SECTION 280 – MANAGING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY

Table of Contents

Summary of Changes

Provides continued guidance to agencies on implementing the Federal Government's customer experience framework, and information for agencies on how to effectively manage customer experience improvement efforts. Updates include elevating the responsibility of the completion of the HISP annual capacity assessment, providing definitions for terminology and activities related to the implementation of the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experiences Act, the new requirement for HISPs to identify two specific services for their customer feedback reporting and action planning, and additional information for agencies on best practices for measuring and managing customer experience.

280.1 Who is responsible for Customer Experience and service delivery?

All Executive agencies (5 U.S.C. 105) have a responsibility to manage customer experience and improve service delivery using leading practices and a human-centered approach, under the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act, (P.L. 115-336). All agencies should apply the guidance provided in this section for the design of feedback surveys and establishing experience measures for Federal services. This guidance designates High-Impact Service Providers (HISPs, as defined in section 280.12) and Priority Life Events (PLE, as defined in section 280.12) which are required to implement the guidance in sections 280.13 through 280.16.

280.2 Who is a Federal Government customer?

For the purposes of this guidance, "customers" are individuals, businesses, and organizations (such as grantees, state and municipal agencies) that interact with a Federal Government agency or program, either directly or via a Federal contractor or even a Federally-funded program. Federal government customers could also include public servants and employees themselves in their interactions with Federal processes.

280.3 What is Federal Government customer experience?

Customer experience (CX) refers to a combination of factors that result from touchpoints between an individual, business, or organization and the Federal Government over the duration of an interaction and relationship. These factors can include ease/simplicity, efficiency/speed, equity/transparency of the process, effectiveness/perceived value of the service itself, and the interaction with any employees. Perceived responsiveness to individual needs and feedback is also important.[1] Similar to their application in the private sector, these factors can drive the overall satisfaction and confidence/trust with the program, agency, and the government at large. A customer's experience interacting with the Federal government directly contributes to their trust in government itself.[2] -As a Federal government, it is our responsibility to ensure that every interaction a member of the public has with their government demonstrates competence and builds trust. To that end, measures of experience (including measures of equity (e.g., participation), effort (burden/friction), and those outlined further in this guidance) are of co-equal importance as traditional measures of financial and operational performance, and which this document begins to outline an accountability framework to deliver. *Services*, that are defined by actual customer needs, are the unit of observation for this performance accountability irrespective of perceived current ownership or budgetary / organizational lines.

280.4 What is Federal Government service delivery?

"Service delivery" refers to the multitude of diverse interactions between a customer and Federal agency such as applying for a benefit or loan, receiving a service such as healthcare or small business counseling, requesting a document such as a passport or social security card, complying with a rule or regulation such as filing taxes or declaring goods, utilizing resources such as a park or historical site, or seeking information such as public health or consumer protection notices.

A "service" is defined as the sum of the help provided--by an agency and its partners--throughout the process a customer goes through to obtain, receive, or make use of a public offering (or comply with a policy). This definition is inspired by customer perception; customers perceive the series of interactions as a whole when they combine to solve a need or provide assistance during a life event. The degree to which those interactions are effectively coordinated, easy to navigate, and mitigate uncertainty, largely determines the customer's satisfaction and trust. Services, as experienced by the customer, cut across organizational functions. They need not align exactly to formal Federal budgets, programs, or organizational charts, or even to an individual agency. They do however require management and collaboration to be delivered effectively.

[1] The OECD has done work to demonstrate that "government's competence - its responsiveness and reliability in delivering public services and anticipating new needs - are crucial for boosting trust in institutions." See https://www.oecd.org/gov/trust-in-government.htm.

[2] A recent analysis reveals that 67 percent of the public's trust in government comes from their experience with government programs. See https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/Customer-Experience-in-the-Public-Sector.

Services start with an occasion of need, are processed as a self-service workflow or series of interactions, and end with achieving an outcome. For example, most Federal Government services can be categorized as one of several service types:

- Administrative: Requesting or renewing items that do not require an extensive eligibility determination or multi-stage review processes such as getting a license, passport, or social security card.

- Benefits: Applying for or progressing through more complex government processes to determine eligibility and degree of benefit such as immigration, Medicare, Veterans' Health services, or a small business loan.

- Compliance: Completing required actions such as filing taxes, submitting information for or engaging with an auditor, environmental reporting, or completing a survey mandated by law.

- Recreation: Utilizing public spaces such as national parks and historical sites, or visiting museums.

