

# Hillsborough County Tax Collector

The Hillsborough County Tax Collector's Office (HCTC), located in Tampa, is one of 67 Tax Collector offices in the state of Florida. The Tax Collector is a constitutional officer elected every 4 years in the presidential election year and serves as a local, independent agent providing various state and local government services on behalf of the Department of Revenue, Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and various county and city authorities.

A day in the life of a Floridian or a visitor to our state means almost constant interaction with the programs, benefits, and institutions funded through a county Tax Collector's office. The services we provide include: the collection of local property, tangible, business, and tourist development taxes; the processing of title and registration transactions for motor vehicles, mobile homes, and vessels; issuing and renewing driver licenses; issuing hunting and fishing licenses; and the distribution of taxes and fees to the appropriate agencies. These services are available in English and Spanish via one of our seven conveniently located branch offices, online, or by phone.

## **OUR MISSION:** *Who we are and what we do.*

To exceed customer expectations through continuous innovation in performing the required duties of our office with the highest level of ethics and integrity while empowering and challenging our workforce.

## **OUR VISION:** *Where we want to be.*

To be an exemplary government organization.

## **OUR VALUES:** *Standards we live by.*

Integrity, Communication, Positive Relationships, Customer Focus, Teamwork, Effectiveness, Knowledge, Creativity

## **OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:** *What's most important to achieve success.*

Customer Service Excellence, A Successful & Engaged Workforce, Fiscal Responsibility, Continuous Improvement

## **LEADERSHIP**

HCTC adopted the Sterling business model in 2004 to provide a framework for operating our government organization as a private sector business. As a result, we've created a team-based culture, driven by our senior leaders, that involves all employees in the decision-making process. The senior leadership team, which includes the Tax Collector, Executive Administrator, and department Directors, drives success and sustainability through an integrated approach to setting the direction and goals of the organization while maintaining a culture of ethical and regulatory compliance. Our progress towards achieving our goals is monitored during monthly production meetings with senior leaders and management. During these meetings, performance is reviewed using branch, department, and organization-level scorecards to identify adverse levels, trends, and gaps. Then, improvement teams, established at all staff levels, use a variety of improvement tools to optimize our processes and enhance performance.

Another important aspect of our leadership system focuses on supporting and strengthening our community through initiatives to educate the public, promote public awareness, and give back to Hillsborough County. HCTC hosts public awareness programs; participates in educational outreach programs and town hall meetings; promotes various specialty license plates; and seeks voluntary contributions through the motor vehicle renewal notices to provide community support. Our formal application and selection process ensures we support events that align to our mission, vision, and values using a three-tier approach. Tiers range from direct support of Hillsborough County residents to protecting Florida's environment. The selection process is supported by employee interest surveys which allow staff to vote on our annual support initiatives, creating greater buy-in and participation.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The HCTC strategic plan ensures our mission, vision, values, and core competencies support changing organizational needs and expectations. The planning process involves setting strategic priorities and objectives based on data and information gathered from various internal and external sources. These sources include organizational performance results reviews, stakeholder feedback, benchmarking data, technology trends, legislation, workforce



GOVERNOR'S  
STERLING AWARD

needs, and budget requirements. Then, the organizational scorecard is developed to align indicators and targets with objectives, which allows us to measure the success of the plan. In addition, senior leaders develop and deploy action plans to support the various objectives and improve performance. The strategic plan is reviewed monthly and adjustments are made as needed. Golden Threads are developed in each department by all staff levels to demonstrate how every employee contributes to performance excellence and to eliminate organizational silos.

