

## **How Can We Help: Approaches to Customer Service**

## **Funded By a Grant From the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals**

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## Course Description

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- Civil process is often the public's first (and most frequent) touchpoint with a constable's office.
- We'll discuss best practices for top-notch customer service while staying within legal and ethical boundaries.
- Topics include professionalism, communication, legal information vs. legal advice, ethics, technology, and resources.
- Unique perspectives from panelists representing different office sizes.

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## Learning Objectives

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- Identify best practices for effective customer service related to civil process.
- Apply standards of ethics, professionalism, and effective communication to real-life scenarios.
- Distinguish between legal information and legal advice.
- Use technology to access important information and resources.
- Use the Civil Process Field Guide and other handbooks, statutes, and forms relating to service of civil process.

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## **Panelist Introductions**

**Chad Jordan – All**

**James Slack – All**

**Ali Flores – Denton**

**Paul Leal – Galveston**

**Carl Eller – San Marcos**

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## **Poll: Who's in the Room?**

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- How many people are in your office?
- 0–4 deputies
- 5–10 deputies
- More than 10 deputies

Slido link/code: \_\_\_\_\_

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**What are 3 words for how you  
want the public to view your  
office?**

7

**What is one thing your office  
does really well in customer  
service that you are proud of?**

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**How often do you actually call people back with updates on their case, paperwork, or complaints – and how realistic is that for small, mid and large agencies?**

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**How do you use social media and/or a website to enhance customer service?**

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**What are your policies for responding to social media messages and emails, and website contact forms?**

11

**What misunderstandings do you hear most about what a Constable's office can/can't do?**

And how do you explain limits (due to office size) without sounding dismissive?

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## **What is the difference between legal information and legal advice?**

What resources are available from your office for the public?

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## **How do you handle high-emotion contacts such as a citizen being angry and disrespectful?**

14

**How do you provide customer service when someone is upset about fees, fines or court orders that you did not create?**

15

**How do you keep communication smooth with the JP Court staff when facing the same upset customer?**

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**How do you balance office safety and scene control while being respectful and transparent in regards to:**

**Evictions**

**Seizures**

**Mental Health Warrants**

**Child Custody Orders**

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**What is your process for handling complaints about a deputy or staff member, or yourself?**

18

**If you wanted to improve customer service  
with no new money and no new staff,  
what are the first two or three things you  
would start doing Monday?**

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## Resources

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- <https://www.tjctc.org/>
  - Civil Process Field Guide and other deskbooks.
  - Webinars, self-paced modules, forms.
  - SRL packets, self-help resources for the public, etc.
- <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/> - Statutes and Constitution
- <https://www.txcourts.gov/rules-forms/rules-standards/> - TRCP
- OCA Legal Information vs. Legal Advice guidelines – *see class handouts*.
- Check for if you have a local referral list (or AI could help you make one):
  - JP courts • city services • county services • legal aid.

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