- Informational: Providing authoritative knowledge-based resources to the public such as designing labels, releasing warnings, requiring disclosures, or providing health recommendations.

- Data and Research: Conducting or funding research, maintaining and preserving artifacts, collecting, analyzing, reporting, and sharing data.

- Regulatory: Providing clear guidance to support commerce, transportation, employment rules, workplace safety, public safety (e.g., ensuring clean water, safe medicines); enabling reporting of grievances (e.g., consumer protection).

Services, as described above, are a more well-defined unit of observation for customer experience management than a Federal program. In many sectors, the service, even more so than the offering, determines the customer's satisfaction and the reputation of the organization or brand. Other factors affect customers' total experience - the environment, prior interactions, etc. - but the service is the most critical part controlled by the entity. Today, citizens are dissatisfied with government services when compared against the private sector, which has leveraged technology, process re-design, self-service, empowered front lines, and other tactics to raise expectations.

All Federal agencies should have knowledge of the *services* they provide (e.g., SNAP recertification, land border checkpoints, business tax filing) and should also be able to articulate:

- *Occasion*: A customer situation, ("the why") an individual is interacting with your agency and the problem they are trying to solve through your service and offering. Can be written as a story describing their intent (access financing to procure new farm equipment) or a life event (addressing food insecurity). Agencies should be able to understand the scale of the demand or impact of the problem and characteristics of the person navigating the service.

- *Offering:* A customer objective ("the thing") they are trying to get or accomplish, "the noun." The "product", good, or value received / task completed (e.g., passport, flu shot, loan, tax payment, timely entrance into the United States through a border checkpoint).

- *Channels:* The mechanisms ("the places") by which the American public accesses public services (e.g., in-person at a service center (a USDA county office), in-person at another point of service (buying stamps at a pharmacy), digital (checking a loan balance on a mobile phone), or over the phone (calling a call center to complete an application over the phone).

- *Roles:* Tasks to perform ("the people") within the delivery chain in order to deliver the services and who does do them (e.g., concierge, county office employee, auditor, chat bot).

- *Tools*: Foundational building blocks ("the tech") for delivering services (e.g., identity verification, mobile-responsive website, notification platform).

For more detail on a Federal service delivery model, visit www.performance.gov/cx.

280.5 How should agencies identify services?

All Executive agencies (5 U.S.C. 105) are required to establish processes that identify all the services that they maintain. At a minimum, this list must include the name of the service, a brief description of the service, the name of the responsible organizational unit that manages the service, and the channels in which this service is provided. If a service is not provided via a digital channel then the agency must also include a brief description as to why the service is not available in a digital channel and potential ways this service could be provided in a digital channel.

280.6 What are agency responsibilities to deliver services and make them physically available through multiple channels?

Service delivery through multiple channels increases access and participation, ensuring that Government services are available to all - including those who need them the most, such as socially disadvantaged or socially excluded groups. Agencies are encouraged to develop and leverage multichannel approaches, to the greatest extent feasible, to ensure the equitable and effective delivery of services.

Agencies must continue to maintain traditional channels and accessible methods of completing services to ensure those individuals without sufficient access to information technology are not deprived of or impeded in their ability to successfully utilize those services.

280.7 What are agencies' responsibilities toward digital service delivery?

Agencies should ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that all services are made available through a digital channel using customer experience industry best practices and human centered design. Executive agencies should review all Federal Government services on a regular basis to identify opportunities for digital service delivery. Examples of digital service channels include websites, mobile services, and public access kiosks. Examples of traditional services channels include in-person or face-to-face, telephone, and postal mail.

280.8 What is the purpose of implementing this guidance?

Implementing the guidance specified in this section will establish a more consistent, comprehensive, robust, and deliberate approach to CX across Government.

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- Increase agencies' understanding of customers' needs and measure continuous improvement of Federal Government services to better meet customers' priorities;

- Establish a CX-mindful culture across Federal Government services;
- Improve customer satisfaction with and trust in Federal Government;
- Provide structure and consistency around how agencies/programs approach CX;
- Promote accountability and governance mechanisms to improve service design, quality and service;
- Ensure high-impact programs are making progress in growing CX program maturity, service definition, and applying leading practices[3];
- Ensure high-impact programs are receiving and acting upon customer feedback to drive performance improvement and service recovery;
- Allow for government-wide comparative assessment of customer satisfaction;
- Ensure transparency through public reporting; and,
- Encourage the application of human centered design as foundational to achieving customer experience outcomes.

