

The Client: Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC)

The Need: Design and implement a state-of-the-art Call Center operation to manage the PUC's Customer Choice Hotline. As part of the Call Center operation, InspiriTec was asked to develop a literature fulfillment function to provide consumer education material about customer choice. The project required InspiriTec's systems engineers to ensure integration of the PUC's Customer Account Information (CAI) system.

The Project and Results:

InspiriTec was contracted by the Public Utility Commission in 2001 to begin servicing utility customers. A fully functional call center staffed by 75% people with disabilities for direct labor was developed and implemented in 5 months from contract award notice.

Call Center set-up included facility preparation, workspace set-up, and implementation of an Automated Call Distributor (ACD). The ACD, a software based PBX phone system, is configured to handle 48 lines (two T-1's), directing customers to appropriate Customer Service Representatives (CSR's). Customers can also leave voice messages requesting information and/or a call back. In addition, the ACD provides management tools and reports for tracking queue times, call lengths, and other call detail. CSR's access and enter customer detail remotely to the State's server system, capture customer information requests for literature to a local database, and access the web to perform research and provide information to the customer.

InspiriTec partnered with the PUC to develop an intensive training curriculum that was delivered CSR training in two components. The first is a generic component covering the overall topics of computer literacy and customer service. The second phase of training is job specific and present those policies, procedures, resources, software applications (CSS/CAI), and work responsibilities associated with teaching the "best practices" for a PUC Call Center representative.

InspiriTec reached out through its vast network of referring agencies, including the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), to identify potential CSRs from their pool of persons with disabilities. InspiriTec conducted a battery of tests and comprehensive interviews to select its CSR team members.

Today, this call center, located in Center City Philadelphia, provides service to more than 200,000 customers per year seeking payment arrangements with their utility bills, utility information, or emergency assistance when their power will be or has been turned off. Staffed by more than 30 call handlers, this call center receives more than 22,000 calls per month, and sends out 2,300 pieces of fulfillment literature, during the busy season. PUC customers are typically low-income individuals.