

Utility Collections: Trends and Challenges

Recommended CEUs .7/PDHs 6.5/CPEs 7.8

Field of Study: Specialized Knowledge

Wednesday

8:30 a.m. Section One

- Course Introduction and Overview
- Discussion of Learning Objectives
- The Basics of Customer Service/Call Center Operations
 - Personnel
 - Physical Location
 - Software/Technology

10:00 a.m. Break

10:15 a.m. Section Two

- What Makes a Good Customer Service Operation
 - Value of Fair and Consistent Collections Policies and Procedures
- Best Practices in Public Power for Policies and Procedures
 - Office Hours, Setting Up New Accounts, Security Deposits
- Exercise: Break into groups to discuss how students are addressing new account issues at their utilities—report highlights back to class for further discussion

Noon Lunch (*on your own*)

1:00 p.m. Section Three

- How to Communicate with Customers about Outages
 - During and after office hours
- Best Practices in Public Power for Policies and Procedures
 - Payment Schedules
 - Overdue Accounts (skip tracing, liens, and credit agencies)
 - Handling Collections In-House vs. Outsourcing
- Exercise: Break into groups to discuss how students are addressing payment schedules and overdue account issues at their utilities—report highlights back to class for further discussion

3:00 p.m. Break

3:15 p.m. Section Four

- Open Discussion with Students About Issues at Their Own Utilities and Sharing Strategies for Resolving Them
- Brainstorm topics for special project students must complete in one year for APPA Certification. Each project combines an assessment of and a plan for improving one of the following topics:
 - Customer Service Culture Across the Organization
 - Payment & Non-Payment Policies and Procedures
 - Improving Operations of the Customer Service Office/Call Center
 - Customer Service Communications & Technologies
 - Topics for Student to Propose

4:30 p.m. Course Adjourns

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Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to successfully:

1. Describe the basic elements of customer service/call center operations.
2. Identify the hallmarks of good customer service operations.
3. Explain the benefits of having fair and consistent policies and procedures for new accounts, overdue accounts, and payment schedules.
4. Describe best practices in setting up new accounts and determining security deposit requirements.
5. Describe best practices for handling overdue accounts.
6. List today's payment options.
7. Design a plan for assessing and improving a customer service policy or procedure, as required for APPA's Customer Service Management Certificate.