280.9 How should agencies manage customer experience?

At multiple levels of government organizations (departmental enterprise, bureau, program office, service center), elements of core CX functions should be present[4]. These include:

- Measurement: Defining and instituting CX outcome measures, as well as service operational measures, to ensure accountability for improving service delivery and communicating performance across the organization and to the public, routinely analyzing and making use of this data;
- Governance and Strategy: Institutionalizing CX by identifying executives and leaders responsible, organizing supporting resources, defining the processes by which strategic decisions incorporate customer perspective, and aligning CX strategy and activities with business decisions, initiatives and investments within the agency's broader mission and strategic priorities;
- Culture and Organization: Acquiring and developing the talent required to incorporate and improve CX within agency activities, and empowering all employees to adopt a CX mindset through training, performance measurement, and rewards;
- Customer Understanding: Identifying the main occasions that result in the public making use of or interacting with Federal services and conducting qualitative and quantitative research across organizational silos to map intra-agency customer journeys, as well as cross-agency journeys where applicable, to build and continually refine a knowledge base of the agency’s customer segments and needs, integrating disparate customer interaction and administrative data; and,

[3] For examples of leading practices and industry frameworks for managing customer experience, please review the annual CX Capacity Assessment template provided on performance.gov/cx.

[4] For a practitioner's guide on implementing CX core functions and capabilities, see the Customer Experience (CX) Cookbook, https://www.performance.gov/cx/assets/files/va-customer-experience-cookbook.pdf.

- Service Design and Improvement: Adopting a customer-focused approach to the implementation of services, involving and engaging customers in iterative development, leveraging digital technologies and leading practices to deliver more efficient and effective interactions, and sharing lessons learned across government.

Each fiscal year, Executive branch agencies should reflect on their maturity and capacity to perform these functions. Further, agencies and programs should develop an understanding of the types of and explicit definition of the services they offer (as defined in sections 280.4 and 280.5).

280.10 How should customer experience measures be surveyed?

To assist in developing comparable, government-wide scores that enable cross-agency benchmarking (when relevant) and reduce burden on the public, programs providing services to the public should measure their touchpoint/transactional performance. To do so, collect feedback:

1. On the services of highest-impact using customer volume, annual program cost, and/or knowledge of customer priority (importance of the service on individual lives) as weighting factors. Reference Federal Services Definition in 280.4.

2. In as a real-time manner as possible: immediately following or within 48 hours of completion or exiting the service interaction.

3. Longitudinally as appropriate, consistent with the below guidance to capture the customer's journey and its relationship to customer feedback.

4. In as few questions as possible leveraging what we know drives experience (see experience drivers in chart below) in the design of the survey.

Transactional customer feedback surveys must include:

- A required overall trust score of the entity in response to a Likert-scale question (preferred 5 point).
  - Agencies should use one of the statements below as a sentence base and make only minor edits. Any requested modification to the wording of these statements must first be discussed with OMB prior to implementation in order to maintain reporting comparability government-wide.
    - *This interaction increased my trust in [Program/Service name].*
    - *I trust [Agency/Program/Service name] to fulfill our country's commitment to [relevant population].*

- A required overall score of the transaction (satisfaction) in response to a Likert-scale question (preferred 5 point);
  - Agencies should use one of the statements below as a sentence base and make only minor edits, using a 5-point Likert scale. Any requested modification to the wording of these statements must first be discussed with OMB prior to implementation in order to maintain reporting comparability government-wide.
    - *Please rate your experience [5-star option].*
    - *I am satisfied with the service I received from [program/service name].*

- A required series of choices or questions to assess relationships between the overall score and experience drivers relevant to the service (see chart below).

  - A multiple-choice question asking a question such as *"How can we improve?"* Or *"What contributed to your rating?*" (the time it took, the employee, the quality, etc.) and enables the selection of individual drivers.
  - Alternatively, individual questions for each driver on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree) to (strongly disagree) using statements in table below. Each Driver Sub-Category lists alternative statements that can be used, but not all statements under each Driver Sub-Category must be used.

- One question allowing but not requiring free response (unless format, such as an IVR-based survey, does not enable).

- If applicable and absolutely necessary, as few questions as possible that enable the agency to make use of the data, such as a question regarding the purpose of a visit or call, for a total survey length of no more than 15 questions.

Agencies are to submit these surveys for approval under the OMB A-11 Section 280 Umbrella Clearance that can be established at the department level using the templates provided on CX MAX Community page. Individual collection requests under this clearance will be reviewed by a customer experience subject matter expert in an effort to further streamline the review of these types of collections.

