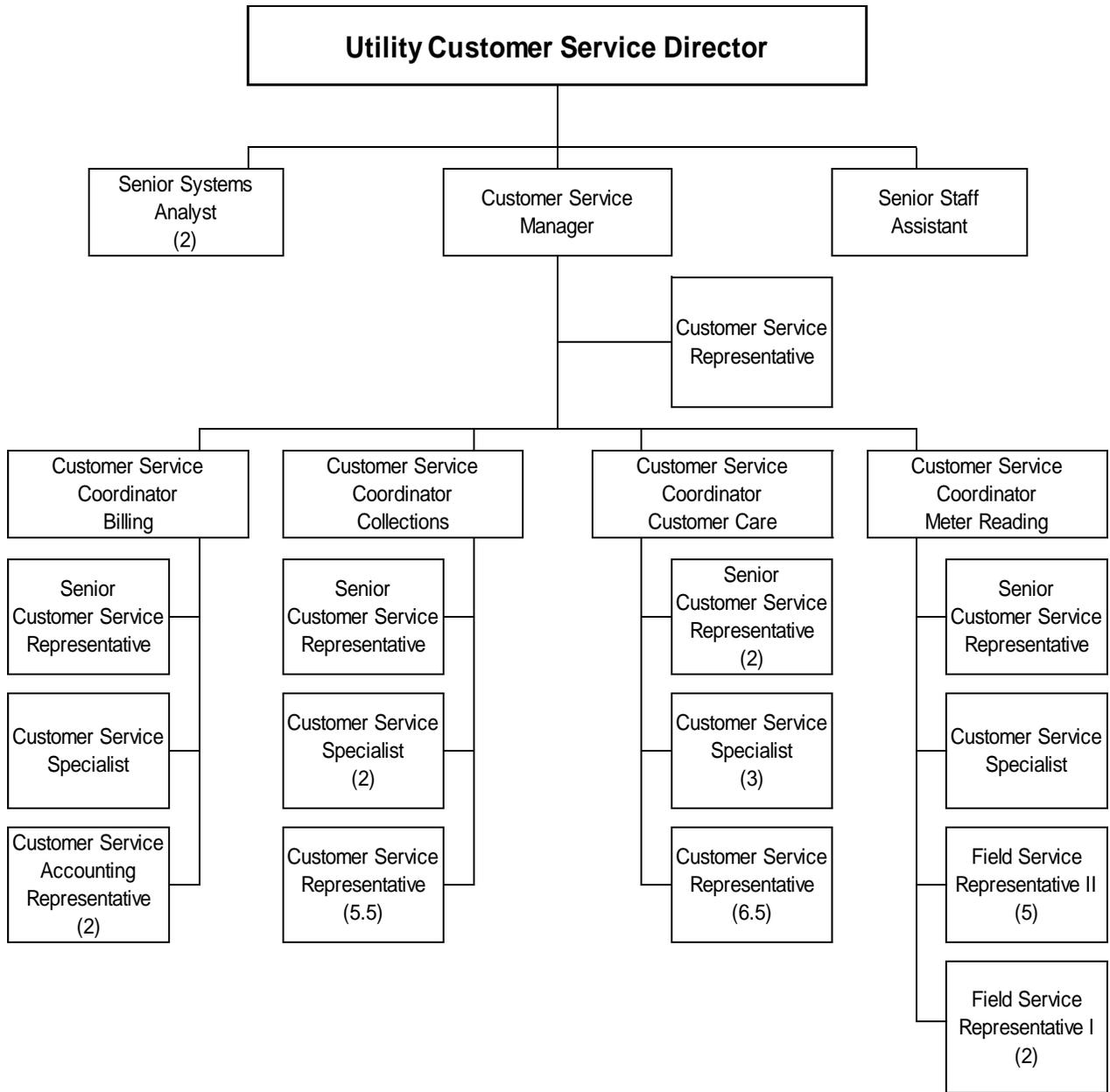




# UTILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE



Utility Customer Service – 43.0 FTE's

# UTILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

## Department Description

Utility Customer Service (UCS) is responsible for providing centralized customer service functions to customers of the seven City utilities: Gas, Water, Sewer, Solid Waste, Recycling, Reclaimed Water, and Stormwater. The major areas associated with this responsibility include Meter Reading, Billing, Collections, and Customer Care.

