management.

Given the manual processes involved and the inability to manage the large volumes of data involved, DHR Constituent Services could not maintain the organized and efficient operation needed to service the public's needs. They also had no means of gauging the success of the operation or anticipating what resources would be needed to deal with future growth. Recognizing the shortcomings of their system, the DHR decided to outsource this process.

Solution

DHR selected Active Network under the state's Call/Contact Center Services Master Contract Vehicle to develop a call center system to handle inbound and outbound call center operations and data capture. Additionally, Active was required to provide customer service representatives to handle all calls and process requests for order fulfillment.

Customer at a Glance

Customer: Maryland Department of Human Resources, Office of Constituent Services

Solution: Managed Services

URL: www.dhr.state.md.us

Project Highlights:

- ▶ Providing Managed Services to DHR since 2000
- ▶ Serving 23 Maryland counties and Baltimore City
- ▶ Fielding more than 7,700 calls per month

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Technology

Active Network developed:

- ▶ A call center system to handle inbound and outbound call center operations, data capture, and routing outbound calls to DHR offices, including the ability to handle calls after hours and on weekends resulting from media campaigns.
- ▶ A comprehensive call flow and intelligent routing process that integrates the assigned DHR programs and services with Active's equipment, operation, and array of services.
- ▶ A database to capture caller information based on the logic of the hard copy forms previously used by DHR.
- ▶ An IVR menu system in coordination with DHR.
- ▶ Computer/Telephony Integration (CTI) functionality for intelligent call routing and auto-populating the CSR screen with data captured in the IVR.
- ▶ TTY support for hearing impaired callers.

Results

Since early 2000, Active has developed and managed an informational and transactional call center for taking calls in English and Spanish from constituents in 23 Maryland Counties and Baltimore City on many human services issues involving the financial and physical well being of the public. In all, Active handles calls for 37 different services under the DHR umbrella. These services are listed in the table below.

Adoption	Faith Community	Other Medical Waivers
Adult Abuse/Neglect	Fatherhood Activities	Out-of-State Inquiries
Appeals	Food Stamps	Press and Media
Birth Registry	Foster Care	Project Retain
Central Administration Employees	General Information	Reporting Changes
Child Abuse/Neglect	Hardworking Families	Special Alert
Child Care	Homelessness	State Government
Child Support	Housing	Temporary Cash Assistance
Complaints/Concerns	Independence Card	TTY for Hearing Impaired
DHR Local Departments	Kinship	Welfare Fraud
Domestic Violence	Living at Home/Attendant Care Waiver	Women's Services
Emergency Food	Medical Assistance	
Energy Assistance	One Church One Child	

The comprehensive solution provided by Active has resulted in:

- ▶ In-depth reporting including information on calls by county, service, language, number of calls transferred to local DHR departments, average call handling time, number of dropped calls, and number of calls received, answered, and abandoned.
- ▶ The ability to identify spikes and other call patterns and dynamically deploy staffing to meet call surges.
- ▶ An abandon rate of approximately 5%, well below the contract specification of 10%.
- ▶ The ability to add new, additional services to the call center and IVR configuration in less than three days, including IVR programming time.