Baseline statements for each driver are provided, and agencies may adjust the wording as necessary for mission and circumstance-specific customization based on the type of service (see section 280.4) or transaction type (for example, it may not involve an interaction with an employee). It is important that whenever possible, agencies ask the fewest number of questions, and map each question to one of the categories below, so that we might identify at a government-wide level those elements that are most impactful on satisfaction and trust within different types of Federal services.

Customer Experience Drivers	Driver Sub-Categories
Service Quality	**Service Effectiveness / Perception of Value**
	My need was addressed / My issue was resolved. / I found what I needed. / My question was answered.
Process	**Ease / Simplicity**
	It was easy to complete what I needed to do. / It was easy to find what I needed.
	Efficiency / Speed
	It took a reasonable amount of time to do what I needed to do. / I found what I needed on the site quickly.
	Equity / Transparency
	I was treated fairly / I understand what was being asked of me throughout the process.
People *(If applicable for a transaction)*	**Employee Interaction / Warmth / Helpfulness / Competence**
	Employees I interacted with were helpful. / The Call Center Representative was committed to solving my problem.

Note: These domains are in alignment with leading practices from both the private and public sectors, including Fortune 500 companies, market research institutions, and international organizations.

In general, agencies should follow these leading practices for feedback surveys:

- For applicable services, customer feedback should be obtained as close to the time of the transaction as is possible. For example:

- A persistent button on a website for providing feedback
- A prompt at the end of the service engagement
- An email or other message sent soon after the engagement
- A kiosk near the exit of a room or building were a service took place

- Make data available to program managers as frequently as practical (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly), with capabilities to analyze and take action.

- To the extent possible, feedback collection mechanisms should be brief, thereby imposing minimal burden on customers and sampling techniques may be used on high-volume transactions to reduce burden, when appropriate.

- Administer surveys applying practices for optimizing response rate, for example, presenting only a single-screen (even on a mobile device) version of the survey.

- Agencies should have an overarching measurement and collection plan that captures timing for transaction, journey and relationship customer feedback, taking stock of all data collection efforts and minimizing survey fatigue. Based on this strategy, OMB is open to conversations regarding how and when trust measures are collected. Definitions of these three points in time:
  - Transaction (immediately following or within 48 hours): Measuring the customer perspective after a single, stand-alone interaction such as after viewing a website to find a piece of information, purchasing a park pass, or speaking with a contact center employee.

  - Journey: Measuring the customer perspective after a series of interactions, completion of a multi-stage process such as applying for and receiving/managing Federal student aid, filing taxes, or a specific period of someone's life such as transitioning from military active duty.

  - Relationship: Measuring the customer perspective reflecting on the lifetime of their engagement and series of transactions and journeys with a service providing agency.

- Agencies are encouraged but not required to also solicit relationship-level customer feedback reflecting on customers' overall lifetime of interactions across agency services and perception of the agency as a whole. In this case, measuring the customer perspective reflecting on the lifetime of their engagement and series of transactions and journeys with a service providing agency.

- Data should be coded so that it can be sorted for action by organizational units, such as office location.

- Relevant service level indicators (e.g., wait times) and usage statistics (e.g., leveraging the Digital Analytics Program (DAP)) appropriate to each service should also be collected and measured.

- CX data collected, including quantitative customer feedback data on satisfaction, trust, drivers of experience and service level metrics, should be made publicly available; for example, on performance.gov/CX, and included in the Annual Performance Report (see section 280.14).

As overall CX program maturity and capacity increases across the Federal Government, OMB may provide guidance for additional types and levels of measurement.

280.11 How should customer experience be reflected in the agency's Annual Performance Plan?

Agency Annual Performance Plans should include indicators for outcomes related to customer experience and relevant service levels. This should include customer feedback data collected as described above in section 280.10, as well as service level indicators (e.g., wait times, website utilization data) appropriate to their program. More information on integrating this information into the Annual Performance Plan is included in section 210.

280.12 What programs have been identified as High-Impact Service Provider (HISPs)?

High-Impact Service Providers are those Federal entities designated by OMB that provide (or fund) high-impact customer-facing services, either due to a large customer base or a high impact on those served by the program. HISPs will be reviewed and updated periodically by OMB. The current list of HISPs is available at Performance.gov/HISPs.