## CUSTOMER AND MARKET FOCUS

HCTC customers are primarily dictated by Florida Statutes, the Florida Constitution, and local ordinances. However, we also segment our customers into three groups: public, government, and business. Public customers include property owners and motor vehicle, vessel, and mobile home owners. Business customers include: mortgage, escrow, and title companies; hotels and motels; business owners; and automobile dealers. Government customers include taxing authorities and special taxing districts such as municipalities, the school board, and various Hillsborough County agencies. HCTC further segments these customer groups based on type of transaction (online, mail, and in-person customers), geographic location, language, and volume of business. This in-depth segmentation process has allowed HCTC to enhance customer data collection and feedback mechanisms, which helps drive our strategic planning process. This ensures the unique needs of each of our customer groups are identified, and our programs and services are developed to exceed their expectations.

## MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

HCTC determines relevant performance indicators based on our strategic priorities and objectives. Measures reflect process performance and achievement of our strategic plan using a balanced scorecard approach. Each department and branch has a scorecard containing measures aligned to the key performance indicators on our organizational scorecard. Measures and results are reviewed during monthly production meetings, and are re-evaluated based on changing needs and requirements. In addition, HCTC uses a comparative data selection methodology to establish scorecard targets and determine

benchmarking partners in and outside the tax collector industry. The data collected are used to identify potential performance and process improvements based on best-in-class results and business practices.

Data availability, access, and user-friendliness are critical to the success of HCTC. As a result, we've developed a high-speed, high-availability Metropolitan Area Network serving eight locations and approximately 300 users. In addition, our technical infrastructure:

- 1) Maintains a public web site in English and Spanish that links to other state and government agencies, allows access to online payments, and links to HCTC informational databases for public access.
- 2) Provides a Windows-based intranet for employees serving as the portal for our information systems.
- 3) Provides a converged voice and data communications system supporting our Interact Voice Response system to handle commerce and disperse information.
- 4) Supports the call center with a Voice-Over Internet Protocol phone system.
- 5) Supports a high-speed remittance processor for payment processing.

## WORKFORCE FOCUS

Each staff position at HCTC has been evaluated to assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to achieve our mission. Knowledge and skills are reinforced through coaching, performance management, on-the-job training, participation in improvement teams, and continuing education opportunities. In addition, HCTC has deployed one of the richest government tuition reimbursement plans in Florida to help employees further develop their abilities and achieve their career goals.

HCTC also recognizes the value of employee initiative and empowerment. Therefore, HCTC employees are directly involved in strategic planning and decision-making. When an improvement team is tasked with addressing an action plan or improving a process, we strive to ensure involvement from as many levels of the organization as possible. This diversity gives us an array of technical, operational, and "real-life" expertise.

High-performance is encouraged among employees through several reward and recognition programs that extend beyond the standard pay system. For example, our Productivity Award Program allows employees to submit process improvement or cost savings suggestions for monetary

rewards. Additionally, an Incentive Pay Program was established to provide an annual pay increase that can be granted to qualified staff based on organizational achievement of scorecard indicators.

## PROCESS MANAGEMENT

The HCTC process management system emphasizes a team-based approach to process design and improvement, resulting in value-added services for our customers and other stakeholders. HCTC work processes are primarily derived from statutory mandates, but we maximize our results by identifying and understanding the needs and requirements of our customers and stakeholders. As a result, our processes are designed to promote improved service outcomes by delivering prompt, accurate, convenient, and legally compliant services.

## RESULTS

Since adopting the Sterling business model in 2004, HCTC has achieved significant performance results in all areas.

- Branch customer wait time has decreased from over 17 minutes to 11 minutes.
- The percent of customers rating our service "excellent" has increased from 88% to 91%.
- Our abandoned call rate has decreased from 5.6% to 2.4%.
- The percent of calls answered within 20 seconds has increased from 45% to 90%.
- Employee survey results indicate 89% of our workforce is satisfied with employment.
- Our expenditure to revenue ratio has decreased 10%.
- The number of training hours per employee increased from 17 hours in 2006 to 37 hours in 2007.
- 94% of HCTC organizational performance indicators met or exceeded target in 2007.

We are extremely proud of these accomplishments, which are a direct result of using the Sterling Criteria to improve performance and address our organizational challenges.

### *For More Information Contact:*

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