Meter Reading Representatives are responsible for securing accurate and timely readings. Metered services include: Water (potable, lawn, reclaimed), Gas and Wastewater (based on metered potable water usage). Each month Meter Reading Representatives visit each service location and record meter readings in a hand held device that interfaces with our Utility Management System. Meter reading is the first step in a billing process that optimizes "read-to-bill" time and ensures that each account is billed each month. The Meter Reading section also performs special readings, leak notifications, and initiates service orders based on field observations.

The Billing section is responsible for calculation and preparation of customer bills, resolving billing exceptions, processing service orders and special/final bill requests, and generating reports. Each day, the Billing section is responsible for reviewing account billing, based on the previous day's meter readings, as well as, billings for non-metered utility services.

The Collections section is responsible for managing utility customer accounts receivable in a fiscally responsible manner that respects customers while limiting the exposure of the City of Clearwater to delinquent accounts. Active accounts with past due balances are noticed and measures are undertaken to secure payment. Services are disconnected for non-payment when necessary. The Collections area also manages inactive accounts receivable, seeking payment of final bills, performing skip-tracing and filing property liens as appropriate. Payments are received and processed on a daily basis.

The Customer Care section is responsible for responding in a timely, courteous, and professional manner to customer requests received via telephones, mail (postal or e-mail) or from walk-in customers. Accounts are opened or closed, requests for information are responded to, and inquiries are researched and resolved.

Utility Customer Service is located on the first floor of the Municipal Services Building, 100 S. Myrtle Avenue. Customers may reach Utility Customers Service either by phone at 727-562-4600, in person Monday thru Friday (except for observed holidays), or on the web at [www.myclearwater.com/services/customer\\_service](http://www.myclearwater.com/services/customer_service).

| <b>DEPARTMENT SUMMARY</b>             |                           |                           |                           |                           |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
|                                       | <b>Actual<br/>2013/14</b> | <b>Actual<br/>2014/15</b> | <b>Budget<br/>2015/16</b> | <b>Budget<br/>2016/17</b> | <b>%<br/>Change</b> |
| Personnel                             | 2,146,983                 | 2,199,809                 | 2,422,410                 | 2,406,700                 | -1%                 |
| Operating                             | 621,995                   | 623,543                   | 696,540                   | 705,650                   | 1%                  |
| Internal Services                     | 404,334                   | 392,475                   | 431,990                   | 435,810                   | 1%                  |
| Transfers                             | -                         | -                         | 50,000                    | 50,000                    | 0%                  |
| <b>Total Utility Customer Service</b> | <b>3,173,312</b>          | <b>3,215,827</b>          | <b>3,600,940</b>          | <b>3,598,160</b>          | <b>0%</b>           |

# UTILITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

| DEPARTMENT FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|   | Actual<br>2013/14 | Actual<br>2014/15 | Budget<br>2015/16 | Budget<br>2016/17 |
| Utility Customer Service                  | 44.0              | 44.0              | 43.0              | 43.0              |
| <b>Total Utility Customer Service</b>     | <b>44.0</b>       | <b>44.0</b>       | <b>43.0</b>       | <b>43.0</b>       |

## Department Highlights

- ❖ The Utility Customer Service program is an internal service function supporting all City utility operations. All costs of the Utility Customer Service program are passed back to the City's utility departments based upon services provided. This program supports all customer service functions, including billing, collection, accounting, meter reading, administration, and customer service for over 50,000 monthly billable accounts.
- ❖ The Utility Customer Service program is supported by 43 full time equivalent positions, the same level of staffing as the 2015/16 budget.
- ❖ Other operating costs include the funding for postage related to mailing monthly utility bills to City residents estimated at \$304,000 which is approximately 43% of operating expenditures.
- ❖ Transfers include \$50,000 to fund a capital improvement project for Customer Information System Upgrades and Replacements, which provides funding for future enhancements and maintenance of the customer service information system. This is the same level of funding as the 2015/16 budget.
- ❖ There have been no other significant changes in the Utility Customer Service Department; the budget for this program reflects a slight decrease from the 2015/16 budget.