The senior accountable official for the High Impact Service Provider (or appropriate senior official) shall coordinate the selection of Designated Services, completion of an annual CX Capacity Assessment and Customer Experience and Service Delivery Action Plan ("Action Plan") for the enterprise. In addition to relevant program and field office staff, this exercise should serve as an intra-agency convening mechanism around the customers served and involve cross-cutting representation from mission support functions within the agency, including the Chief Information Officer, Chief Human Capital Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Performance Improvement Officer, Evaluation Officer, and Chief Data Officer. HISPs will work with OMB to identify at least two (2) high impact services for which they will complete quarterly reporting and develop improvements for in their Action Plan. An annual HISP CX Capacity Assessment and Action Plan template will be provided annually on the CX MAX Community page.

Additionally, each year, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will identify priority life experiences that require members of the public to navigate a service (or services) across the boundaries of multiple Federal programs, agencies and / or levels of government. OMB will provide leadership, a governance structure, and dedicated support to agencies through the President's Management Council to tackle improvements for these life experiences. The list of these experiences will be made available at Performance.gov/HISPs.

280.13 What additional steps should HISPs take to manage customer experience?

Given the significance of the services they provide, HISPs must:

- In collaboration with OMB, designate at least two (2) services for focused assessment and the activities of this guidance (by December 31st);

- Collect customer feedback in accordance with section 280.14 for identified moments that matter along designated service journeys (e.g., no longer sufficient to only report general call center satisfaction measures without the context of a service journey);

- Submit this feedback data to OMB at a minimum quarterly, until feedback data is provided directly to Performance.gov through an open application programming interface (API) (once developed);

- Conduct an annual CX Capacity Assessment (submitted to OMB by February 25th) and brief OMB on the resulting findings at an annual deep dive (completed by March 31st);

- Develop an Action Plan (submitted to OMB by May 31st) annually for each designated HISP enterprise, with a focus on improvement actions for designated services; and,

- Embed more customer-focused practices into their service design and delivery such as conducting service assessments, customer research through qualitative and quantitative research and journey mapping, approaching more holistic calculations of burden (learning, compliance, and psychological costs) for their service, and continually user-test program elements with customers to refine and improve.

OMB will meet with each HISP as needed to provide clarification of expectations.

280.14 What shall the feedback data submitted to OMB include?

A data reporting template will be provided on the CX MAX Community page. The template includes instructions, a section for reporting on the overall customer experience measures above, as well as values across each of the customer experience driver measures, a placeholder for program-specific service-level indicators as appropriate, and space to summarize recent accomplishments.

280.15 When is feedback data due?

HISP designated services will provide feedback data to OMB each quarter until data is reported directly through an API to Performance.gov. Agencies (many of which are collecting data in real-time) should submit their data as soon as they are able following the last day of the quarter. Submittals will be due the last business day of the month following the last day of the quarter. For FY 2022, these due dates are January 28th, April 29th, July 29th, and October 28th. See section 200. Feedback data will be made available publicly on performance.gov.

Newly designated HISPs without the current capacity to collect data using the government-wide measures must identify a target date for reporting of these metrics not to exceed FY 2023, Quarter 1.

280.16 What shall HISP CX Capacity Assessments and Action Plans include?

The content of CX Capacity Assessments shall address the core CX functions at the HISP enterprise-level outlined in section 280.9 and include these primary components:

- Organization/Accountability: Describing how the HISP's CX resources are organized, the leadership responsible for CX, and what measures are in place to ensure program accountability for CX performance improvement and service delivery;

- CX Program Maturity: Providing the results of an annual capacity assessment of the CX program maturity using the maturity model noted above and describing initiatives underway or planned to improve CX program maturity;

- CX Data Collection and Metrics: Describing the types of data collected to support CX assessment, the methods for obtaining feedback, including human centered design, and the methods used to report the data internally and publicly; and

- CX and Service Delivery Improvement: Describing the initiatives underway or planned to improve the program's service delivery, including whether human centered design is used. This should include how the agency is integrating CX activities with the 21st Century Integrated Digital

Experience Act (IDEA) initiatives underway. When rationalizing, modernizing, or digitizing websites, forms, and services under IDEA, agencies should use HISPs as a means for prioritization. The CX Action Plan and annual IDEA report to Congress should also be in alignment.

The content of the Action Plans shall address specific improvements that the HISP commits to making in the following budget year, addressing pain points identified through service assessments, customer feedback, human-centered design research, and other evidence generation activities. Action Plans will be made publicly available on performance.gov.

Templates for the CX Capacity Assessment and Action Plan are provided annually on the CX MAX Community page.